

Trail Information:

Length of Trail: Two miles

Trail Type: Paved, asphalt

ADA Accessible: Yes, trail and parking ADA

Restroom/Drinking Fountain: Yes

Other: Benches along the route, some long areas without a lot of shade, so bring a hat

Photos by: Jay Kolbet-Clausell



History Highlights:

- From 1968 to 1995 the Helm's Construction Company owned the land which is now the Sparks Marina. This was used as a 100-ft-deep gravel pit.
- The City of Sparks planned to upgrade the 100 ft pit into a 30 ft pond, but the Truckee River had different plans for the area. In 1997 the Truckee River flooded and filled the pond fully in two days which was thereafter kept at 100 ft instead of the shallow 30 ft!
- Spark Marina is a natural aquifer which is fed by groundwater (an estimated 1-3 million gallons of water seep into this lake daily).
- Because of the excess groundwater feeding this lake, the city has to pump 1-2 million gallons of water out of the pond and into the Truckee River each day to keep the pond level stable!
- The sand on the beach at Sparks Marina was brought in from Lake Tahoe.

Local Biodiversity:

Cattails:

Identification: Cattail seed heads are long, brown, and narrow like cigars. Leaves are long, flat, grey/green in color and are basal (leaves form in pairs oppositely attached from each other).

Fun Facts:

- Cattail leaves have been used in weaving for shelter, baskets, and mats.
- The young cattail shoots can be eaten raw or boiled.
- The pollen can be collected and used in pancake batter, bread, muffins, etc.
- The dried brown flower heads when removed can be used as a down-like fluff for pillows, padding for shoes, or comforters.
- Cattails have also been used to remove harmful chemicals, waste, or heavy metals from the soil or water.
- Check out the awesome work of John Todd and his "eco-living machines" where he uses a variety of plants (including cattails) to clean sewage waste!

Resources: "Willow Bark & Rosehips: An Introduction to Common Edible and Useful Wild Plants of North America" by Fritz Springmeyer.

"Phytoremediation of Heavy Metals from Urban Waste Leachate by Southern Cattail" from the International Journal of Scientific Research in Environmental Sciences.

Black Crowned Night Heron:

ID Characteristics: Black Crowned Night Herons are usually found in the evening, and adults are stocky birds with grey and black plumage. The profile of the adults often resemble that of Gru in Despicable Me!

Fun Facts:

- Black Crown Night Herons are the most widespread of Herons, and live in a variety of wetlands.
- The young cannot fly until about 6 weeks of age, however they leave the nest at only one month and survive via foot until they can fly.
- Females will raise any chick that is in her nest, and does not distinguish her own young from that of another species.
- Black Crown Night Herons will regurgitate their food upon being approached which makes researching their diets quite easy for scientists.

Resources: "Black Crowned Night Heron." , Life History, All About Birds , Cornell Lab of Ornithology, https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-crowned_Night-Heron.

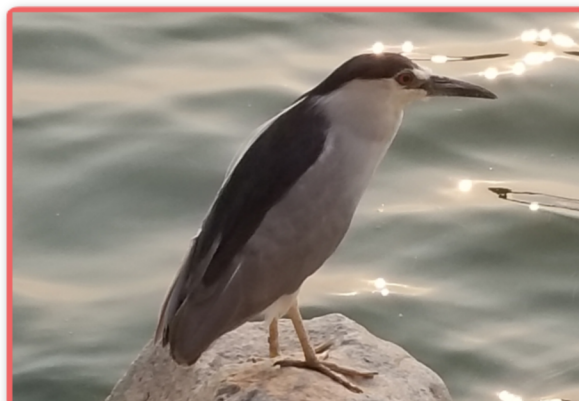


Photo By:
Jessica Andreone

Learn More:

Visit the Sparks Marina page as a part of the Parks Project on our website at: tmparksfoundation.org/sparks-marina-park