

Saturday, March 2nd Docent-led walk at Elkhorn Slough.

Come learn all about the slough and why it has been designated a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Hiking trails through marshes, woodlands and tidal creeks where you can see pelicans, herons, egrets, sea lions, otters and... maybe sharks! Bring a picnic lunch if you wish. ~ *Elkhorn Slough Visitor Center* ~ 9:30 a.m. to noon.

Location: Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, 1700 Elkhorn Road.

Please arrive at 9:30 a.m. The walk will happen if there's a light rain, but heavy rain will likely cancel.

Duration: ~2.5 hours

Mileage: ~2 miles. Most of it is relatively even, with one small but somewhat steep hill (70ft elevation change). Most walkers/hikers rate it as relatively easy.

Walk Overview:

- The group will start with some free time to explore the Visitor Center, retrieve binoculars, and use the facilities as we wait for everyone to arrive.
- An experienced naturalist will gather your team for an orientation to the Reserve and its partnerships (~15 minutes)
- Your naturalist will lead your team out on a 2-mile loop wandering through native oak forest, grassland, and mudflat habitat. Depending on timing and group ability, you might visit Hummingbird Island and peak into the main channel of the Slough.
- The tour ends back at the Visitor Center, where there are picnic tables for lunching and lounging.

Recommended attire: Long pants, layered clothing, sturdy hiking shoes, and one water-proof/water-resistant layer.

Binoculars: We highly recommend using binoculars, they make the experience much better. The Reserve lends them out for FREE to visitors, but you're welcome to use your own if you'd prefer.

Topics:

- March brings a peak number of migratory birds to the Elkhorn Slough, with over 300 different species to be found out in the field. From nesting raptors in the oak forest to feasting shorebirds in the mudflats, there is a bounty of avian life each spring.
- This season also brings amphibians out to our ponds, and occasionally a red legged frog might be spotted peeking out from the water's edge.
- The Reserve is home to several year-round inhabitants, including the famous Southern Sea Otter. Though not always seen from the Reserve property, we will certainly discuss the interwoven relationship between otters and the Slough.
- Along the walk, a naturalist will help your group spot and identify organisms while interpreting their unique life histories. You'll learn about the history of human activity around Elkhorn Slough, and how organizations (and our community) are working together to preserve this place for the future.