



Tufted Puffins. PRBO files.

## Report Disturbance Violations

Call California Department of Fish & Game's CALTip Hotline 888/334-2258 (888/DFG-CALT) with the following information within 24-hours:

1. Your name and contact information;
2. Time, location and cause of incident;
3. Which and how many birds were disturbed;
4. Number of people involved;
5. Description of craft(s) involved: complete registration numbers, type, military/civilian, color, number of engines, wing design;
6. Estimate distances and altitudes in reference to landmarks and permanent objects.

## Learn more about Seabird Conservation

SEABIRD AWARE PROJECT  
 4990 Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA USA 94970  
[www.prbo.org/seabirdaware](http://www.prbo.org/seabirdaware) or 415/868-1221, ext. 302

## Join Us!

PRBO Conservation Science is dedicated to conserving birds, other wildlife and their ecosystems through innovative research and outreach. Visit [www.prbo.org/membership](http://www.prbo.org/membership) or call 415/868-1221, ext. 320 to become a member.



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## Raising our Seabird Awareness

Seabirds depend on a mix of marine habitats to survive. Though seabirds spend most of their lives at sea, they must come ashore to rest, nest, and raise young—often in great colonies.

The gregarious atmosphere of seabird colonies has long attracted interested boaters, wildlife watchers, and fishermen. Unfortunately, many seabirds are highly sensitive to human disturbance.



During the breeding season, which spans February to September in central California, seabirds are particularly vulnerable to human disturbance. A single disturbance can cause the loss of eggs and chicks, or permanent desertion of their colony. Seabird populations need every chance to successfully breed because most birds only produce one or a few young each year.

## SEABIRD AWARE



Brandt's Cormorant in display pose. Photo by Peter LaTourrette

Simple ways to share our coast with birds

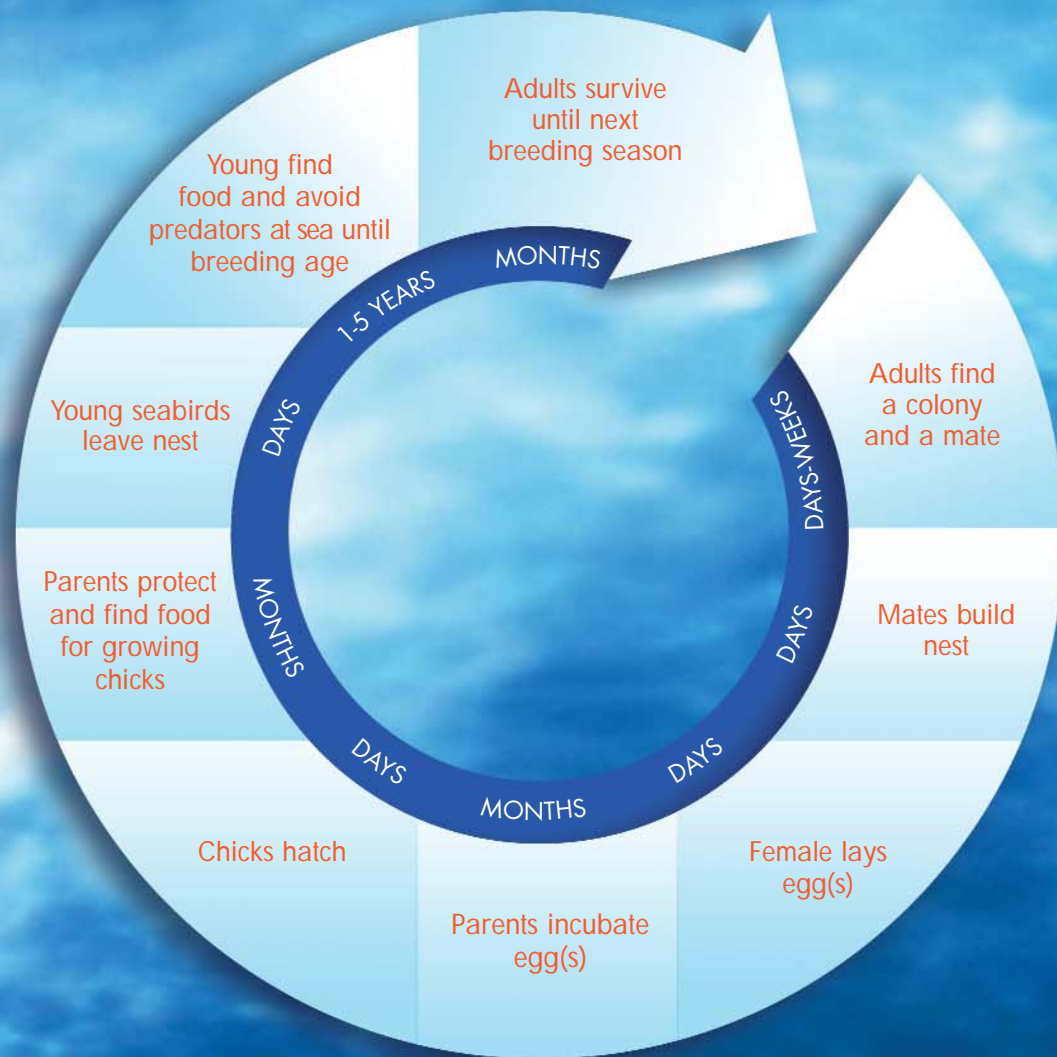
## Why is human disturbance a problem for nesting seabirds?

Human disturbance causes a change in an animal's normal behavior. In marine environments, such disturbances are typically caused by close approaches from the water, air, or land. Their effects range from minor to disastrous:

- Birds are distracted from normal activities, but don't fly away
- Parents spend less time tending young
- Parents fly away from nest, leaving eggs or chicks vulnerable to predators and cold
- Nests are destroyed
- Parents injured or killed
- Seabirds entirely abandon their colony

## The Life Cycle of Seabirds

Like us, seabirds need adequate food and safe places to rest and nest. Successfully completing this life cycle is critical to their long-term health and survival.



Brandt's Cormorant with chicks. Photo by Peter Lafourrette

The seabird life cycle is disrupted or terminated when it, or its young or eggs are killed or destroyed.

### Today, California's seabirds are threatened by:

- Destruction or damage to their habitats;
- Disturbances during nesting and feeding;
- Death and injury from fishing hooks, lines, nets and trash;
- Lack of food from overfishing;
- Dangerous contaminants in the ecosystem.

## How You Can Help

State and federal laws protect seabirds and other marine life from disturbance and harassment. Being aware of wildlife around you is the key to preventing disturbance. If you see birds reacting nervously (e.g., head bobbing, calling, or fluttering), you are too close!

By following these simple, seabird-safe actions, you can reduce disturbance and contribute to the health and safety of our treasured marine resources. *To report violations, please see back of brochure.*

### Boating & Fishing

- Stay 500 feet away (nearly two football fields) from colonies where seabirds roost and nest.
- Paddle, sail, or motor around flocks of birds rather than through them.
- Do not feed wildlife.
- Recycle or dispose of plastics, fishing hooks and line in the trash - not in the water.
- Weight fishing lines to avoid hooking seabirds.
- Never dump oil, fuel, or other foreign substances into the water or drains.

### Coastal Hiking

- Stay on trail at all times, as one ill-placed foot can damage an underground nesting burrow.
- If you see wildlife flush (flying away) as you approach, slowly step away and leave the area.
- Pack out trash and never feed wildlife.
- Educate other hikers about seabird-safe hiking.

### Aircraft

- Low-flying aircraft can cause severe disturbances to colonies. To avoid disturbance, please maintain an above ground level of 2000 ft.
- Report wildlife disturbances caused by low-flying aircraft (*learn how on back of brochure*).
- Share this information with fellow pilots and airport staff.

Photo by Bob Boekelheide.



### Common Murre

**HABITAT**—Steep cliffs of rocky islets and islands near- and offshore.  
**PROFESSION**—

A fish and krill hunter, it uses its strong wings to “fly” underwater to depths of 600 ft.  
**FUN FACT**—Lays only one pear-shaped egg that will not roll off even the narrowest rock ledge.

### Brandt's Cormorant

**HABITAT**—Steep cliffs of rocky islets and islands near- and offshore.  
**PROFESSION**—A fish-hunter, it propels itself with large, webbed feet.



Photo by Ben Saenz.

**FUN FACT**—Unlike many other cormorants, these sleek seabirds flock together to communally hunt schools of fish.

### Pigeon Guillemot



Photo by Jeff Foote.

**HABITAT**—Rocky coasts of islands, islets, and mainland.  
**PROFESSION**—A fish-hunter, its powerful wings allow it to “fly” underwater in

pursuit of its prey.  
**FUN FACT**—These handsome birds nest and raise their young in rocky crevices on steep cliffs.

### Western Gull

**HABITAT**—Rocky coasts of islands, islets and mainland.  
**PROFESSION**—An opportunist, this large gull will eat just about anything.



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**FUN FACT**—To protect eggs and chicks, they release a hot dose of guano onto potential predators - including humans - from above.