

Some Southern California sites

I really appreciate the great information I have received on this site. I don't have the same level of knowledge that most of you do but I wanted to contribute some information of some interesting spottings etc. that maybe could be useful to someone. I think a lot of these will be especially useful if you are in the "area" but may not be worth a long trip for many.

Point Vicente- Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

This is best place in the area that I know about to see migrating gray whales from land. March and April are excellent times to come. It's also pretty common to see common dolphins, harbor seals, California sea lions, and sometimes blue whales in the summer and bottlenose dolphins. You can view from the bluffs or there are some informal trails to get down to the coast (which has passable tidepools and low tide).



I have also found it to be a decent botta's pocket gopher site after late winter/spring rains. If you are into other kinds of wildlife, there have been resident peregrine falcons on the cliffs consistently for the last few years and sometimes stripe tailed scorpions can be found on top of the bluffs under rocks. Sometimes barn owls can be found in the Indian fan palms near the visitor center.



Point Fermin- San Pedro, California

Every year around late May/June, Red foxes mate and bring up a litter right by the lighthouse near the cliff. If you get there shortly after dawn during this time of year you can get some really good views.



You can also see some whales from afar and there is usually a small colony of harbor seals on the rocks below the bluffs. Sometimes in the spring you can find raccoons in the trees near the lighthouse during the daytime. There are also peregrine falcons and sometimes roosting great horned owls in the summer.



Wind Wolves Preserve near Maricopa, CA

This is a very pretty site to visit that makes a good compliment to going to Carrizo Plain. Elk are possible especially during rut and I found this to be one of the best places for bobcat if you don't live near Pinnacles or Point Reyes. I don't know if it is still there but there was a bobcat living near the visitor center that came out during the day often. I have also seen them in various places throughout the canyon, especially early mornings in the summer.





Mule Deer and Coyotes are plentiful here and I have seen numerous Heermans Kangaroo Rats and mice on night drives along the Wind Wolves access road.



Rangers told me they have trapped endangered Buena vista shrews their also. I am also told occasional black bears come to feed on the hillsides during the fall.

Gabrielino Trail/Arroyo Seco(trail starts near Jet Propulsion lab in Pasadena)-Angeles National Forest.

Okay so I don't know how consistent a site this would be but based on some random good luck during the day, maybe this would be a good place to spotlight on foot at night? In a few random short daytime visits I have found black bear, gray fox, mule deer, California ground squirrel, and one time a Dusky-footed woodrat during broad daylight!! It has a year round stream

that also attracts newts, treefrogs, aquatic snakes, and lots of pretty birds like orioles, tanagers, grosbeaks, and warblers.



Redbox parking lot in the Angeles forest on highway 2

I don't have the equipment or skills to identify them but this is a good place to see bats on the wing about 45 minutes before the sun sets(it's also a good sunset spot). Entering from the LA area, it is about 15 miles up the Angeles Crest highway.



Eagle lake hike at Mineral King, Sequoia National park

This is a great place for Pikas! So this is not an easy hike but if you are in decent condition its really worth it! About 3 miles in or a half mile from Eagle lake on the Eagle lake trail is a great spot for Pikas. I have generally gone in early July when it is supposed to be safe from Marmots destroying your car at the parking area. When I went last year I found the area where you first run across talus slopes to be a an excellent place to see many pikas, often right from the trail! I sat on a rock for about an hour and saw about 10-15 different pikas, some with some interesting darker coloration.





That trail is also great for Marmots(especially near the lake), douglas squirrel, golden mantled ground squirrel, mule deer, lodgepole chipmunks, and possibly another kind of chipmunk or two. Your supposed to be able to see bears sometimes too and I wonder if it could be a spot to find the occasional martens hunting for pikas and wood rats?



Odds and Ends

Lake Casitas- just one interesting mammal sighting here. I went here to find the nesting bald eagles which were easy to find. After I did that I took a hike around most of the lake into hilly, oaky areas. Under some damp logs I found this California Vole.



It's the only time I have seen a vole, it was really cool to get a look in the daylight too, it didn't stay unhidden for long but I did get a few seconds where it hid in plainish sight before losing me for good.

Palm to Pines scenic drive from Palm Springs to Idyllwild

This is supposed to be a good drive to see Bighorn sheep, I didn't see any but I did find what seemed like it could be a consistent White-tailed Antelope Squirrel site at the Cahuilla Tewanet overlook. After just walking down a little bit from the parking lot I found the most and tamest antelope squirrels I have ever seen. For the first time I got to see where some of them lived. They lived in this awesome Cacti fortress. I usually have trouble getting so many good pics of them but watching their fortress patiently resulted in lots of good views of babies and adults.



I hope some of this information can help in some way. I really wanted to contribute some useful info to the great people on this site.

Gary Skipper