

# BATIQUITOS LAGOON TRAIL

# 07

## IN BRIEF

Cool ocean breezes and glassy water that laps soothingly at the shore make this a refreshing hike for hotter days, and the trail is easy. Bring your children for an educational experience, including a visit to the nature center, where friendly guides enjoy sharing information.

## DESCRIPTION

Walk southeast on the paved section; you quickly come to the nature center. There, colorful seabird cutouts offer still-life clues as to what you're likely to see in full living color ahead—birds, birds, and more birds—grebes, herons, plovers, terns, and more.

Just past the nature center, the dirt trail begins. The lagoon waters gently lap the shore to the right of the path while, beyond it, the freeway incessantly hums. Concentrate on the birds floating along where the ripples take them or ducking their heads beneath the glassy water in search of food. Slow-winged gulls sail along on the air. Drawing your attention to the moment, the yellow-beaked gulls seem to carry the traffic noise away on their lazy flight.

Information panels offer facts about surrounding marsh vegetation, like the fleshy pickleweed, rustling cattail, heath, or salt grass. Look closely amid the greenery: a plover rests atop a stick in the mud, and an egret stands so still he seems to be a part of the landscape.

## Directions

Take Interstate 5 to the Poinsettia Lane Exit and drive 0.3 miles east to Batiquitos Drive. Turn right and continue 0.4 miles to where the road curves southwest. Turn right on Gabbiano Lane and drive 0.3 miles to the parking lot at the trailhead.



## KEY AT-A-GLANCE INFORMATION

**LENGTH:** 3 miles

**CONFIGURATION:** Out-and-back

**DIFFICULTY:** Easy

**SCENERY:** Native sage scrub; birds and their nesting sites

**EXPOSURE:** Sunny and shady

**TRAFFIC:** Heavy

**TRAIL SURFACE:** Sandy soil

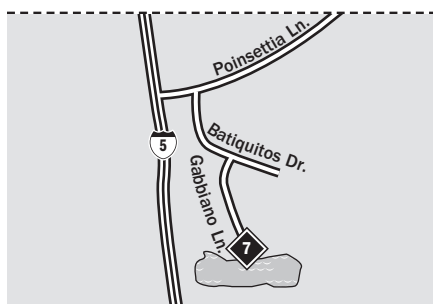
**HIKING TIME:** 1 hour

**ACCESS:** Free

**MAPS:** At the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation Web site, [www.batiquitosfoundation.org](http://www.batiquitosfoundation.org) or the restoration Web site, [www.batiquitos.org](http://www.batiquitos.org)

**FACILITIES:** Restroom at the nature center

**SPECIAL COMMENTS:** The nature center offers guided walks and lots of learning opportunities. The trail does not allow bikes or horses. For more information, see the foundation's Web site or call (760) 931-0800.





Benches are placed approximately every third of a mile and overlook the lagoon the same way several houses on the left do, poised to enjoy the rippling water through south-facing windows shaded against the afternoon sun—or perhaps thrown open to allow in the musky scent of thriving coastal sage scrub.

The route bears left through eucalyptus trees with trunks that creak and squeak as the wind pushes them against each other. Note Aviarrá Cove on the left (another entrance to the lagoon) and continue east. A golf course appears, with its



**Abundant feathered wonders are a delight at Batiquitos Lagoon.**

manicured grass looking almost artificial against this natural setting. Two worlds usually so far apart collide here, where golfers in collared shirts wave at hikers in boots or running shoes. Look up into the trees as you head through this section. Guides tell of great blue herons nesting overhead year after year.

Another quarter of a mile or so brings you past the golf clubhouse and then to the eastern entrance, which is a good place to turn around. You'll notice a protected nesting area for the threatened snowy plover and endangered least tern. Be sure to visit during nesting season, generally May to August.

Enjoy the fresh coastal air and absorb the ever-changing palette of nature's canvas as you retrace your steps. The late-afternoon sun forms stripes on the lagoon waters as though filtered through blinds.