

Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: Bobcats, Bears, Seabirds & Yosemite! Monday 12th - Thursday 22nd September 2016

Tour Participants: Michael Wilding, Doug Yelland, Sue Healey, Helen Booker, Andy Walters, Michelle Bruus, Mike Thompson and Susie Pearson

Leaders: Chris Townend & local guides Nancy Black, Brent Paull & Michael Ross

HIGHLIGHTS OF TRIP

Bobcat: We had to work for it, but eventually everyone enjoyed great scope views of a young Bobcat hunting rabbits on the Old Hernandez Road, San Benito County.

California Condor: Great views of two adults and an immature on the Big Sur Coast.

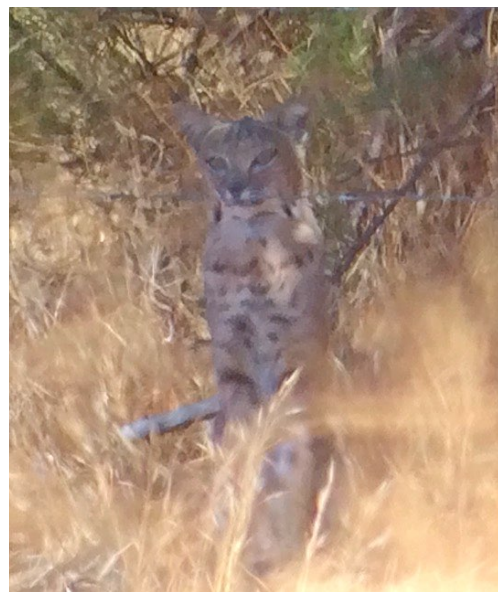
Black Bear: After missing out in Sequoia NP, we were treated to very close views in Yosemite NP as an animal strolled across the road in front of us and into the forest.

Black-footed Albatross: Many wonderful encounters with this majestic bird during our two boat trips in Monterey Bay whilst searching for all marine life.

Humpback Whale: An excellent year for this species in Monterey Bay with around 20+ animals seen during each boat trip including the odd breaching animal!

Baird's Beaked Whale: We were very lucky to encounter at least three animals blowing at the surface close to our boat for a couple of minutes in Monterey Bay.

Scenery: Northern California is a very scenic part of the United States with stunning coastline, amazing forests and spectacular mountains and arid grasslands.



Two of the tour highlights were this California Condor and a young Bobcat.

*This tour focused on all wildlife, mostly birds but with a particular focus on finding some key mammals as well as some impressive reptiles. We recorded **174 birds and 30 mammals** as well as some impressive reptiles. Below is a brief summary of just some of the daily highlights.*

Monday 12th September

San Francisco to Monterey via Palo Alto Baylands

Everyone arrived into San Francisco airport to blue skies and sunshine, so typical of the state of California! Before too long, all the luggage was packed into our two very comfortable vehicles and we travelled a short distance south to the well known birding spot of the Palo Alto Baylands Reserve. This great reserve is the largest tract of undisturbed marshland remaining in the San Francisco Bay area and is an important refuge for migratory shorebirds. Highlights here included very close views of numerous American Avocets, Long-billed Dowitchers, Willet, Killdeer, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-billed Curlew as well as Violet-green Swallows, Cliff Swallow Savannah Sparrow, Common (Green-winged) Teal and Black-crowned Night Heron. We then travelled to our apartments in Pacific Grove near Monterey where we were based for the next four nights.

Tuesday 13th September

Monterey Bay boat trip & Big Sur Coast

This morning we took the short drive to Fisherman's Wharf and boarded our boat to explore Monterey Bay's marine life! A Belted Kingfisher and our first California Sea Lions and Sea Otters entertained us before heading out to sea. We spent the whole morning at sea and although the conditions were a little lumpy we still managed to see some great wildlife, in particular numerous Whales and Dolphins. Highlight included 20+ Humpback Whales, 40+ Short-beak Dolphins as well as smaller numbers of Risso's Dolphins, Pacific White-sided Dolphins and a quite unexpected Northern Elephant Seal. Of course, there were many bird highlights too which included great views of Black-footed Albatross, Red-necked Phalarope and Grey Phalarope, Arctic Skua and Pomarine Skua, Elegant Tern, Rhinoceros Auklet, Pink-footed Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater and Black-vented Shearwater to name just a few!

During the afternoon we headed south along the famous Highway One where the coastline scenery was spectacular. Our main target was the critically endangered California Condor which often patrol the coastal hills. We were not to be disappointed and were treated to superb views of three birds including two adults. Other highlights included two adult Golden Eagles, Osprey, White-throated Swift and Vaux's Swifts. We also scoped a small group of Humpback Whales on the sea way below us! A short walk in some nearby forest produced species such as Pacific Slope Flycatcher, the distinctive Oregon race of Dark-eyed Junco and Townsend's Warbler before we headed back to enjoy an evening whilst the sun set behind us.

Wednesday 14th September

Moss Landing, Moonglow Dairy, Elkhorn Slough & Asilomar State Marine Reserve

Today we headed north along the coast to the well visited birding area of Moss Landing. Here we were immediately distracted by the numerous Sea Otters as adults and youngsters interacted just metres away from us. The birding here was first class too with great views of waders including Marbled Godwit, Long-billed Curlew, Willet and Spotted Sandpiper. A lone Caspian Tern, numerous Double-crested Cormorants,

Brown Pelicans, White-crowned Sparrow and a male House Finch were also welcome additions to the list. A walk on the beach produced the hoped for Snowy Plovers and a stunning drake Surf Scoter close inshore. A short drive to the birder friendly Moonglow Dairy soon produced a good selection of birds with numerous Red-winged Blackbirds including the striking "bicoloured form" and with patience the range restricted Tricoloured Blackbird. Other highlights around the farm and adjacent wetland were Cooper's Hawk, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Bewick's Wren and both Western Grebe and Clark's Grebe sat side by side.

During the afternoon we visited the nearby Elkhorn Slough Reserve where Wrentit, White-tailed Kite and Lesser Goldfinch were some of the bird highlights whilst Michael enjoyed views of Botta's Pocket Gopher and the rest of the group had a superb encounter with a sunbathing Gopher Snake. During the evening we explored the Asilomar State Marine Reserve near our hotel where Black Turnstone, Western and Heerman's Gulls were some of the highlights and Doug did well to find our only Blackish (Black) Oystercatcher of the trip.

Thursday 15th September

All day pelagic Monterey Bay

Today half of the group ventured out to sea again for an all day pelagic whilst the others remained on dry land and visited the world renowned Monterey Bay Aquarium. On the boat things began well with good views of a Surfbird amongst the numerous Brandt's Cormorants and California Sea Lions loafing on the rocks as we left Fisherman's Wharf. At sea there were many highlights including the amazing spectacle of a feeding flock no less than 20,000 Sooty Shearwaters! Birding excitement continued with two Ashy Storm Petrels, three Buller's Shearwaters, Pink-footed Shearwater, Black-vented Shearwater, 6+ Black-footed Albatross, 8+ Rhinoceros Auklet as well as numerous Red-necked Phalaropes, Elegant Tern and both Arctic and Pomarine Skuas. Of course, the marine mammals were equally exciting with the clear highlight being a group of at least three Baird's Beaked Whales blowing at the surface close to our boat. It is a very rare and seldom seen species and the world's largest Beaked Whale. Other distractions included numerous Humpback Whales, Pacific White-sided Dolphin and a lone Steller's Sea Lion sleeping on a buoy.

Friday 16th September

Monterey to Hanford via Pinnacles National Park

After four nights in Monterey, it was time to head inland as we headed towards the Pinnacles National Park. On arrival at the the park we spent a couple of hours exploring the park before it became too hot. Highlights during the morning included great views of the the often tricky Lawrence's Goldfinch, California Quail, Wild Turkey, Warbling Vireo, Acorn Woodpecker, Western Tanager and a very obliging Red-shouldered Hawk. During the afternoon the temperature increased rapidly whilst a Canyon Wren sensibly searched for food around the shade of some stone buildings. We then continued our journey into the Panoche Valley. Highlights here included over 30 Yellow-billed Magpies, numerous Lark Sparrows as well as American Kestrel and Western Meadowlarks before we enjoyed an evening meal at the quirky Panoche Inn. After sunset we travelled across the arid grasslands and hills of this unique area and managed to find a Black-tailed Jack Rabbit before continuing our journey to Hanford.

Saturday 17th September

Old Hernandez Road and Pinnacles National Park

Today was Bobcat day and we spent the entire day from dawn until dusk with our local guide Brent, focusing our effort on trying to see this secretive cat. After much driving and checking suitable habitat we finally found a young Bobcat thanks to Andy and Sue's sharp eyes. It was late morning and the animal was quite relaxed by our presence as it sat in the shade of some nearby vegetation. We even managed to get out of our vehicles and obtain some great scope views as the animal hunted rabbits. Other highlights during the day included the first Coyote of the trip, great views of four Golden Eagles, Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Loggerhead Shrike and Wild Turkey.

Sunday 18th September

Sequoia National Park

Another day and another destination, this time the beautiful Sequoia National Park where we hoped to find another target mammal, the Black Bear. Once again we left our hotel early and were soon winding our way up to Sequoia NP to an altitude of around 2,000M. We spent the first part of the morning looking for Bears with no success though there were plenty of birds and other mammals to keep us occupied. Highlights here included a very obliging male Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Lincoln's Sparrow and a good selection of warblers with Yellow-rumped Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Wilson's Warbler and a single Hermit Warbler. Yellow-bellied Marmot's entertained us and posed for the camera along with our first sightings of Douglas's Squirrel and Lodgepole Chipmunk.

After lunch, some of the group visited the famous General Sherman Sequoia Tree, believed to be the largest living tree in the world. The rest of the group continued birding and still remained hopeful for a bear sighting. New birds included two showy White-headed Woodpeckers and an all too brief male Williamson's Sapsucker. However, it seemed any luck with Bears was not working in our favour, as we narrowly missed seeing two Bear Cubs watched by other tourists just a few minutes before our arrival! Despite this bad luck, it was a beautiful place and everyone enjoyed time to take in the scenery with an ever watchful eye for Bears before returning to our hotel.

Monday 19th September

Hanford to Yosemite National Park, Sentinel Dome & Bridalveil Meadow

After a slap-up American breakfast, we headed towards Yosemite National Park and the small village of Wawona in the southern part of the park. We arrived at our beautiful Victorian hotel shortly after lunch and checked in before meeting with our local guide Michael. Our introduction to Yosemite was certainly impressive as we took a walk to Sentinel Dome where the views across the park and towards Half Dome were simply stunning. The birding was good too, with the undoubted highlight being a group of six Sooty Grouse that wandered around at our feet! Other birds included Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch and the now very familiar Steller's Jay. A Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel was also a new mammal for the trip.

During the last hour of the day, we visited one of the small meadows in the Bridalveil Creek area in the hope of seeing one of Yosemite's most wanted birds, the Great Grey Owl. However, en route to the meadow a clear shout of "Bear!" from the back of Chris's vehicle soon had us pulling over to a convenient parking place! Thanks to the ever vigilant Michelle we were all soon watching a fabulous Black Bear as it

nontulantly wandered across the road and back into the forest. It was a great view and a very welcome one after our "near miss" in Sequoia. Despite the Bear excitement we still made it to the Bridalveil Creek meadow in good time. We sat in silence scanning the meadows as the sun was replaced by the moon but it seemed the Black Bear had been our good luck for the day and despite our best efforts we failed to find any Owls.

Tuesday 20th September

Yosemite NP: Crane Flat, Tuolumne Meadow, Tioga Pass & Mono Lake

Today we spent a full day exploring as much of Yosemite National Park and its surroundings as possible. We headed through the centre of the park visiting Crane Flat, Olmsted Point and through Tuolumne Meadow where we enjoyed a picnic lunch before heading over the Tioga Pass at around 3,000M and dropping down to Lee Vining and the vast Mono Lake.

It was a great day full of varied scenery and birds. Highlights included a Townsend's Solitaire singing on top of a pine near Olmsted Point, a group of 8+ Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Bluebird, Say's Phoebe, tiny Pacific Tree Frogs and no less than three Prairie Falcons including a low flying bird whilst having lunch at Tuolumne Meadow. Once down at Lee Vining we enjoyed coffee and cake with Lesser Goldfinches at the feeders and then we headed out to the Pinyon Pines where we enjoyed views of a number of Pinyon Jays and our only Least Chipmunk of the tour. We spent the last hour or two of daylight birding the western edge of Mono Lake where amongst other species Bonaparte's Gull, Northern Harrier and a superb summer plumaged adult Sabine's Gull were the best pick of the bunch. We then returned to Lee Vining for a wonderful evening meal and some of us enjoyed the most amazing Blueberry Pie with cream before we took the long drive back to our hotel in Wawona.

Wednesday 21st September

Yosemite NP: Upper Tamarac Creek & Wawona

We awoke to a rather grey, drizzly and quite chilly day, very different to all the previous days of blue skies and sunshine! Regardless of the weather we headed out to make the most of our last day and once again we met with Michael and explored a trail near Upper Tamarac Creek. Once we started walking the drizzle slowly eased and we enjoyed a number of good birds including a couple of specialities including MacGillivray's Warbler and Lewis's Woodpecker. Andy did very well to pick up an owl in flight that turned out to be a Great Horned Owl rather than the hoped for Great Grey Owl, but a great spot nonetheless. Other species included Slate-coloured Fox Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow and a calling Mountain Quail

A walk in some forest near Crane Flat later in the afternoon was somewhat hard work as the rain started again and a frustrating Williamson's Woodpecker and White-headed Woodpecker just did not want to show themselves properly! We arrived back at the hotel for late afternoon allowing time to pack and have some free time before enjoying our last evening meal together as a group.

Thursday 22nd September

Wawona to San Francisco Airport

For the keenest members of the group, it was an early start as we tried one last time for Great Grey Owl at another meadow often favoured as a hunting area. A close Coyote was a welcome distraction but once again, despite our best efforts the Great Grey Owl was clearly hunting elsewhere this morning!

After breakfast, we packed up and headed back to San Francisco airport. The journey was fairly uneventful except for a number of large feeding flocks of White-faced Ibis to the SW of Merced which was to be our final new species for the tour.

Conservation Donation – Following this tour to California £250 was transferred to the Wise Birding Holiday's central conservation fund. This will be used to support a conservation project in the future, yet to be determined.

For the last three years Wise Birding Holidays has been supporting a number of small conservation projects. However, we now believe that to make a bigger difference to conservation it seems better to pool the donations from most of our tours into one central fund. Once a target amount has been reached this money will then be used to support a single project in the hope of achieving more for species conservation. At present this amount stands at £2,500. Some tours will still continue to donate money to help some of the smaller projects that we feel will still benefit from such smaller donations. Please visit our [Conservation News](#) and [Latest News](#) links to find out more.

Wise Birding Holidays Ltd

3, Moormead, Budleigh Salterton, DEVON, EX9 6QA

Website: www.wisebirding.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/wisebirdingholidays

Email: chris@wisebirding.co.uk

Telephone: **07973 483227**





Long-billed Dowitchers (above) and “Western” Willet (Below)





**Mixed wader flock of Avocet, Marbled Godwit,
Willet & LB Dowitcher (above) and Long-billed Curlew (below)**





**It was great year for Humpback Whales in Monterey Bay
this year with numerous sightings of many different animals**





**Short-beaked Common Dolphins (above)
The seldom seen Baird's Beaked Whale (below)**





Black-footed Albatross were a joy to watch on the boat trips (above) and Rhinoceros Auklets were seen well in small numbers (below)





Pink-footed Shearwater (above) and the stunning Buller's Shearwater (below)





Sea Otters were common sight on the coast (above) and a Steller's Sea Lion resting with a California Sea Lion was seen on one of our pelagics (below)





Brown Pelican (above) Heerman's Gull and California Gull (below)





Wandering Tarantula (above) and Gopher Snake (below)





This young Bobcat showed very well as it hunted Rabbits off the Old Hernandez Road





Black Turnstone (above) and Surfbird (below) are both west coast specialities





**Elegant Terns were common around the coast (above)
Clark's Grebe in the foreground & Western Grebe behind (below)**





**This Red-shouldered Hawk was far from shy at The Pinnacles (above)
One of three Prairie Falcons seen in Yosemite on one day (below)**





**This Sooty Grouse was one of a group of six birds in Yosemite (above)
Greater Roadrunner showed well on the Old Hernandez Road (below)**





**Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel in Yosemite NP (above)
Douglas's Squirrel in Sequoia NP (below)**





**Yellow-bellied Marmots entertained us in Sequoia NP (above)
Lodgepole Chipmunks posed also in Sequoia NP (below)**





**This Black Bear in Yosemite crossed the Glacier Point Road (above)
The impressive face of El Capitan from Yosemite Valley (below)**





Red-winged Blackbirds at Moonglow Dairy (above) and Anna's Hummingbird (below)





**White-headed Woodpecker in Sequoia NP (above)
One of the many meadows in Yosemite NP (below)**





Yellow-billed Magpies (above) and Wrentit (below) are both specialities of California





**We saw an incredible 20,000+ Sooty Shearwaters in Monterey Bay (above)
One of the tiny Pacific Tree Frogs seen in Tuolumne Meadow, Yosemite (below)**





Pinyon Jay (above)
Wise Birding Group in Sequoia NP by Brent Paull



Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours



More photos from this and other tours can be viewed on our Flickr site:
www.flickr.com/photos/129663578@N06/albums

Bird, Mammal, Reptile & Butterfly Checklist for Northern California 12-22 September 2016

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Notes
1	Mountain Quail	<i>Oreortyx pictus</i>	1	A bird was heard calling on the 21st near Tamarac Creek Yosemite NP
2	California Quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>	2	Some great views of this attractive game bird on the 16th and 17th around Pinnacles NP
3	Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	3	Very close views of males and females on the 16th and 17th in Pinnacles NP
4	Sooty Grouse	<i>Dendragapus fuliginosus</i>	4	A group of 6+ birds posed for us at Sentinel Dome in Yosemite NP on the evening of 19th
5	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	5	Recorded in suitable wetland areas on three days: Palo Alto Baylands, Moss Landing & Mono Lake
6	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	6	Recorded on two days: at the Palo Alto Baylands and Mono Lake
7	Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>	7	Superb views of a drake on the sea at Moss Landing
8	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	8	Recorded at various wetlands on three days: Palo Alto Baylands, Moss Landing & Mono Lake
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	9	Recorded at various wetlands on three days: Palo Alto Baylands, Moss Landing & Mono Lake
10	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	10	Recorded at various wetlands on three days: Palo Alto Baylands, Moss Landing & Mono Lake
11	Common (Green-winged) Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	11	Recorded in large numbers at Palo Alto Baylands and also at Mono Lake
12	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	12	Good views of birds at Palo Alto Baylands and also on a freshwater lake at Asilomar, Monterey
13	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	13	Four birds from our first boat trip from Fisherman's Wharf on the 13th and large numbers at Mono Lake on the 20th
14	Western Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	14	A single bird on the water gave a great comparison as it swam beside a Clark's Grebe at Moonglow Dairy on the 14th
15	Clark's Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>	15	A single bird on the water gave a great comparison as it swam beside a Western Grebe at Moonglow Dairy on the 14th
16	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	16	Recorded on four days mostly around human habitation
17	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	17	This subtly attractive dove was recorded on four days
18	Vaux's Swift	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>	18	A number of birds were seen hawking for insects above the coast near Big Sur as we watched California Condor
19	White-throated Swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>	19	Good views of this very distinctive swift on three days, at the coast near Big Sur and also in Yosemite NP
20	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	20	Excellent views of this resident Hummingbird recorded on at least four days
21	Black-chinned Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>	21	A single bird was seen by Chris only whilst in the Pinnacles NP on the 16th
22	Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>	22	Recorded on two days whilst exploring the Pinnacles and Old Hernandez Road areas with a max. count of 2 birds on the 17th
23	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	23	Recorded on three days in suitable habitat
24	Ashy Storm-petrel	<i>Hydrobates homochroa</i>	24	Two birds were seen well whilst on our pelagic in Monterey Bay
25	Black-footed Albatross	<i>Phoebastria nigripes</i>	25	We enjoyed excellent views of this fabulous albatross on both boat trips in Monterey Bay: 2+ birds on 13th & 6+ birds on 15th
26	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	26	A single bird in heavy wing moult flew past the boat during our pelagic on the 15th
27	Buller's Shearwater	<i>Ardenna bulleri</i>	27	We had to work hard for them, but we were finally rewarded with 3 beautiful shearwaters during our pelagic on the 15th
28	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>	28	Recorded on both boat trips with an incredible 22,000 birds estimated during our pelagic on the 15th
29	Pink-footed Shearwater	<i>Ardenna creatopus</i>	29	Small numbers recorded on both boat trips in Monterey Bay

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Notes
30	Black-vented Shearwater	<i>Puffinus opisthomelas</i>	30	Small numbers (below 10) on each boat trip in Monterey Bay
31	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>	31	150+ birds were seen feeding in fields SW of Merced whilst travelling from Yosemite to SFO on the 22nd
32	Black-crowned Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	32	A single adult posed on the 12th at Palo Alto Baylands and another two birds were seen on the 14th
33	Green-backed Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	33	The only sighting was of a single bird in flight at Palo Alto Baylands
34	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	34	Recorded whilst travelling from Hanford to Yosemite on the 19th
35	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	35	Recorded on two days
36	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	36	Recorded on two days
37	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	37	Recorded during the first four days
38	American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	38	A minimum of 20+ birds recorded around the Moss Landing area on the 14th
39	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	39	Excellent views whilst around the coast of both adults and juveniles recorded on three days
40	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	40	Good views of a number of birds at Moss Landing on the 14th
41	Brandt's Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax penicillatus</i>	41	The commonest cormorant whilst on the coast and recorded on three days
42	Pelagic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i>	42	A single bird sat on rocks beside a Brandt's on the 14th and small numbers during our pelagic on the 15th
43	Blackish (Black) Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ater bachmani</i>	43	Doug did well to find us a single bird on rocks around the Asilomar area, Monterey
44	American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	44	Excellent views of large flocks whilst birding the Palo Alto Baylands on our first day and again at Mono Lake on the 20th
45	Black-winged (necked) Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus mexicanus</i>	45	Small numbers recorded on the 12th and the 14th
46	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	46	One or two birds seen at Moss Landing on the 14th
47	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	47	The odd bird was seen at Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th
48	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	48	Great views of this attractive wader at Moss Landing and also on a small wet area on the Old Hernandez Road
49	Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius nivosus</i>	49	Three birds were seen well on the beach near Moss Landing on the 14th
50	(Hudsonian) Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus</i>	50	A single bird at Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th and two birds at Moss Landing on the 14th
51	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	51	Superb views at Palo Alto Baylands and Moss Landing
52	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>	52	Superb views at Palo Alto Baylands and Moss Landing
53	Black Turnstone	<i>Arenaria melanocephala</i>	53	1-2 birds seen well on three days whilst around the coast
54	Surfbird	<i>Calidris virgata</i>	54	A single bird showed well on rocks as we left Fisherman's Wharf for our pelagic on the 15th
55	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	55	A few birds were present on the beach at Moss Landing on the 14th
56	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	56	The commonest "Peep" with small flocks at Moss Landing / Elkhorn Slough and also at Mono Lake
57	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	57	100+ Dowitchers at Palo Alto Baylands and all those scrutinised were Long-billed though Short-billed may have been present!
58	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	58	Small groups were seen at sea around Monterey Bay and also on Mono Lake - Recorded on four days
59	Red Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	59	A single bird sat on the sea clearly stood out amongst the adjacent Red-necked Phalaropes during our boat trip on the 13th

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Notes
60	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	60	Recorded on two days at Palo Alto Baylands and Moss Landing with a max. count of two birds on the 12th
61	Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	61	Excellent views of this common and vocal wader recorded on three days around the coast and at Mono Lake
62	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	62	A single bird with a Greater Yellowlegs allowed excellent comparison at Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th
63	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	63	A single bird with a Lesser Yellowlegs allowed excellent comparison at Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th
64	Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>	64	A summer plumaged adult at Mono Lake on the 20th was unexpected and the only sighting of this beautiful gull
65	Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>	65	An adult winter plumaged bird was present at Mono Lake on the 20th
66	Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>	66	A common but beautiful gull seen well around the coast on three days
67	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	67	Small numbers at Palo Alto Baylands and the Moss Landing / Moonglow Dairy areas
68	Western Gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>	68	A common species on the coast and recorded on the first four days
69	California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	69	Small numbers around the coast and also at Mono Lake
70	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	70	A single bird sat on a sand bank at Moss Landing on the 14th was the only sighting
71	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	71	Six birds seen during our pelagic in Monterey Bay on the 15th
72	Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>	72	Sue, Helen & Chris saw a bird in San Francisco Bay near the airport before the rest of the group arrived
73	Elegant Tern	<i>Thalasseus elegans</i>	73	The commonest tern around the coast and recorded on three days
74	Arctic Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	74	Single birds on the 13th and 15th boat trips in Monterey Bay
75	Pomarine Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	75	Three birds on the 13th and a single on the 15th boat trips in Monterey Bay
76	Rhinoceros Auklet	<i>Cerorhinca monocerata</i>	76	Some good views of this distinctive chunky Auklet - 2+ on the 13th and 6+ on the 15th during boat trips in Monterey Bay
77	Pigeon Guillemot	<i>Cephus columba</i>	77	Two birds seen from our boat trip on the 13th
78	Common Murre	<i>Uria aalge</i>	78	Small numbers seen on both boat trips in Monterey Bay
79	Common Barn-owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	79	Two birds roosting in a barn near Old Hernandez Road on the 17th
80	Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	80	A single bird in a barn on the Old Hernandez Road on the 17th and another bird seen by Andy in Yosemite on the 21st
81	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	81	A common vulture seen on five days
82	California Condor	<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	82	Great views on the coast road near Grimes Point, Big Sur where three birds including two adults glided above us
83	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	83	A single bird near Big Sur whilst watching Condors and 2 birds the following day around Moss Landing / Elkhorn Slough
84	White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	84	A perched bird was seen well at Elkhorn Slough Reserve
85	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	85	Two adults on the coast near Big Sur whilst watching Condors and 2 ad and 2 juv. on the 17th near Old Hernandez Road
86	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>	86	An immature male was seen hunting at Mono Lake on the 20th
87	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	87	Some good views of this small Accipiter seen on four days
88	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	88	Single birds were seen well on the 12th at the Palo Alto Baylands and again on the 17th on the Old Hernandez Road
89	Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	89	Our first views were 2 birds at Elkhorn Slough on 14th, but the most memorable was a close perched bird at the Pinnacles NP

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Notes
90	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	90	The most commonly encountered raptor seen on at least eight days
91	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	91	A bird at Fisherman's Wharf on the 13th was our only sighting
92	Red-shafted (Northern) Flicker	<i>Colaptes cafer</i>	92	This distinctive red-shafted form was seen well on four days
93	Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Hylatomus pileatus</i>	93	A male feeding on a dead stump low to the ground on the 18th at Sequoia NP was a memorable sighting
94	Williamson's Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus thyroideus</i>	94	An all too brief male in Sequoia NP was seen by Mike & Chris and another frustratingly brief bird was in Yosemite on the 21st
95	Red-breasted Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus ruber</i>	95	Mike had good views of a bird in Pinnacles NP on the 16th
96	Lewis's Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	96	A bird sat and posed at the top of tree in Yosemite near Upper Tamarac Creek on the 21st
97	Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	97	This highly gregarious woodpecker was seen very well on at least seven days
98	Nuttall's Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates nuttallii</i>	98	Single birds were seen well at Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th and again in Pinnacles NP on the 16th
99	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Leuconotopicus villosus</i>	99	Single birds seen on at least three days
100	White-headed Woodpecker	<i>Leuconotopicus albolarvatus</i>	100	Two birds were seen very well by some of the group in Sequoia NP on the 18th
101	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	101	This attractive small falcon was seen well on at least four days
102	Prairie Falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	102	Excellent views with the best views in Yosemite Tuolumne Meadow - Seen on 3 days with a max. count of 3 birds on the 21st
103	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	103	Single birds recorded on three days both around the coast and inland at Yosemite NP
104	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis</i>	104	Recorded on three days
105	Western Wood-pewee	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>	105	Mike and others saw a bird in trees beside the Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th
106	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	106	This attractive flycatcher most often encountered near water was recorded on eight days
107	Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>	107	A single bird was seen by the river at Tuolumne Meadow in Yosemite NP
108	Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	108	Singles recorded on the 11th and 17th
109	Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	109	Small groups were seen hawking at the Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th
110	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	110	Recorded on at least three days
111	Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	111	The odd bird was present within the small group of Violet-green Swallows at Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th
112	Canyon Wren	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>	112	A singing bird posed around buildings in the Pinnacles NP on the afternoon of the 16th
113	Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	113	A single bird was heard calling and seen around the wetland at Mono Lake on the 20th
114	Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	114	Some good views of this vocal species on at least three days
115	Northern (Pacific) Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes pacificus</i>	115	A single bird was seen well in woodland near Big Sur on the 13th
116	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	116	The only sighting was of a single bird whilst at the Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th
117	California Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma redivivum</i>	117	Rather embarrassingly only heard on the coast near Big Sur!
118	Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	118	This attractive Bluebird was recorded on at least four days
119	Mountain Bluebird	<i>Sialia currucoides</i>	119	Great views of this stunning species at Tuolumne Meadow Yosemite NP

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Notes
120	Townsend's Solitaire	<i>Myadestes townsendi</i>	120	A singing bird was scoped as it sat at the top of a pine in Yosemite NP near Olmsted Point on the 20th
121	American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	121	Seen well in Yosemite NP
122	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	122	A single bird seen by Chris only on the 19th in Yosemite NP
123	Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>	123	A single bird seen in the forest near Crane Flat Yosemite NP on the 21st
124	Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliptila caerulea</i>	124	Seen well on the 13th near Big Sur
125	Wrentit	<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>	125	Recorded on three days with the best views in Elkhorn Slough Reserve as 2 birds posed just metres from us
126	Mountain Chickadee	<i>Poecile gambeli</i>	126	Recorded on two days whilst in Yosemite NP
127	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	<i>Poecile rufescens</i>	127	Recorded on two days near Big Sur and in the Pinnacle NP
128	Oak Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	128	Some good views of this distinctive and vocal species recorded on three days with the best views in Pinnacles NP
129	Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>	129	Often heard in the forest and seen well on at least two days whilst in Yosemite NP
130	White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	130	Good views of this larger cousin of the Red-breasted in Pinnacles NP and Yosemite NP
131	American (Brown Creeper) Treecreeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>	131	Seen well in forest near Big Sur on the 13th and in Yosemite NP on the 21st
132	Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	132	Seen only along the Old Hernandez Road on the 17th
133	Pinyon Jay	<i>Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus</i>	133	At least 6 birds seen well and heard calling in Pinyon Pines adjacent to Mono Lake during late afternoon on the 20th
134	Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	134	This attractive Jay complete with punk hairdo was seen very well on at least six days
135	Western Scrub-jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>	135	Recorded don four days
136	Yellow-billed Magpie	<i>Pica nuttalli</i>	136	This distinctive speciality was seen well on two days in the Panoche Valley and Old Hernandez Road with 30+ birds on the 16th
137	Black-billed Magpie	<i>Pica hudsonia</i>	137	Recorded only on one day whilst in Yosemite / Mono Lake on the 20th
138	Clark's Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga columbiana</i>	138	This much sought after speciality was seen very well in Yosemite NP on the 20th with 8+ birds in Tuolumne Meadow
139	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	139	Recorded daily
140	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	140	Recorded on seven days
141	Common Starling	<i>Sturnas vulgaris</i>	141	Recorded on three days
142	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	142	Recorded on the 12th and the 20th
143	Hutton's Vireo	<i>Vireo huttoni</i>	143	Good views of this plain Vireo in Pinnacles NP on the 16th and Sequoia NP on the 18th
144	Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	144	A single bird showed well on the 16th in Pinnacles NP
145	American Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis tristis</i>	145	A few birds flew over at a random stop heading towards the Panoche Valley
146	Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>	146	Great views in Elkhorn Slough Reserve on the 14th and again at Lee Vining at feeders whilst enjoying coffee on the 20th
147	Lawrence's Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis lawrencei</i>	147	Excellent views of 12+ birds in Pinnacles NP
148	House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	148	Small groups including some bright males recorded on three days
149	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	149	Recorded in Yosemite on the 19th and 20th

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Notes
150	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>	150	This subtly marked warbler was recorded on three days whilst at Sequoia and Yosemite NPs
151	Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	151	Recorded on at least three days with great views of some bright males
152	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata auduboni</i>	152	Great views of this distinct race on at least four days mostly in Yosemite and also Sequoia NP
153	Townsend's Warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>	153	Recorded in woodland near Big Sur on the 13th
154	Hermit Warbler	<i>Dendroica occidentalis</i>	154	Mike had good views of a single bird in Sequoia NP on the 18th
155	MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Oporornis tolmiei</i>	155	Close views of two birds feeding in willow scrub at Upper Tamarac Creek on the 21st
156	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	156	Singles at Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th and Elkhorn Slough on the 14th
157	Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	157	One of the most stunning warblers of the trip recorded five days
158	Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	158	A single bird seen well in the Pinnacles NP on the 16th
159	Slate-coloured Fox-sparrow	<i>Passerella schistacea</i>	159	A bird at Upper Tamarac Creek on the 21st
160	Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	160	This distinctive "Oregon" form was recorded on six days
161	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	161	Small numbers recorded on six days
162	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	162	Recorded on at least three days
163	Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	163	At least one bird showed well staying typically low to the ground in Sequoia NP on the 18th
164	Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	164	Singles at the Palo Alto Baylands on the 12th and again at Moss Landing on the 14th
165	Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	165	A few birds seen well in Yosemite at Upper Tamarac Creek on the 21st
166	Brewer's Sparrow	<i>Spizella breweri</i>	166	A single bird seen at Mono Lake
167	Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	167	Good numbers seen on the 16th and 17th in the Panoche Valley and Old Hernandez Road
168	Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	168	Good views on at least two days
169	California Towhee	<i>Pyrgisoma crissale</i>	169	Seen well on at least three days
170	Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	170	A common species often very tame near habitation recorded on eight days
171	Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	171	Recorded on at least two days
172	Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	172	Recorded on 3 days with large numbers at Moonglow Dairy where the distinctive "Bi-coloured" <i>californicus</i> race was also seen
173	Tricolored Blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>	173	A couple of birds were picked out amongst the numerous Red-winged Blackbirds at Moonglow Dairy
174	Western Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>	174	Recorded on three days mostly around the Panoche Valley and Old Hernandez Road

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Notes
1	Mountain (Nuttall's) Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus nuttallii</i>	1	Seen whilst searching for Bobcat on the 17th and also at Mono Lake on the 20th
2	Desert Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus audubonii</i>	2	A number of animals seen whilst in the Panoche Valley and Pinnacle NP on the 16th
3	Brush Rabbit	<i>Sylvilagus bachmani</i>	3	Seen whilst in the Pinnacles Np and Panoche Valley area on the 16th
4	Black-tailed Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>	4	Two animals near Merced Springs on the evening of the 16th
5	Yellow-bellied Marmot	<i>Marmota flaviventris</i>	5	Seen very well in Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks at higher elevations
6	Eastern Fox Squirrel	<i>Sciurus niger</i>	6	Introduced: Seen around Pacific Grove near our apartments on at least the 14th
7	Eastern Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	7	Introduced: A single animal thought to be this species was seen briefly around Pacific Grove near our apartments on the 13th
8	Western Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus griseus</i>	8	Recorded in Yosemite on the 21st
9	Douglas's Squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus douglasii</i>	9	Excellent views whilst exploring Sequoia and Yosemite NP on the 18th and 19th
10	California Ground Squirrel	<i>Otospermophilus beecheyi</i>	10	The commonest Ground Squirrel recorded on eight days
11	Belding's Ground Squirrel	<i>Urocitellus beldingi</i>	11	Seen only at Tuolumne Meadow in Yosemite NP on the 20th
12	Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel	<i>Callospermophilus lateralis</i>	12	Great views of this attractive Ground Squirrel in Yosemite NP on the 19th and 20th
13	Least Chipmunk	<i>Tamias minimus</i>	13	Good views of a at least one of these tiny chipmunks at Mono Lake whilst watching Pinyon Jays
14	Lodgepole Chipmunk	<i>Tamias speciosus</i>	14	One of the commoner Chipmunks recorded on four consecutive days 18-21st
15	Merriam's Chipmunk	<i>Tamias merriami</i>	15	A single animal was seen well by some of the group in Pinnacles NP on the 16th
16	Botta's Pocket Gopher	<i>Thomomys bottae</i>	16	Michael saw at least one of these amusing small mammals at Elkhorn Slough Reserve on the 14th
17	Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>	17	One of the highlights of the tour as we watched a young animal hunting rabbits on the Old Hernandez Road on the 16th
18	Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>	18	Single animals on the 17th on the Coalinga Road and another early on the morning of the 22nd near our hotel at Wawona
19	Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>	19	A definite highlight of the tour as we watched an animal cross Glacier Point Road thanks to Michelle who spotted it in the forest
20	Northern Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>	20	Three animals seen on the night of the 13th in the parking area at our apartments in Pacific Grove
21	Sea Otter	<i>Enhydra lutris</i>	21	Some wonderful views and interesting behaviour seen over three days with a minimum of 50 animals' on the 14th
22	California Sea Lion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	22	Very common, particularly around Fisherman's Wharf and recorded on three days
23	Northern Fur seal	<i>Callorhinnus ursinnus</i>	23	One animal seen well from our boat on the 15th
24	Northern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>	24	A surprise sighting at sea during one of our boat trips on the 13th
25	Steller Sea Lion	<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>	25	One resting on a buoy with a California Sea Lion during our boat trip on the 15th
26	Mule Deer (Black-tailed Deer)	<i>Odocoileus hemionus columbianus</i>	26	Recorded on 8 days - based on range the majority were the black-tailed sub-sp though <i>californicus</i> does occur in Yosemite
27	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	27	Recorded on our two days at sea with 20+ animals on each trip. Also from land whilst watching California Condors!
28	Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>	28	A small group of animals were seen well on our boat trip on the 13th
29	Short-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	29	A number of animals seen well during our boat trip on the 13th
30	Baird's Beaked Whale	<i>Berardius bairdii</i>	30	A great sighting of this seldom seen Beaked Whale as at least three animals blew at the surface close to our boat on the 15th

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Notes
1	Pacific Tree Frog	<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>	1	A few of this tiny frog seen well at Tuolumne Meadow Yosemite NP
2	Pacific Gopher Snake	<i>Pituophis catenifer catenifer</i>	2	A wonderful encounter of this beautiful snake as it sunbathed on one of the trail at Elkhorn Slough Reserve
3	Common Kingsnake	<i>Lampropeltis getula</i>	3	A few of the group saw this very distinctive snake crossing the road in the Panoche Valley on the 16th
4	Rubber Boa	<i>Charina bottae</i>	4	Great views of this snake in Yosemite on the Tamarac Creek trail
5	Western Fence Lizard	<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>	5	A common lizard recorded on a number of days
6	Tarantula	-	6	At least a dozen seen whilst travelling back from our day looking for Bobcat during the last hour of daylight
7	Mourning Cloak / Camberwell Beauty	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	7	Recorded on the 20th in Yosemite
8	Monarch Butterfly	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	8	Recorded on the 20th in Yosemite

Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours

www.wisebirding.co.uk

