



Field Guides Tour Report

Slice of California: Seabirds to Sierra I 2016

Sep 8, 2016 to Sep 17, 2016

Chris Benesh

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



Early morning at the Mono Lake shoreline. (Photo by participant Peter Heilbronner)

This tour got off to a good start with our first day spent birding at various sites around San Francisco Bay. We started near the airport with a terrific Ridgway's Rail that Barb spotted for us, along with a bunch of other shorebirds to pick through. We then headed to Coyote Point where we enjoyed a few passerines and a few Clark's Grebes. Radio Road had bunches of dabbling ducks and some families of Black Skimmers. We then headed down to the Don Edwards NWR where we had flocks of shorebirds, a pesky Peregrine, and two species of Empidonax.

Our second day was along the wild and scenic Mines Road and Del Puerto Canyons. Here we saw many targets including Lawrence's Goldfinches, Lewis's Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Magpie, Phainopepla, California Thrasher, Wrentit, Bell's Sparrow and more... Then it was off to Sonora for the afternoon.

Our third morning began with a short stop at the Parrotts Ferry Bridge where we saw White-throated Swifts zooming around overhead. Then it was on to Calaveras Big Trees State Park where we spent the morning walking around the North Grove. The scenery was splendid though the birding was a bit slower than normal. We saw some fabulous Pacific Wrens, a few mixed flocks, a big Pileated Woodpecker and, finally, two pairs of White-headed Woodpeckers interacting with each other. From there it was on to the high country in the afternoon. We had a nice mixed flock at Big Meadow Campground, with Cassin's Vireo and Orange-crowned, Nashville, Black-throated Gray, and Audubon's warblers in the mix. We checked Lake Alpine, which had some Common Mergansers, and the Bear Valley Ski Area, which added a few things including a nice pair of Townsend's Solitaires. Then it was back to Sonora with a roadside stop for sapsuckers -- at least three Red-breasted and a pair of Williamson's!

On the fourth morning we headed east across Sonora Pass with several stops along the way. A frustratingly brief encounter with Mountain Quail was followed by a nice White-headed Woodpecker and a few mixed flocks. We then headed to Bridgeport Reservoir where we viewed a nice assortment of birds. From there we headed to Mono Lake, with a visit to the interpretive center and the western shore.

The next day began with a cold front passing through. We visited the South Tufa and watched the sun break clear of the clouds. There were a few sparrows around, and we eventually got on to a Sagebrush Sparrow and Brewer's Sparrow. After breakfast we headed out toward the Jeffery Pine forest south of the lake. Almost immediately we came across a big flock of Pinyon Jays just south of Lee Vining. There were more in the Jeffrey Pines, along with some Clark's Nutcrackers. We continued south to the Owens River Road burn in search of woodpeckers. Some nice Mountain Bluebirds and the interior form of White-breasted Nuthatch were highlights. After lunch and a torrential downpour, we drove to Bodie, encountering a huge flock of Greater Sage-Grouse before reaching the parking lot. We had a nice tour with Catherine Jones and saw a few more species around the town. But it was

the grouse encounter on the way out that was most memorable. We watched as a number of grouse came in to eat dirt and grit from some bare earth that appeared to be well worked over, perhaps a traditional grit-eating site.

We spent the sixth morning searching again for Mountain Quail near Lee Vining. We failed in that effort, but we did manage to find a couple of Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays, making this one of the rare tours to combine seeing California and Woodhouse's. Then it was off again, making our way back toward the coast. Near Bridgeport, we found a nice Prairie Falcon and minutes later a juvenile Ferruginous Hawk being harassed by a Raven. There were plenty of Red-tailed Hawks along the way. Near Tracy we had an adult Swainson's Hawk fly across the highway in front of us. Then we were off to Half Moon Bay for the night to prepare for the next morning's pelagic trip.

The pelagic trip was a great success with a nice variety of species. We had lots of Pink-footed and Sooty shearwaters, and a couple of Black-vented and Buller's thrown in. We had lots of albatrosses, three jaegers plus South Polar Skua, and a bunch of Sabine's Gulls. Storm-petrels caused some excitement. In addition to Ashy, we had a huge concentration of Wilson's Storm-Petrels and a mystery bird that may prove to be a tattered Leach's Storm-Petrel.

Our final day we spent on the coast enjoying a few more migrants, a vagrant White-winged Dove, and nice things like Tricolored Blackbird and Snowy Plover. We headed north through San Francisco in the afternoon to spend our last evening together enjoying the spectacle of seventeen thousand Vaux's Swifts coming to roost in San Rafael. What a sight!

Thanks to all of you for making the trip a great success and a treat to guide. I hope to see all of you in the field again in the future. Until then, good birding!

--Chris

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

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – Small flocks at Coyote Point and in the Central Valley.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*)

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – A few females at Radio Road.

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

SURF SCOTER (*Melanitta perspicillata*) – A small raft of these in the harbor at Coyote Point. More rafting off the beach in Half Moon Bay.

COMMON MERGANSER (*Mergus merganser*) – A raft of fourteen were at Lake Alpine.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

MOUNTAIN QUAIL (*Oreortyx pictus*) – Seen by just Howard and Don, we jumped the group at Donnell Vista while we were still in the van.

CALIFORNIA QUAIL (*Callipepla californica*) – Quite a few along Mines Road.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

GREATER SAGE-GROUSE (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) – Some terrific views of this species at Bodie, coming into view even before we arrived at the parking lot. On our way out of Bodie, we came across birds getting grit at an apparent long used site.

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – A small group of these was well seen along Mines Road.

Gaviidae (Loons)

RED-THROATED LOON (*Gavia stellata*)

PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia pacifica*)

COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer*)

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) – Quite a few of these along the coast.

CLARK'S GREBE (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) – Several seen from Coyote Point.

Diomedidae (Albatrosses)

BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS (*Phoebastria nigripes*) – I estimated about forty of these seen on the boat trip. It was interesting to see one allopreeing a neighboring bird at one point.

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

NORTHERN FULMAR (*Fulmarus glacialis*) – Three seen including one that came right alongside the boat.

PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATER (*Ardenna creatopus*)

BULLER'S SHEARWATER (*Ardenna bulleri*) – We were fortunate to see an individual of this elegant species.

SOOTY SHEARWATER (*Ardenna grisea*)

BLACK-VENTED SHEARWATER (*Puffinus opisthomelas*) – We managed quick views of two birds.

Hydrobatidae (Storm-Petrels)

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanites oceanicus*) – Impressive was the slick that held up to forty birds, one of the highest counts of this species in the northeastern Pacific.

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) – We chased around this battered bird for some time, trying to work out whether it might belong to one of the newly described species (Townsend's perhaps), but there were problems with that conclusion, and the best explanation for its odd dipping/fluttery behavior may have simply been the poor, damaged condition of its wings and tail.

ASHY STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma homochroa*) – Some nice looks at this regional endemic.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

NORTHERN GANNET (*Morus bassanus*) – This stakeout bird was seen near Maverick's. This is the first individual of this species known to have made it to the Pacific ocean.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

BRANDT'S CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*)

PELAGIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*)

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*)

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – One of the very first birds of the trip at Bayfront Park.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – About twenty or so at Bridgeport Reservoir, including one quite close bird.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – The most memorable ones were those seen on the last evening in San Rafael.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*)

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – An immature bird zoomed past us at Calaveras Big Trees.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (ELEGANS) (*Buteo lineatus elegans*)

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – One seen flying over the highway as we were traveling through Tracy.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (*Buteo regalis*) – One was seen near Bridgeport on our second trip through.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

RIDGWAY'S RAIL (SAN FRANCISCO BAY) (*Rallus obsoletus obsoletus*) – Great looks at this species at Bayfront Park. Barb spotted the first of ours.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – One was briefly seen swimming in a canal in Alviso.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*)

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

BLACK OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus bachmani*) – We had a total of eight at Pillar Point.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Quite a few of these were along the mudflats at Bayfront Park.

SNOWY PLOVER (*Charadrius nivosus*) – We had a nice flock of these in Half Moon Bay.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

WHIMBREL (HUDSONIAN) (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) – A few seen at Bayfront Park on the first morning.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*)

MARbled GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*)

BLACK TURNSTONE (*Arenaria melanocephala*) – Some terrific looks at at least fifteen birds at Pillar Point.

SURFBIRD (*Calidris virgata*) – There was a flock of about ten birds on the breakwater as we were leaving the harbor on the pelagic trip.

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*)

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*)

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*)

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*) – Great studies of this species in the next at Bayfront Park and Radio Road ponds.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – More than a thousand were near Alviso. More were offshore on the pelagic trip.

RED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) – A small number of these were seen on the pelagic trip.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – One seen on the first day of the tour.

WANDERING TATTLER (*Tringa incana*) – We did manage to see one from the boat on our pelagic. Those normally at Pillar Point were absent due to tide and/or off-leash dogs.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

WILLET (WESTERN) (*Tringa semipalmata inornata*)

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – A single bird was hanging out with a Greater at Don Edwards NWR.

Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)

SOUTH POLAR SKUA (*Stercorarius maccormicki*) – Good views of one offshore which at one point got chased a short distance by a Pink-footed Shearwater. Another or the same seen later.

POMARINE JAEGER (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) – A total of about five seen.

PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) – A couple seen from the boat and another seen from shore the following day.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) – We had a lone bird on the pelagic trip.

Alcidae (Auks, Murres, and Puffins)

COMMON MURRE (*Uria aalge*)

PIGEON GUILLEMOT (*Cephus columba*) – There was one juvenile bird hanging out in the Princeton Harbor.

CASSIN'S AUKLET (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*) – A few good looks. This species can be very difficult to see well at sea.

RHINOCEROS AUKLET (*Cerorhinca monocerata*) – A handful of these seen.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

SABINE'S GULL (*Xema sabini*) – It was an excellent day for these with about twenty seen on the boat trip.

BONAPARTE'S GULL (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) – There was a bird hanging out on the beach near the Snowy Plovers.

HEERMANN'S GULL (*Larus heermanni*)

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*)

WESTERN GULL (*Larus occidentalis*)

CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*)

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL (*Larus glaucescens*) – A single near adult bird was at Radio Road.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – We had three singles on the tour.

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*)

ELEGANT TERN (*Thalasseus elegans*) – Quite a few of these along the coast, best seen on our boat trip right in the harbor.

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rynchops niger*) – Great views of this species at Radio Road. Fresh juvenile birds indicated local breeding.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – A good sized flock was in the big trees at Coyote Point.

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

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – One hanging out at feeders next to the Fitzgerald Marine Sanctuary was quite a surprise, as this species is rare along the coast in northern California.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

Strigidae (Owls)

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – Several of these were hanging out at a traditional spot in Alviso.

Apodidae (Swifts)

VAUX'S SWIFT (*Chaetura vauxi*) – In what has to be one of the most amazing wildlife spectacles in North America, we witnessed over 17,000 coming to roost in chimneys at the McNear Brickyard in San Rafael.

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Seen flying over the Parrott's Ferry bridge.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*)

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megasceryle alcyon*)

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

LEWIS'S WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes lewis*) – We were fortunate to find three of these along Mines Road where one seemed to hanging out near a nest hole.

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*) – Nice look at a pair of birds on our drive back to Sonora on Hwy 4.
RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus ruber*) – At least four seen along Hwy 4.
NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER (*Picoides nuttallii*) – A couple of nice looks along Mines Road.
DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Picoides pubescens*)
HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*)
WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Picoides albolarvatus*) – After hearing several, we connected with this species at Calaveras Bird Trees when two pairs of birds flew in and interacted with one another. A few more seen elsewhere in the Sierras.
NORTHERN FLICKER (*Colaptes auratus*)
PILEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – We saw one fly in to a big conifer at Calaveras Big Trees.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)
PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – Memorable was the huge immature female harassing waterbirds at Don Edwards NWR.
PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*) – We finally connected with this species near Bridgeport.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*)
WILLOW FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax traillii*) – Marie spotted this scarce migrant at the headquarters building at Don Edwards NWR.
PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax difficilis*) – Also seen at Don Edwards, first spotted by Peter.
BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*)
SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – A couple seen in the drier section of Del Puerto Canyon.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Seen in Alviso and again in Del Puerto Canyon.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – Nice views of this species along Mines Road.
CASSIN'S VIREO (*Vireo cassinii*) – A couple of birds seen in the Sierras.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

PINYON JAY (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*) – We had a big flock soon after leaving Lee Vining for Mono Lake, and more later in the Jeffrey Pine forests south of there. About 100 seen in total.
STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)
CALIFORNIA SCRUB-JAY (*Aphelocoma californica*) – Newly split, we had a number of these along the coast and Mines Road.
WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*) – We were able to track down a couple of these just southwest of Lee Vining. Slimmer billed, and with less distinct blue color and facial markings.
BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE (*Pica hudsonia*)
YELLOW-BILLED MAGPIE (*Pica nuttalli*) – Some nice studies of this species along Mines Road. Endemic to California. [E]
CLARK'S NUTCRACKER (*Nucifraga columbiana*)
AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)
COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*)
BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE (*Poecile gambeli*)
CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE (*Poecile rufescens*)
OAK TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus inornatus*) – Mines Road was the place to see this species really well.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (*Psaltriparus minimus*)

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*)
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis tenuissima*) – Note that we saw two distinct forms of this complex on the tour, which have been proposed as being full species recently. There has been an expansion of this interior form in the Sierra in recent years, and even birds at Donnell Vista matched this call type.
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (PACIFIC) (*Sitta carolinensis aculeata*) – A few of this distinctive form along Mines Road.
PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*)

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) [*]
PACIFIC WREN (PACIFICUS GROUP) (*Troglodytes pacificus pacificus*) – Well seen in the giant sequoia forest of Calaveras Big Trees.
BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

Cinclidae (Dippers)

AMERICAN DIPPER (*Cinclus mexicanus*) – Nice looks at a couple of these along the Clark Fork.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus satrapa*) – Best seen at Calaveras Big Trees.

Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrentit, and Allies)

WRENTIT (*Chamaea fasciata*) – We had several in the Chaparral along Mines Road.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – At Coyote Point and along Mines Road.

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia currucoides*) – Seen around Mono Lake and Bodie.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes townsendi*) – Seen in the high Sierra along Highway 4.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CALIFORNIA THRASHER (*Toxostoma redivivum*) – A few nice scope views of singing birds along Mines Road.

SAGE THRASHER (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) – Feeding along the shoreline at Mono Lake.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) – Remarkable was one seen flying around our boat many miles offshore west of Half Moon Bay.

Ptiliogonatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – A single female in Del Puerto Canyon.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*)

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

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*)

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – It is worth paying attention to the various forms of this complex as they are ripe to be split again in the near future.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – We did see one of these in the Sierra along Highway 4.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*)

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*)

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*)

BREWER'S SPARROW (*Spizella breweri*) – We did manage to squeak out one of these near Mono Lake.

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*) – Quite a few of these along Mines Road.

FOX SPARROW (SOOTY) (*Passerella iliaca fuliginosa*) – One along the coast at the Fitzgerald Marine Sanctuary had just arrived for the winter.

FOX SPARROW (THICK-BILLED) (*Passerella iliaca megarhyncha*) – Tough to see this time around, though we did manage looks at one.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (*Junco hyemalis*)

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (ORIANTHA) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*)

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (NUTTALLI) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys nuttalli*) – Our best looks at White-crowns were those along the coast.

SAGEBRUSH SPARROW (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*) – Another one that took some time to track down. We managed one perched up near Mono Lake.

BELL'S SPARROW (BELLI) (*Artemisiospiza belli belli*) – With a bit of work we had decent views of a couple of birds in the Chaparral along Mines Road.

VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*)

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – We had some really streaky birds at Don Edwards NWR.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*)

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*)

CALIFORNIA TOWHEE (*Melospiza crissalis*)

RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – A couple of these were at the water hole along Mines Road.

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – Particularly evident east of the Sierra.

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*)

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

WESTERN Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – A small number of these were in the trees at Coyote Point.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Including a number of "Bicolored" Blackbirds, those lacking yellow in their epaulets.

TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius tricolor*) – We managed to track down some on our last day along the coast north of Pigeon Point. Though there was a fair number of them, the lighting made getting good studies more difficult.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) – Plentiful.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

PURPLE FINCH (WESTERN) (*Haemorhous purpureus californicus*) – A couple of streaky birds were seen along Mines Road at the water hole.

CASSIN'S FINCH (*Haemorhous cassinii*) – Not a lot around, we did get views of a couple.

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*)

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*)

LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH (*Spinus lawrencei*) – Quite a few of these were at the water hole along Mines Road. Many appeared to be younger males molting into their black-faced look.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*) – Along the coast near Half Moon Bay.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [H]

MAMMALS

NUTTALL'S (MOUNTAIN) COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus nuttalli*) – Best views were those at Mono Lake.

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*)

LEAST CHIPMUNK (*Tamias minimus*)

LONG-EARED CHIPMUNK (*Tamias quadrimaculatus*)

CALIFORNIA GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus beecheyi*) – Abundant near the coast, but quite widespread.

GOLDEN-MANTLED GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus lateralis*) – Looking a bit like a large chipmunk, but lacking a stripe along the cheeks.

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – Well established in well wooded towns. [H]

CHICKAREE (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*)

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*) – Seen just off the beach in Half Moon Bay.

PACIFIC WHITE-SIDED DOLPHIN (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*) – An amazing show of these on our boat trip. Dozens to hundreds.

NORTHERN RIGHT WHALE DOLPHIN (*Lissodelphis borealis*) – A fair number of these marvelous stealth dolphins mixed in with the PWSD. Lacking a dorsal fin and being mostly black, they look like sleek torpedos jumping through the water.

HARBOR PORPOISE (*Phocoena phocoena*)

DALL'S PORPOISE (*Phocoenoides dalli*) – We had some of these bow-riding on our boat trip.

BLUE WHALE (*Balaenoptera musculus*) – We were even lucky to encounter one of these spectacular creatures, being the largest animal on Earth.

HUMPBACK WHALE (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – A pair of these were seen near Bridgeport.

CALIFORNIA SEA LION (*Zalophus californianus*)

HARBOR SEAL (*Phoca vitulina*)

MULE DEER (*Odocoileus hemionus*) – Black-tailed form along Mines Road. Mule Deer once we went inland.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 204 bird taxa and 20 mammal taxa