

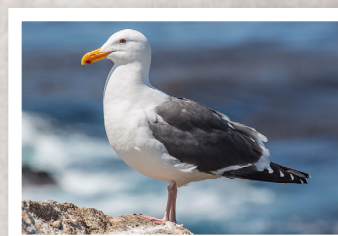
DOWNTOWN TO MISSION BAY

SPECIES: WESTERN GULL



ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

» South Park, South Beach Park, 303 Second Street Plaza, 611 Folsom Street Plaza, McKesson Plaza, AT&T Park.



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

WESTERN GULL – *Larus occidentalis*

Our Gull!

Western Gulls (*Larus occidentalis*) breed on Alcatraz Island and along the shoreline of San Francisco Bay. These are large gulls, with clear white and grey markings. They prefer to feed on marine invertebrates and fishes, eggs, and chicks of seabirds. Because humans have given them so much to eat, we have altered their behavior. One example of this is that the Western Gulls, being opportunistic feeders, congregate in large numbers during the seventh and eighth innings, awaiting food scraps left behind by Giants fans. This causes a big problem for ballpark staff, fans, and the birds. Western Gulls nest only on the West Coast in colonies. During breeding season, they are essentially the only gull species in San Francisco. They nest in a scrape in the ground filled with vegetation, feathers, and other natural items; sometimes they'll fill the nest with rope, plastic, or other items.

KEY HABITAT FEATURES

They are skillful hunters and scavengers and don't really depend specifically on other plants and animals. However, they do feed off the ocean's surface, so the proximity of water is helpful, but also it is not necessary, as they are seen inland too!

DIET

Eats marine invertebrates and fishes. Eggs and chicks of seabirds. Scavenges carrion and refuse.

NESTING INFORMATION

Nest is a scrape in the ground filled with vegetation, feathers, rope, plastic, or other items. Nests in colonies, often with other gull species.