



CAT EXPEDITIONS

Private Bobcat Photo Tour 2024 Trip Report

December 2nd - December 6th, 2024



Group: One Private Client

Trip Leaders: Sebastian Kennerknecht
Rachel Tobias

Places Visited: Marin County, California

Please note, because we always prioritize the guest's photography over taking images ourselves, some of the photos in this report were taken at the same location as with the client, but when we visited the area independently.



Trip Highlights

Bobcats: For the duration of the trip, we saw more than twenty different individual bobcats. Sightings averaged thirty minutes, at an average distance of 20 meters. For our closest encounter the bobcat was just two meters away! Besides the sheer number of cats, we were able to observe them hunt, sometimes for over an hour at a time. We watched them catch gophers successfully, and even saw a mother with her kitten, a truly rare sighting for us!

Coyotes: Coyotes were the other target species for our guest. We saw over twenty coyotes, and had really nice hunting behavior with quite a few of them. The guests photos of the encounters are fantastic, showcasing the amazing jumping abilities of these canids, as they foraged for prey.

Day 1 | Monday, December 2

After picking up the guest in San Rafael, we headed to west. We settled into our hotel and went for lunch, before heading into the field. It took less than an hour to find our first bobcat. We didn't get a long look at this individual as it crested a hill into thickets. However we were all excited about finding a cat so quickly. We had some nice coyote hunting behavior shortly after, but the afternoon would only heat up. We ended up seeing five more bobcats that day alone. Sometimes people ask us if we are seeing the same cat over and over. In other locations we wouldn't be as sure of ourselves but in this spot, we know all the different individuals, what they look like, and what their territories are. The highlight was probably following a bobcat as she was hunting at sunset, beautifully backlit by the sunset. A six bobcat afternoon was probably the most productive afternoon we have ever had!



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Day 2 | Tuesday, December 3

As if day one hadn't already been a dream come true, day two proved to be even more productive. We had nine different cats in total that day. Numbers to me aren't really so important, I care more about the quality of the sighting. Our highlight for the day for sure was watching a female hunt successfully, feed on her prey, and then walk over to her kitten. It is very very rare to see kittens (we have done so less than ten

times while guiding] so we were completely ecstatic!



Day 3 | Wednesday, December 4

The morning was very quiet, with fog and mist obscuring our view, but hot beverages keeping our spirits up. We had a nice and close coyote encounter as it was hunting in a field, just a few meters from us. From there, we found a new cat to us, which is always exciting utilizing the sit-and-wait hunting strategy.

For this method, the cat lies right next to a gopher hole, with its head at the holes entrance. It lies there in perfect stillness, often seemingly so relaxed it starts to nod off. Its ears tell the true story however, as its obvious it is very much listening for the sounds of movement below. We watched the cat wait for over thirty minutes, then, without warning, it struck with lightning speed. Not fast enough however, as it missed its prey.

After lunch we spotted a long-tailed weasel hunting, poking its head up over the grasses in that true periscoping manner. It may have gotten jealous at the nearby coyote, which successfully dug out a gopher out of a burrow (a hunting strategy we often don't see). Soon after finishing its meal we spotted a second coyote beelining it towards the original canid. Based on the posture of the running individual, it seemed like the interaction would not be a nice, one, and in fact, the two coyotes met, and fought. We couldn't see it well because the action happened mostly behind a bush, but the occasional head, tail or leg would poke out. The second coyote seemed to have won the fight as it ran back uphill, routinely looking back at the spot of the fight. We didn't want to get closer and cause more stress to the loser, but we imagined it licking its wounds behind the bush.

We saw three more cats that afternoon, but focused our attention on getting nice coyote shots at sunset.

Day 4 | Thursday, December 5

We were greeted by an incredibly colorful and beautiful sunrise. To take advantage of the beautiful sky, we found some elk to photograph on the ridge with the stunning sky. From there we found a male



bobcat, but realized it was one of the more skittish individuals of the area, so didn't even try approaching.

The fact that it was cat number twenty was remarkable and we were all really happy! The afternoon got a bit more exciting when we received tsunami warnings after a big earthquake hit just north along the coast. We sought high ground, and waited a bit until the warnings were called off. Closer to sunset, we saw two more bobcats, which we photographed until the light was gone. As twilight turned dusk, a badger emerged from its burrow and started its nighttime foraging.



Day 5 | Friday, December 6

We only had a few hours in the morning, but this ended up being our quietest day. We had a nice trio of coyotes, and one distant cat before we drove our guest to his onward journey. Reflecting on the five days, we couldn't believe we saw 23 different bobcats in total. Our guest probably took over 100,000 photos during this time. It was truly special.

SPECIES LIST

Mammals

Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>
Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>
Long-tailed Weasel	<i>Neogale frenata</i>
American Badger	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>
Tule Elk	<i>Cervus elaphus hispanicus</i>
Mule Deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>

Birds

California Quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>
Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
Wilson's Snipe	<i>Gallinago delicata</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>
Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>
Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>
Western Scrub-Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>

