

Montclair Redwood Tree- Observations and Ecological Value

Observations and report by Josiah Clark, Consulting Ecologist 11/4/16

Introduction

The Coastal Redwood Tree located at 4 Montclair is one of the largest trees in the neighborhood, and as such is a locally significant habitat resource. This redwood tree is the habitat of dozens of species of birds and a hundred or more species of invertebrates including insects and spiders. "Cover" is a primary habitat component in any urban area, and this is perhaps the biggest piece of cover in the neighborhood.

Methods

At the request of the owner a total of four visits were made to this tree, with observation periods lasting between one and two hours. During each observation period efforts were made to note all species that entered the tree.

Observations

The boughs provide layers of foliage and the bark and trunk serve as foraging areas for many species of songbirds. During my visits migrant birds to the tree included Townsend's Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Orange-crowned Warbler. Resident birds that were regularly seen using the tree include Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Dark-eyed Junco and Anna's Hummingbird. There are also native species that eat the redwood seeds.

Local Ecological Significance

There is a general rule that plant species from a bioregion have more relationships with native insect and animal species than they do with non-native plants. This is a theme we see with redwoods and other native conifers in the urban forest of San Francisco and is true with this tree.

The canopy of a large tree in a neighborhood like this one provides a suspended refuge of native biomass for wildlife to visit and inhabit. Raptors and other birds use this high point as a strategic hunting spot and vantage point to observe the skyline. Smaller birds including American Robin and Anna's Hummingbird use the dense foliage of redwoods like this one to hide their nests.

Conclusion

This Coast Redwood does play a significant role in the ecology of the neighborhood as a habitat feature for birds, insects and other local wildlife. It is a tree species that is native to the bioregion and facilitates beneficial processes between native flora and fauna.

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Following is a list of the species I observed using the tree.

Table 1: Native Bird Species observed using the Montclair Redwood

Mourning Dove	American Crow	American Robin	Orange-crowned Warbler
Anna's Hummingbird	Western Scrub Jay	Hermit Thrush	Dark-eyed Junco
Downy Woodpecker	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Townsend's Warbler	White-crowned Sparrow
Northern Flicker	Pygmy Nuthatch	Yellow-rumped warbler	Lesser Goldfinch

Table 2: Introduced, non-native birds observed using Montclair Redwood

Red-masked Parakeet	European Starling
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