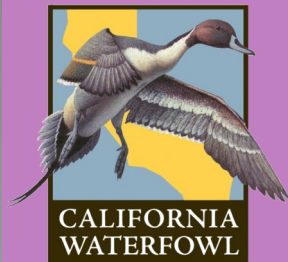


# Ghost Town

## Sprig Tales Newsletter



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### Spot the Difference

Millions of Snow Geese and Ross's Geese migrate to Central Valley to spend the winter. These two species with their similar snowy-white plumage are famously difficult to tell apart. Bagging limits are different for each species of waterfowl and it is important to be able to tell them apart in the field to avoid breaking the law. Below are a few easy differences you can spot in the field to separate the Snow Geese and Ross's Geese.

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Goose, Duck!

Larger, flatter  
head

Black gap  
between upper  
and lower bill

Blue-green at  
base of bill

Short, stubby bill

Rounded head





# Drawbridge: The Marsh Ghost Town

There is a place in California that has been forgotten. Though only minutes from the buzzing city of San Jose (population: +1,000,0000), the town of Drawbridge (population: 0) remains a mystery. Hidden away in the protected Don Edwards National Refuge and often invisible behind a blanket of gray, crawling fog, it has managed to hide from the world ever since the last person left for good in 1979.

In 1876, a railroad worker got a job at a small station on the Union Pacific Railroad track, which ran through wetlands. His only job was to raise and lower a drawbridge that went over a waterway in the marsh. But soon, people noticed the large flocks of waterfowl in the surrounding marsh and built hunting cabins near the station. By the 1880s, Drawbridge was a popular hunting spot with a population of approximately 1,000 people on the weekends. It had two enemy neighborhoods (the North and South neighborhoods) and was known for lots of outlaw activity, especially gambling. Even one hundred years ago, Drawbridge was good at keeping out of view.

The bridge that was the beginning of the town would also be the end of it; the drawbridge was shut down in 1955 and trains no longer stopped at Drawbridge. To

make matters worse, the nearby salt ponds were making the wetlands too salty, discouraging the once-abundant ducks and geese from staying in the marsh. With the main businesses gone, all but a handful of people left. The last person left in 1979, and



*Graffiti spray painted onto the crumbling walls are the only human-made changes to Drawbridge made in decades*





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## Hunting Near Drawbridge

Don Edwards is located in Fremont, about 30 minutes from San Jose. With more than 10,000 acres of marshland, the refuge offers many hunting opportunities. Species of interest include Mallard, Pintail, Canvasback, and Redhead. Hunting season typically begins in October and continues into January (specific dates depend on the species).

no one has moved back since.

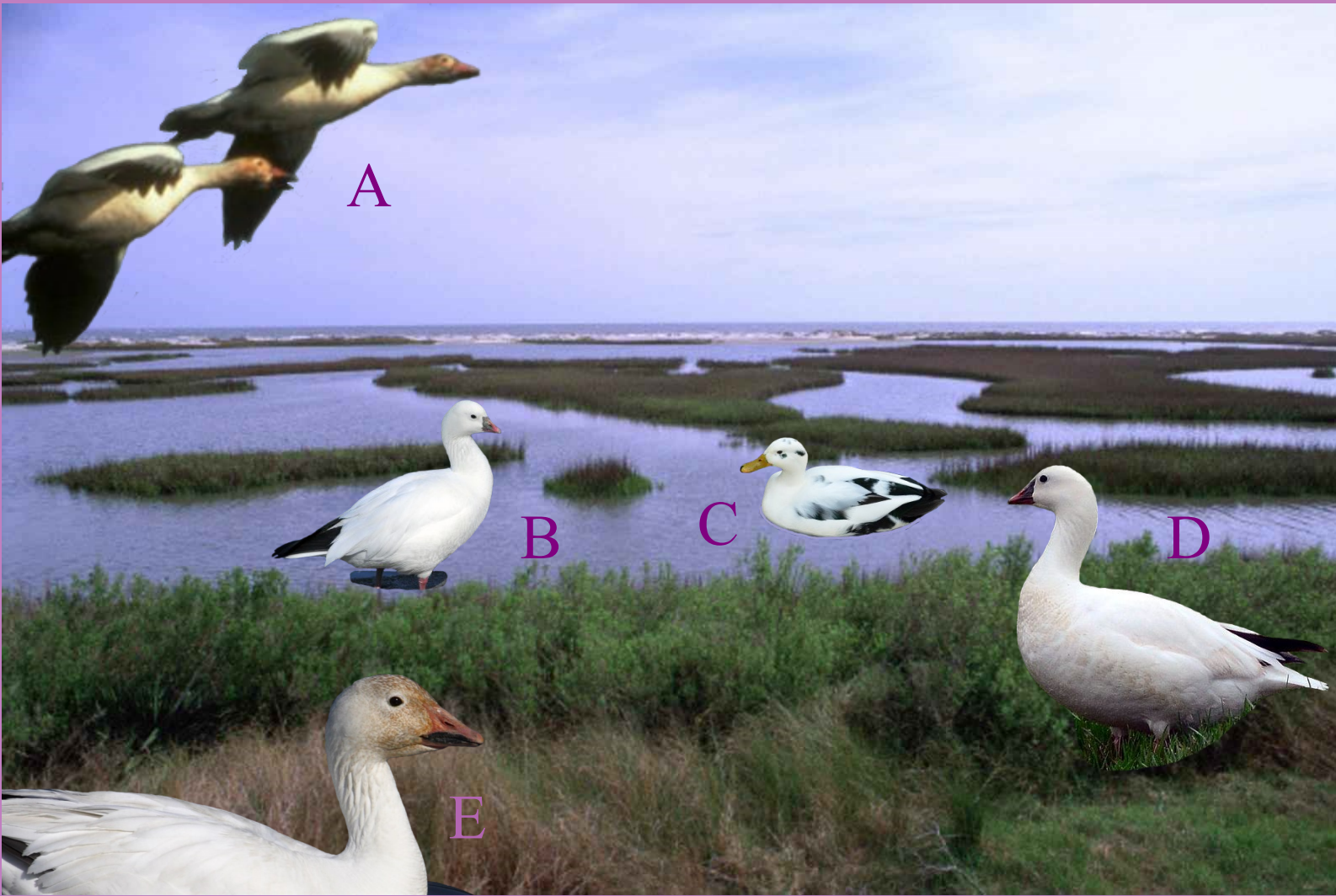
Drawbridge was included into the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, making it a protected area. Today, refuge managers are not destroying or fixing the old town, choosing instead to leave it alone in order to protect the habitat. So with each passing day, Drawbridge sinks a little deeper into the marsh. But on the bright side, most of the salt ponds are being restored and waterfowl have returned to the marsh. Now, Drawbridge can be enjoyed from a distance on one of the refuge's many trails.



William Ward / Wikimedia Commons

*Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, where Drawbridge is located, becomes a temporary home to millions of migrating birds during spring and fall every year.*

# Goose, Goose...Duck!



Use the notes on Page 1 to find out which of these birds are Snow Geese and which are Ross's Geese. Hint: there is a duck hiding here, too...

**Answers:** Snow Goose = A, E; Ross's Goose = B, D; Domestic Duck = C

Photo Credits: A = FWS / CC0, B = Linnaea Mallette / CC0, C = X posid / CC0, D = CheepShot / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 2.0, E = Simon Pierre Barrette / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 1.0 Background = John Hagerty, FWS / CC0

For more information on our education programs or to get involved, contact Sabreena Britt, Education Coordinator at (916) 648-1406 Ext. 102 or [sbritt@calwaterfowl.org](mailto:sbritt@calwaterfowl.org)

For more information and our calendar of events go to [www.calwaterfowl.org](http://www.calwaterfowl.org)