

# **Julian and William Heise County Park**

## **Habitat**

- Neighborhoods
- Parkland
- Pine and oak forests
- Chaparral
- Orchards
- Meadows
- Farmland

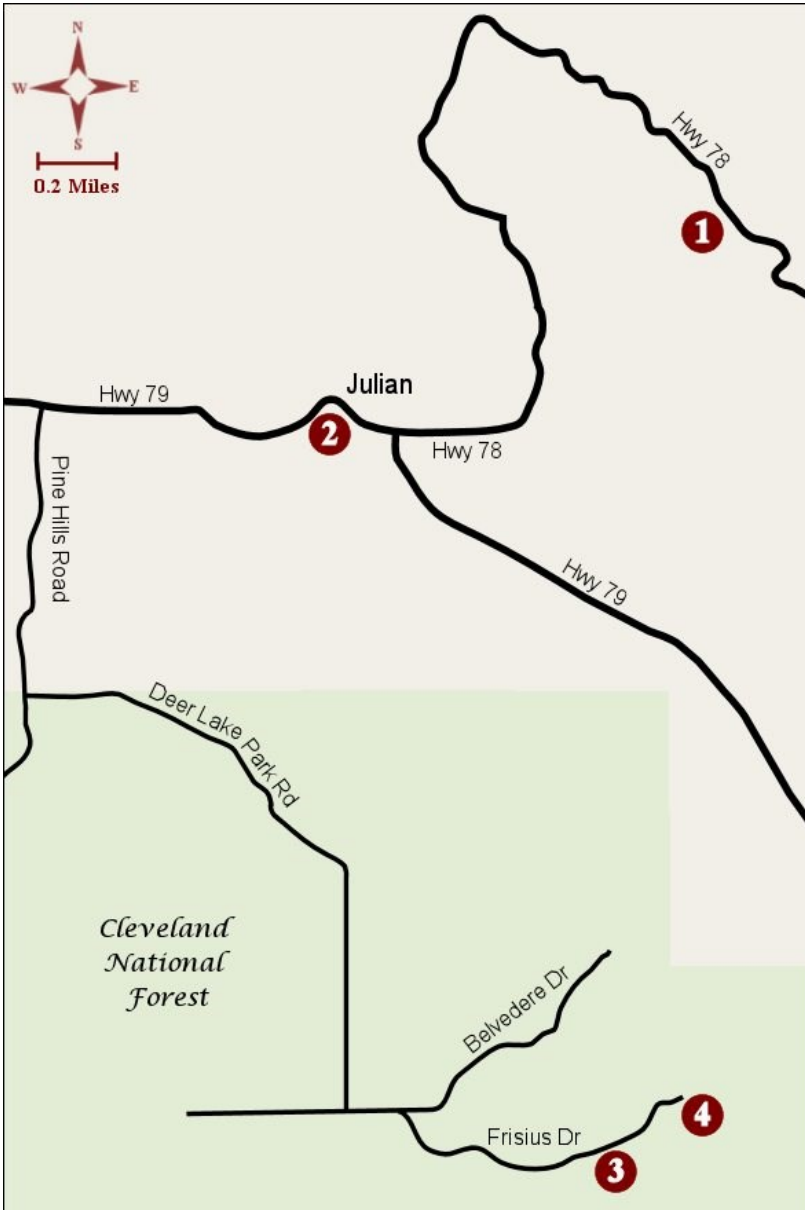
## **Target Birds**

- Quail: Mountain and California (resident)
- Red-shouldered Hawk (resident)
- Owls: Western Screech-Owl and Spotted (resident)
- Belted Kingfisher (winter)
- Woodpeckers: Acorn and Nuttall's (resident)
- Jays: Steller's and Western Scrub-Jay (resident)
- Phoebes: Black and Say's (resident)
- Loggerhead Shrike (winter)
- Western swallows (migrants and resident)
- Nuthatches: Pygmy and White-breasted (resident)
- Mountain Chickadee (resident)
- Oak Titmouse (resident)
- Western Bluebird (resident)
- California Thrasher (resident)
- Phainopepla (spring)
- Western warblers (mostly migrants)
- Towhees: Spotted and California (resident), Green-tailed (winter)
- Sparrows: Song (resident) Chipping, Brewer's, Savannah, White-crowned (winter)
- Orioles: Scott's and Bullock's (summer)
- Goldfinches: Lesser (resident) and Lawrence's (irruptive)

## **General Description**

Julian is a pleasant tourist destination high up in the Laguna Mountains. Especially during the summer, weekends can be very crowded, when hordes of tourists drive up to escape the heat and eat homemade apple pie and ice cream. The best time to bird this area on weekends is early in the morning; weekdays are much less crowded. Southeast of Julian, William Heise County Park covers 900+ acres at an elevation of 4420 ft.

Eleven miles of trails take you through red cedars, pines, and oaks. Banner Grade is a windy road that takes from 4200 ft to 2600 ft and provides opportunities to bird the pines, chaparral, oaks, riparian woodland, the high desert.



Julian Area

# Birding Suggestions

## 1) **Banner Grade**

If approaching Julian from the east, Banner Grade is a stretch of Highway 78 that ascends 4.0 miles from the desert floor to the pine forests of Julian. Along the drive you'll pass through Live Oaks which are home to Acorn Woodpecker, Western Scrub-Jay, and Oak Titmouse. Mountainside chaparral is the predominant vegetation along much of the ascent; stop at pull-offs here to look and listen for resident California Quail, Wrentit, Oak Titmouse, Spotted Towhee, and California Thrasher. Winter brings Fox and White-crowned Sparrows. Once you reach the pines you'll be in the home of breeding Mountain Chickadee, Black-headed Grosbeak, Pygmy and White-breasted Nuthatch, and Steller's Jay.

## 2) **The Birdwatcher**

This large store in Julian sells gifts, publications, optics, bird feeders, and bird food. On the outside you'll find hummingbird feeders hanging from the eaves and seed feeders out back. Hummingbirds to look for in migration include Rufous, Calliope, and Black-chinned. Look for Anna's all year round. Visitors to the seed feeders include Black-headed Grosbeak, Pine Siskin (winter), nuthatches, and finches. Several years ago a vagrant Common Redpoll drew in hordes of birders!

## 3) **William Heise County Park – Cedar Trail**

At Picnic Area 2 park near the restrooms and take the downhill trail which intersects with the Cedar Trail. This trail winds through beautiful red cedar and then goes up into the sunlit mountain chaparral. In the cedar forest look for Spotted Owl (at times they're easy to see, at other times they seem to be invisible). Other birds in the forest include American Robin, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Hairy Woodpecker, Dark-eyed Junco, and Spotted Towhee. As the trail ascends into the chaparral watch for resident Bushtit, Wrentit, and California Thrasher.

## 4) **William Heise County Park – Group Campground**

The campground host has an excellent bird-feeding station as of July 2015. At that time we spotted scores of migrant Rufous Hummingbirds there, as well as Dark-eyed Junco, Oak Titmouse, Mountain Chickadee, and Western Bluebird.

### *Warblers of San Diego County Mountains*

**Hermit** – uncommon migrant that favors spruce and firs

**Townsend's** – common migrant in pines

**Black-throated Gray** – common migrant and breeder, favors oaks

**Wilson's** – most often seen in riparian areas, but may be found anywhere – the most common of our migrants

**MacGillivray's** – a fairly common but retiring warbler of thick brushy areas

**Common Yellowthroat** – common breeder in wet areas, like the marshes and brush around Lake Cuyamaca

**Yellow** – common breeder in riparian areas

**Yellow-rumped** – common winter visitor and migrant in many wooded areas and urban neighborhoods

**Nashville** – common migrant in riparian areas

**Orange-crowned** – common migrant and less common winter visitor in riparian areas

### **Driving Directions to Julian Birding Areas**

- **Area 1 (Banner Grade)** – If you approach Julian from the east on Highway 78, you'll start ascending Banner Grade 6.2 miles east of town. If you are heading east out of Julian and will be descending the Banner Grade, drive east on Highway 78 for 2.2 miles beyond the intersection of Highways 78 and 79 to begin the 4-mile downhill drive.
- **Area 2 (The Birdwatcher)** – At the intersection of Highway 79 and Highway 78 (Main Street), drive west on Main Street for 0.2 miles to B Street. Turn left onto B Street and drive southwest up the street several hundred feet to the Birdwatcher. Turn into the parking lot and park.
- **Area 3 (William Heise County Park - Trail)**
  - From the corner of Main and Washington Streets, turn left and drive southwest on Highway 78 (Washington Street) for 0.9 miles to Pine Hills Road
  - Turn left (south) onto Pine Hills and drive 1.0 miles to Deer Lake Park Road

- Turn left (east) onto Deer Lake Park Road and drive 2.1 miles to Frisius Drive.
  - Turn left (east) onto Frisius Drive and drive 0.5 miles into the park; pay the day use fee at the kiosk.
  - Drive 0.4 miles past the entrance kiosk to Picnic Area 2. The Cedar Trail is accessed from the south end of the picnic area.
- **Area 4 (William Heise County Park, Group Campground)** – From the entrance kiosk continue east for 0.6 miles on the main park road to the group campground. The host’s trailer is at the beginning of the campground loop road.

## Site Notes

### Best Time to Visit

April has singing residents and numerous migrant passerines

### Ownership

- San Diego County
- Private

**Vehicle Access:** All paved roads

**Fees:** William Heise County Park

- Day use is \$4 per vehicle
- Camping fee depends on the type of site—varies from \$24 (tent) to \$62 (cabin)

**Hours:** William Heise County Park

- 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays
- 9:30 a.m. to sunset on weekends

**Camping:** William Heise County Park has 103 developed sites and 14 cabins

**Restrooms:** In the park

**Food:** Julian

**Gas:** Julian

### Addresses

William Heise County Park  
4945 Heise Park Road  
Julian, CA 92036



The Birdwatcher  
2775 B Street  
Julian, CA 92036

**Phone:** (760) 765-0650

**Website:** <http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/parks/Camping/heise.html>