

Looking Closer



Look closely and carefully; most animals are *camouflaged* and blend into the background.

Shades of Small:

The deep shade and acidic soil of the redwood forest is very much alive with creatures that can use these conditions to their advantage.

Small:

The forest supports many small hard-to-see birds that take advantage of the dense cover and abundance of insects. Often, these birds can be heard but not seen! Look for *Brown Creepers*, *Nuthatches*, and *Wrens*.

Smaller:

Common but little-noticed members of the forest are *Lichens*. Lichens are often mistaken for moss, but are instead composed of a fungus and an algae or bacteria living together in a *symbiotic relationship*. They may grow on trees or rocks as a “crust” or in clumps.

Smallest:

There are many insects, slugs, and other *invertebrates* that help recycle the organic material found in the forest. Look carefully on the trunks of trees and in the leaves on the forest floor. You may find *banana slugs*, *millipedes*, *spiders*, and *crickets*.

How to Look:

Listen; use all your senses!
Don't forget to look UP and DOWN.
Find a quiet place away from people.

Take only pictures, leave only footprints.
No souvenirs please!
Everything that lives in the park is protected by law.

Take a guided Nature Hike: check the park schedule!

Stop by the Nature Museum to find examples of Big Basin's natural history.

Learn as much as you can so you can be a **STEWARD** of the Redwood Forest

Don't Feed the Animals

It's tempting to lure birds and animals to us with food, but it's a harmful practice both for them and ourselves. They don't need our charity, and we prevent them from doing their “jobs” in the forest. This breaks natural cycles that the forest depends on.

Take home information!
There are many guides for sale in the store.

Big Basin Redwoods State Park



Easy Field Guide

For the Big Basin Redwood Forest Habitat

www.parks.ca.gov/bigbasin
831-338-8883
21600 Big Basin Way
Boulder Creek, CA 95006



✓ Can you find all the plants and animals listed in this guide?

Trees and Shrubs

Coast Redwood

- Can grow to over 370 ft. tall
- Can live to be over 2,200 years old
- Bark is a reddish color
- Has small, round, thumbnail-sized cones that contain about 50-150 small seeds
- Leaf branchlets are flat with a row of “needles” on the sides



Douglas-Fir

- Grows over 300 ft. tall
- Can live to be around 1,000 years old
- Often mistaken for a redwood tree
- Bark is grey, tough, and scaly
- Soft needles grow like bottlebrushes
- Cones are larger, with modified scales that look like little mouse tails and feet



Tan Oak

- A short tree that grows in the deep shade of the old-growth redwood forest
- Not a true oak, but is closely related
- Its acorns are an important food for many forest creatures
- Look for a “parking lot” pattern on the leaves



Huckleberry

- Common shrub, grows in deep forest shade
- Produces crops of edible, dark-blue berries
- Has glossy, dark green leaves all year
- Flowers are fragrant and lantern-shaped



Birds

Steller's Jay

- Do not confuse with its cousin, the Blue Jay
- Blue bird with black head, crest, and shoulders
- Loud, raucous, and aggressive, with an unmistakable “chak-chak-chak” call
- Related to crows and ravens
- Will eat any available food. Do not feed them!



Acorn Woodpecker



- Laughing call often heard around snags (standing dead trees) where nesting cavities exist
- Can store up to 50,000 acorns in a snag, creating a ‘granary’
- Listen for drumming and “waka-waka” call

Dark-eyed Junco

- Small, common bird with a brown body and distinct white stripes on tail feathers
- Male has an intensely dark head and shoulders
- Do not feed them!



Common Raven

- Large, jet-black bird with a long black beak
- Not native to the Redwood Forest ecosystem
- Makes a large range of sounds, but most often the guttural “raaaach, raaach”
- The diamond-shape of its tail in flight identifies it from its smaller cousin, the crow



Mammals

Raccoon

- Raccoons are most active at night and are very interested in visitors’ food and trash. Please be Crumb Clean!
- The raccoon has a black “mask” across its eyes and alternating dark and light rings on its tail
- It has a lumbering walk and leaves prints that look like little hands



Gray Squirrel

- This tree-dweller is active during the day
- It’s gray with a large bushy tail, and is large compared to other squirrels
- Their call sounds like a barking cough
- They eat fungi and seeds, and store acorns in the ground for winter food
- They are being outnumbered by the introduced Eastern Gray and Fox Squirrels



Black-tailed Deer

- Deer browse on small plants, shrubs, and acorns
- Males grow antlers in spring and summer and shed them in winter; shed antlers are an important source of minerals for smaller mammals in the forest



Merriam's Chipmunk

- The chipmunk has a brown, striped body
- Smaller than a squirrel, and very fast
- Makes distinctive “chip” sound emphasized by jerky tail movements

