



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Slice of California: Seabirds to Sierra I 2015**

Aug 29, 2015 to Sep 7, 2015

Chris Benesh

*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).*



*Sunrise birding at Mono Lake (Photo by guide Chris Benesh)*

Fall of 2015 was certainly an interesting time to be visiting California. Being in the middle of a multi-year drought, things certainly appeared more parched than normal. On top of that, sea temperatures have been hovering somewhat above normal, leading to some oddball birds showing up at sea too. That said, in the short term, the weather was great for most of the trip. Despite the dry conditions, we were able to find most of things we were after.

We started off birding around San Francisco Bay, taking in wetlands and mudflats in search of a variety of cool birds. The following day found us heading east by way of Mines Road and Del Puerto Canyon, isolated from the rest of the bay area. In relatively peaceful conditions, we tracked down California Thrashers, Wrentits, Phainopeplas, Yellow-billed Magpies, and Lawrence's Goldfinches. We then headed across the Central Valley, ending up in Sonora. The next day we headed to Calaveras Big Trees State Park where we spent the morning hiking the North Grove loop trail. We saw a good assortment of woodpeckers, and a few different warblers, and of course a bunch of Red-breasted Nuthatches. Later in the day, we headed further up Highway 4 looking for Mountain Quail.

The following day, we headed over Sonora Pass birding in the morning at Clark's Fork, before heading over the pass. We made a brief stop at Bridgeport Reservoir before heading to Lee Vining for the night. The next morning we were out exploring the South Tufa at first light. We spent much of the rest of the morning exploring the Jeffrey Pine Forest along Highway 120. That was productive, with lots of Pinyon Jays and Clark's Nutcrackers. In the afternoon, we headed to the historic ghost town of Bodie. We had a terrific historical tour guided by Terri Geissinger, and then we set out for Greater Sage-Grouse. After a bit of searching, we found seven birds in the sagebrush near the parking area.

Our next day was largely a travel day with us heading back to Half Moon Bay. We settled in in preparation for the pelagic trip on the next day. The pelagic morning, we all met up early for breakfast and then boarded our chartered boat. Because of the seas, we spent the first bit of the morning nearshore, seeing thousands of shearwaters, some rocky shorebirds and A GANNET! Then we headed slowly offshore, picking the most comfortable route. It turned out that the most comfortable ride was in the direction of the Farallon Islands, so that's where we headed. This ended up being a good move, as we were able to pick up two more species of sulids there. We then headed into deeper water and picked up some albatrosses and a few other odds and ends.

Our final day was spent along the coast, where we tracked down a number of other specialties from Marbled Murrelets and Tricolored Blackbirds to Banana Slug!

I had a wonderful time birding with you all, and thanks for sharing in the Slice of California experience. And thanks too to Jan Pierson, Tom Johnson, and Doug Gochfeld for some good times along the coast. See you again on another birding adventure!

--Chris

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## KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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## BIRDS

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**BRANT (BLACK)** (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) – One really worn bird at Pillar Point Harbor.

**CANADA GOOSE** (*Branta canadensis*)

**GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*)

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

**CINNAMON TEAL** (*Anas cyanoptera*)

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*)

**NORTHERN PINTAIL** (*Anas acuta*)

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN)** (*Anas crecca carolinensis*)

**HARLEQUIN DUCK** (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) – The long staying bird at Coyote Point was still present.

**SURF SCOTER** (*Melanitta perspicillata*)

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** (*Mergus serrator*)

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

### Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

**MOUNTAIN QUAIL** (*Oreortyx pictus*) – Rather squirrely this year. Most were heard and flushed, though we did have a covey at the side of the road for a minute.

**CALIFORNIA QUAIL** (*Callipepla californica*)

### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**GREATER SAGE-GROUSE** (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) – Yay! We connected with about seven in the sagebrush at Bodie. The setting, the hunt, the reward led to this being voted the most popular species on the trip.

### Gaviidae (Loons)

**RED-THROATED LOON** (*Gavia stellata*) – A few along the coast, some still in breeding plumage.

**PACIFIC LOON** (*Gavia pacifica*) – Small numbers along the coast, all in winter plumage.

### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

**WESTERN GREBE** (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)

**CLARK'S GREBE** (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) – Well seen at Coyote Point.

### Diomedidae (Albatrosses)

**BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS** (*Phoebastria nigripes*) – Some great views of this species on the pelagic trip. I estimated about seven in total.

### Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

**NORTHERN FULMAR** (*Fulmarus glacialis*) – Two different birds came by to investigate the boat.

**PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus creatopus*)

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus griseus*) – No one will ever forget the spectacle of thousands of these just off the beach at Half Moon Bay. Hard to estimate numbers that great!

### Hydrobatidae (Storm-Petrels)

**FORK-TAILED STORM-PETREL** (*Oceanodroma furcata*) – A single bird put in an appearance on the boat trip.

**ASHY STORM-PETREL** (*Oceanodroma homochroa*) – Small numbers seen but hard to follow with the swell.

**BLACK STORM-PETREL** (*Oceanodroma melania*) – One bird came pretty close and was well seen by many.

### Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

**BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY** (*Sula nebouxii*) – Getting out to the Farallons gave us the opportunity to see some rare sulids, including this lone Blue-footed.

**BROWN BOOBY (BREWSTER'S)** (*Sula leucogaster brewsteri*) – An amazing thirteen were hanging out at the Farallons.

**NORTHERN GANNET** (*Morus bassanus*) – Perhaps the most remarkable bird seen on the trip. A lone Northern Gannet made its way to the Pacific Ocean where it was discovered circling the Farallons on April 25, 2012. It only occasionally wanders from there, as it did when we spotted it leaving Pillar Point Harbor. This is the first record of this species from the Pacific!

### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**BRANDT'S CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*)  
**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)  
**PELAGIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*)

*Pelecanidae (Pelicans)*

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – A huge number (600+) of these were present in Alviso.  
**BROWN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

*Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)*

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*)  
**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*)  
**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*)  
**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

*Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)*

**WHITE-FACED IBIS** (*Plegadis chihi*)

*Cathartidae (New World Vultures)*

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*)

*Pandionidae (Osprey)*

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Nesting at the tufa formations at Mono Lake. One seen foraging at Clarks Fork Road.

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**WHITE-TAILED KITE** (*Elanus leucurus*) – Well seen right at Bayfront Park at the beginning of the trip.  
**GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – Really nice looks at a couple of these on Mines Road.  
**NORTHERN HARRIER** (*Circus cyaneus*)  
**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** (*Accipiter striatus*)  
**COOPER'S HAWK** (*Accipiter cooperii*)  
**BALD EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – One was out in the farm fields near Bridgeport.  
**RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (CALIFORNIA)** (*Buteo lineatus elegans*)  
**SWAINSON'S HAWK** (*Buteo swainsoni*) – A pair of dark morph birds were still hanging out near Bridgeport.  
**RED-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo jamaicensis*)  
**FERRUGINOUS HAWK** (*Buteo regalis*) – A young bird along the coast near Pescadero was a surprise, seemingly a couple of weeks early.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**RIDGWAY'S RAIL (SAN FRANCISCO BAY)** (*Rallus obsoletus obsoletus*) – Nancy spotted this one for us! A recent split from Clapper Rail.  
**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*)

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*)  
**AMERICAN AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra americana*)

*Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)*

**BLACK OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus bachmani*)

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** (*Pluvialis squatarola*)  
**SNOWY PLOVER** (*Charadrius nivosus*) – Nice looks at close to thirty along the beach in Half Moon Bay.  
**SEMPALMATED PLOVER** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – One was at Coyote Point and a small flock flew over us at Mono Lake.  
**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*)

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*)  
**WANDERING TATTLER** (*Tringa incana*) – Despite the crowd of weekend visitors and off-leash dogs, we managed to get great looks of at least four of these at Pillar Point Harbor. One was still largely in breeding plumage.  
**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – Including two at Bridgeport Reservoir.  
**WILLET (WESTERN)** (*Tringa semipalmata inornata*)  
**WHIMBREL (AMERICAN)** (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) – A small number were present at the Coyote Point mudflats.  
**LONG-BILLED CURLEW** (*Numenius americanus*)  
**MARbled GODWIT** (*Limosa fedoa*)  
**BLACK TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria melanocephala*) – Eleven was a good count for the Coyote Point mudflats, but the 45 seen at Pillar Point was impressive.  
**SURFBIRD** (*Calidris virgata*) – Two were at the Coyote Point mudflats and another dozen were at Pescadero Beach.  
**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*)  
**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*)  
**WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*)  
**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus griseus*)  
**LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)  
**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – At least 150 were at Alviso in the south bay. None were at Mono at this season.

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – Twenty something at Alviso as well as a lot from the boat.

**RED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) – A single bird seen on the boat trip.

*Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)*

**POMARINE JAEGER** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) – Poor views of this species on the boat trip.

**PARASITIC JAEGER** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) – The views from the boat were poor, but we had some great views the following day of jaegers chasing Elegant Terns right along the beaches at the coast.

*Alcidae (Auks, Murres, and Puffins)*

**COMMON MURRE** (*Uria aalge*) – Quite a few seen. Sad to see so many starving this year.

**PIGEON GUILLEMOT** (*Cepphus columba*) – One was hanging out at the harbor and another was out at the Farallons.

**MARbled MURRELET** (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) – Thanks to a hot tip we raced down to Poplar Beach and picked up some Marbled Murrelets just offshore.

**RHINOCEROS AUKLET** (*Cerorhinca monocerata*) – A few nice looks on the boat trip.

**TUFTED PUFFIN** (*Fratercula cirrhata*) – A couple of molting birds at the Farallons.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**HEERMANN'S GULL** (*Larus heermanni*) – Quite a few of these around Half Moon Bay. As Alvaro pointed out, none of these were juveniles, indicating a complete breeding failure this past year.

**MEW GULL (AMERICAN)** (*Larus canus brachyrhynchus*) – A fresh juvenile on a breakwater at the harbor was an early fall arrival.

**RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*)

**WESTERN GULL** (*Larus occidentalis*)

**CALIFORNIA GULL** (*Larus californicus*)

**GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL** (*Larus glaucescens*) – A lone bird on top of the breakwater.

**CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

**ARCTIC TERN** (*Sterna paradisaea*) – A few of these were seen on the boat trip.

**FORSTER'S TERN** (*Sterna forsteri*) – Wonderful to see the fresh juveniles at Radio Road on our first day.

**ELEGANT TERN** (*Thalasseus elegans*) – Bunches of these along the coast as is typical for late summer-early fall.

**BLACK SKIMMER** (*Rynchops niger*) – About 20 were at Radio Road.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) [H]

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) [H]

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaida macroura*)

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**GREATER ROADRUNNER** (*Geococcyx californianus*) – One in Del Puerto Canyon.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*) – Some nice scope views in Alviso.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**WHITE-THROATED SWIFT** (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Small numbers encountered in the Sierras starting with a few at Bear Valley Ski area.

*Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)*

**ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** (*Calypte anna*)

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) [\*]

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**ACORN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

**WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*) – A female was at Bear Valley and a handsome male at Owens River Road.

**RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus ruber*) – Several of these at the Calaveras Big Trees.

**NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER** (*Picoides nuttallii*) – Nice looks at Mines Road.

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides villosus*)

**WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides albolarvatus*) – Quite a few seen this year beginning at Calaveras Big Trees.

**NORTHERN FLICKER** (*Colaptes auratus*)

**PILEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – A nice pair at the Calaveras Big Trees.

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*)

**PRAIRIE FALCON** (*Falco mexicanus*) – A spectacular flight performance by one at the South Tufa at Mono Lake.

*Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)*

**WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus sordidulus*)

**BLACK PHOEBE** (*Sayornis nigricans*)

**SAY'S PHOEBE** (*Sayornis saya*)

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – A lingering bird at Mono Lake.

*Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)*



**CASSIN'S VIREO** (*Vireo cassinii*) – Seen at Clarks Fork Campground and a couple further east at the Owens River Road.

**HUTTON'S VIREO** (*Vireo huttoni*) – We eventually picked this up at the Purissima Redwoods.

**WARBLING VIREO** (*Vireo gilvus*)

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**PINYON JAY** (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*) – Quite a few of these were in the Jeffrey Pines south of Mono Lake. Their long spike-like bills allow them to pick out pine seeds from the cones.

**STELLER'S JAY** (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)

**WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (COASTAL)** (*Aphelocoma californica californica*)

**BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE** (*Pica hudsonia*)

**YELLOW-BILLED MAGPIE** (*Pica nuttalli*) – One of my absolute favorites. Seen along Mines Road. [E]

**CLARK'S NUTCRACKER** (*Nucifraga columbiana*) – Small numbers hanging out with the Pinyon Jays south of Mono Lake.

**AMERICAN CROW** (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*)

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**TREE SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – Some big flocks hanging out near Mono Lake.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*)

**CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

*Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE** (*Poecile gambeli*)

**CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE** (*Poecile rufescens*)

**OAK TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus inornatus*)

*Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)*

**BUSHTIT** (*Psaltriparus minimus*)

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta canadensis*) – These seemed to be in just about every flock we encountered in the mountains.

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST)** (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – The taxonomy of this group is a bit muddled but worth noting since their may be future splits resulting. There may be three cryptic species involved. Birds that we saw and heard in the Sierras and south of Mono Lake belong to the subspecies *tenuissima*, which is part of the *nelsoni* subspecies group. These have the stuttering call and are often called Rocky Mountain Nuthatch. The birds we saw along Mines Road belong to the subspecies *aculeata*, the Slender-billed Nuthatch. They have the harsh grrr call.

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (PACIFIC)** (*Sitta carolinensis aculeata*) – These were the birds seen along Mines Road. Also of note, when Grinnell & Miller wrote their epic *Distribution of the Birds of California* in 1944, this was the subspecies believed to occur throughout the Sierras.

More recent work has discovered that this form is only found in the lower foothills on the west slope. All others in the Sierras are interior birds.

**PYGMY NUTHATCH** (*Sitta pygmaea*)

*Certhiidae (Treecreepers)*

**BROWN CREEPER** (*Certhia americana*)

*Troglodytidae (Wrens)*

**ROCK WREN** (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – A couple of these out in the tufa at Mono Lake.

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*)

**PACIFIC WREN (SOUTHERN)** (*Troglodytes pacificus pacificus*) – Very plentiful at Calaveras Big Trees. So much so, we tripped the eBird filter.

**BEWICK'S WREN** (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

*Cinclidae (Dippers)*

**AMERICAN DIPPER** (*Cinclus mexicanus*) – Nice studies of two along Clarks Fork Creek.

*Regulidae (Kinglets)*

**GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus satrapa*) – A couple of these were in mixed flocks at Calaveras Big Trees.

*Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrentit, and Allies)*

**WRENTIT** (*Chamaea fasciata*) – We got our best looks at one in Del Puerto Canyon. Also seen on Mines Road and heard near the coast.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**WESTERN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia mexicana*)

**MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia currucoides*) – Some fun encounters with this colorful species at Bodie.

**TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** (*Myadestes townsendi*) – We came across a couple of these high up in the Sierras where there were some hanging out in the western junipers loaded with fruitlike "berrycones." Nice to hear them sing a bit too.

**AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*)

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**CALIFORNIA THRASHER** (*Toxostoma redivivum*) – Great to see two together along Mines Road at a scenic overlook.

**SAGE THRASHER** (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) – Several around the shore of Mono Lake going after the alkali flies, plus several more in the sagebrush at Bodie.

**NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Ptilionotidae (Silky-flycatchers)

**PHAINOPEPLA** (*Phainopepla nitens*) – We encountered small numbers of these along Mines Road.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*)

**NASHVILLE WARBLER (WESTERN)** (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla ridgwayi*)

**MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – We found one lingering at Calaveras Big Trees that showed pretty well in the end.

**COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*)

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*)

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S)** (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*)

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*)

**TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*)

**HERMIT WARBLER** (*Setophaga occidentalis*) – Four of these were seen along Clarks Fork Road. One of the birds (see photo) has some greenish tones to the back and some streaking along the flanks suggesting some hybridization with Townsend's.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*)

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

**GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – Plentiful on the east slope of the Sierras, especially around Mono Lake.

**SPOTTED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo maculatus*)

**CALIFORNIA TOWHEE** (*Melospiza crissalis*)

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*)

**BREWER'S SPARROW** (*Spizella breweri*)

**VESPER SPARROW** (*Pooecetes gramineus*)

**LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*)

**BELL'S SPARROW (BELL'S)** (*Artemisiospiza belli belli*) – After our first uncooperative bird, we came across a much more obliging one. Birds along Mines Road are the nominate subspecies, with dark heads, unstreaked backs, and bold, dark lateral throat stripes.

**SAGEBRUSH SPARROW** (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*) – After a great deal of searching around Mono Lake, we eventually connect with two of these. Much paler than the Bell's Sparrows seen earlier in the trip.

**SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Seeing the variation in plumage around the San Francisco Bay generated a bit of discussion about subspecies. Should the heavily streaked birds (subspecies *bryanti*) found in the salt marshes be considered part of the Belding's group?

**FOX SPARROW (THICK-BILLED)** (*Passerella iliaca megarhyncha*) – Tough to see well, but quite a few of these present on the west slope of the Sierras. This form has a distinctive high pitched call note.

**SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*)

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (NUTTALL'S)** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys nuttalli*) – Rather dingy looking resident birds around Half Moon Bay.

**DARK-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco hyemalis*)

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

**WESTERN Tanager** (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Most of the ones seen were part of the Bicolored Blackbird subspecies group, having big tomato red patches on the wings without much of a yellow border.

**TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius tricolor*) – We ran into a big flock of these at Pigeon Point. This species has declined dramatically in modern times.

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – Some nice views of this species at Mono Lake.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – We had one decent flock flying alongside the road in the Central Valley.

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*)

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

**HOUSE FINCH** (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

**CASSIN'S FINCH** (*Haemorhous cassinii*)

**PINE SISKIN** (*Spinus pinus*)

**LESSER GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus psaltria*)

**LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus lawrencei*) – We did connect with a small group of these along Del Puerto Canyon Road.

**AMERICAN GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus tristis*) – A couple of flyovers along the coast in Half Moon Bay.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) [II]

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## MAMMALS

**BRUSH RABBIT** (*Sylvilagus bachmani*) – Seen in Half Moon Bay.

**NUTTALL'S (MOUNTAIN) COTTONTAIL** (*Sylvilagus nuttalli*) – The cute little guys at the South Tufa site.

**BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT** (*Lepus californicus*) – Spooked a few of these in the sagebrush at Bodie.

**LEAST CHIPMUNK** (*Tamias minimus*) – Lots of these in the sagebrush.

**LONG-EARED CHIPMUNK** (*Tamias quadrimaculatus*) – The common chipmunk at Calaveras Big Trees.  
**YELLOW-BELLIED MARMOT** (*Marmota flaviventris*)  
**CALIFORNIA GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus beecheyi*)  
**GOLDEN-MANTLED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus lateralis*) – One at Clarks Fork CG.  
**EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – In the urban bay area.  
**WESTERN GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus griseus*) – Several seen. This species has declined in recent years.  
**CHICKAREE** (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*) – Some have lumped this species with Red Squirrel resulting in Pine Squirrel.  
**HARBOR PORPOISE** (*Phocoena phocoena*) – A few quick looks while on the boat and seawatching the next day.  
**HUMPBACK WHALE** (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) – Seen while seawatching.  
**LONG-TAILED WEASEL** (*Mustela frenata*) – A great encounter with one at Poplar Beach.  
**CALIFORNIA SEA LION** (*Zalophus californianus*)  
**STELLER'S SEA LION** (*Eumetopias jubatus*)  
**NORTHERN FUR SEAL** (*Callorhinus ursinus*)  
**HARBOR SEAL** (*Phoca vitulina*)  
**MULE DEER** (*Odocoileus hemionus*) – Not seen well, but those along Mines Road were Blacktail Deer.

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## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

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**Totals for the tour: 197 bird taxa and 19 mammal taxa**