

BIRD TREKS

COMPLETE CALIFORNIA *Mountains, Oceans & Desert*

Friday, 8 September through Thursday, 21 September 2017: 14 days and 13 nights.
Plus a 5-day post-tour extension to **Bolsa Chica** and the **Salton Sea**, 21-25 September.
See separate itinerary for full details on the Salton Sea Extension.

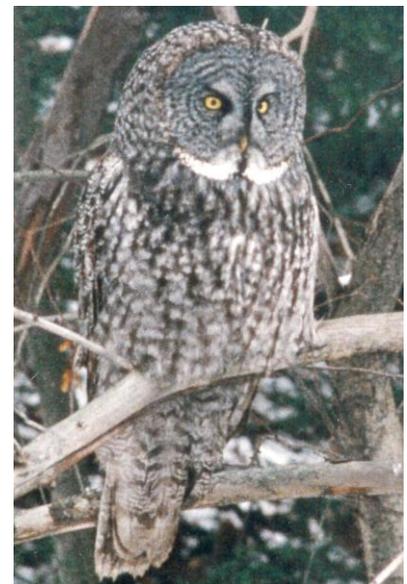
California conjures up visions of sun-baked landscapes, scenic mountain vistas, the blue Pacific, and the expansive deserts to the south. The birds are no less spectacular, with everything from **Black-footed Albatross** to **Lawrence's Goldfinch**. During this two-week tour we will search for many of the birds that California has to offer. Habitats that we visit include marshlands and tidal wetlands around **Monterey Bay** and **Bodega Bay**, the scenic **Sierras** rich with montane birds including seven species of woodpeckers, and the sage-filled lands east of the Sierras that harbor **Greater Sage-Grouse** and **Mountain Bluebird**. We will bird mixed oak woodlands that contain several species of owls and passerines not easily found in other habitats. **TWO Shearwater Journeys** pelagic trips are included for species such as **Long-tailed Jaeger**, **South Polar Skua**, **Buller's Shearwater**, and **Ashy Storm-Petrel**. On these trips and the **Santa Cruz Island** boat ride, there is an excellent chance for whales, including **Humpback** and the magnificent **Blue Whale**!

If you wish to continue the adventure, there is an extension to **Southern California** with stops in various habitats for **California Gnatcatcher**, **Spotted Dove**, **Allen's Hummingbird**, and a trip to the **Salton Sea**. Please see the separate itinerary for more information.

Some of the target species include:

(E) = Endemic

White-tailed Kite	Great Gray Owl	American Dipper
Swainson's Hawk	Common Poorwill	California Gnatcatcher
Prairie Falcon	Black Swift	Mountain Bluebird
Sooty Grouse	Anna's Hummingbird	Townsend's Solitaire
Greater Sage-Grouse	Calliope Hummingbird	Sage Thrasher
Mountain Quail	Allen's Hummingbird	California Thrasher
California Quail	Lewis's Woodpecker	Le Conte's Thrasher
Sora	Williamson's Sapsucker	MacGillivray's Warbler
Pacific Golden-Plover	Red-breasted Sapsucker	Townsend's Warbler
Snowy Plover	Nuttall's Woodpecker	Hermit Warbler
Black Oystercatcher	White-headed Woodpecker	Green-tailed Towhee
American Avocet	Black-backed Woodpecker	California Towhee
Wandering Tattler	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Black-chinned Sparrow
Long-billed Curlew	Gray Flycatcher	Bell's Sparrow
Marbled Godwit	Cassin's Vireo	Brewer's Sparrow
Black Turnstone	Island Scrub-Jay (E)	Tricolored Blackbird



Great Gray Owl - - Randy Miller

Additional target species:

(see page 5 for more species)

Surfbird	Yellow-billed Magpie (E)	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Wilson's Phalarope	Mountain Chickadee	Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
Spotted Dove	Pygmy Nuthatch	Pine Grosbeak
Spotted Owl	Wrentit	Lawrence's Goldfinch



Pelagic Cormorant - - John Puschock

Pelagic species that we hope to find include:

Black-footed Albatross	Black-vented Shearwater	Long-tailed Jaeger
Laysan Albatross	Black Storm-Petrel	Arctic Tern
Northern Fulmar	Ashy Storm-Petrel	Marbled Murrelet
Pink-footed Shearwater	Red-necked Phalarope	Scripps's Murrelet
Flesh-footed Shearwater	Red Phalarope	Cassin's Auklet
Buller's Shearwater	South Polar Skua	Rhinoceros Auklet
Sooty Shearwater	Pomarine Jaeger	Tufted Puffin

(E) = Endemic to California

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COMPLETE CALIFORNIA

8 - 21 September 2017

DAY AGENDA

- 1 Plan to arrive at the San Jose, California Airport by about noon. This is where the tour begins. We'll spend the afternoon birding in and around Bodega Bay and Point Reyes. A wide variety of passerines and shorebirds is possible, but is heavily dependent upon the weather. Overcast and foggy skies can produce large passerine fallouts at Point Reyes. Other species to look for on Point Reyes include **Tricolored Blackbird** and **American** and **Pacific Golden-Plovers**. Additional shorebird possibilities include **Baird's, Western, Least, Semipalmated, Stilt,** and **Pectoral Sandpipers**, and hopefully something Asian, such as a **Ruff!** First night in Petaluma.
- 2 Today could be our **Bodega Canyon and Cordell Bank pelagic trip**, depending upon the *Shearwater Journeys* schedule. If not, we will spend the morning around Bodega Bay and then head southward, with perhaps a stop at the Marin Headlands Hawk Watch. Here we may see a variety of raptors including **Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-tailed,** and **Red-shouldered Hawks, White-tailed Kite, Prairie** and **Peregrine Falcons**, and possibly **Golden Eagle**. Second night in Petaluma.
- 3 Today will be a travel day. We will start by heading toward the Central Valley to look for **Yellow-billed Magpie** and **Swainson's Hawk**. **Western Bluebird** and the comical **Acorn Woodpecker** are a couple of likely candidates in the Sierra foothills. Late afternoon and evening birding will be near the entrance to Yosemite National Park for owls and montane species such as **Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-headed Woodpecker,** and possibly **American Dipper**. We'll do a dusk search for **Great Gray Owl**. Overnight in Oakhurst.

[Day 4 is on page 3]

- 4 The entire day will be spent birding in Yosemite looking for species including **Sooty Grouse, Northern Goshawk, Mountain Quail, Black-backed, White-headed, Pileated, and Hairy Woodpeckers, Williamson's and Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Hermit, Nashville, and MacGillivray's Warblers, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, and Cassin's Finch.** It may be difficult to keep our eyes on the birds, as the scenery is truly spectacular. Evening birding will be at Mono County Park looking for **Yellow-headed Blackbird, Sora, Virginia Rail, Eared Grebe, and Red-necked Phalarope.** Overnight in Lee Vining on the eastern side of the Sierras.
- 5 Our day will be spent in the sage and woodlands east of the Sierras. We will start early with a visit to Crowley Lake for **Greater Sage-Grouse, Prairie Falcon, Sage Thrasher, Bell's Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, and Gray Flycatcher.** A special visit will be made to Aspendell for **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch.** Birding in the woodlands and other areas around Lee Vining can produce **Lewis's Woodpecker, the beautiful Mountain Bluebird, Townsend's Solitaire, Calliope and Rufous Hummingbirds, Green-tailed Towhee, and Pygmy Nuthatch.** We'll go out in the evening to search for owls and **Common Poorwill.** A second night in the same motel in Lee Vining.
- 6 Morning birding in Yosemite will be for any species that we may have missed. Then we head westward toward Monterey Bay, with a stop en route to look for **Spotted Dove** and any **rarities** that may be on the hotline. Overnight in Watsonville.



Laysan Albatross is possible
on one of our days at sea.

- - John Puschock

7 The second of our two scheduled pelagic trips will take us into world-famous Monterey Bay. Monterey Bay is bisected by a huge submarine canyon twice the size of the Grand Canyon. This geography allows for rich and diverse wildlife to be viewed within a short distance of land. Potential species include **Pink-footed, Buller's, Sooty, and Black-vented Shearwaters, Black and Ashy Storm-Petrels, all three jaegers, South Polar Skua, Arctic Tern, Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, and Marbled and Scripps's Murrelets.** We will hope for a rarity such as **Tufted Puffin, Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, Streaked, Wedge-tailed, and Manx Shearwaters, Laysan Albatross, or a tropicbird. Blue and Humpback Whales** are a distinct possibility, as are four additional species of **cetaceans.** We'll do some evening birding looking for species not seen on the previous day. Our second night in Watsonville.

[Day 8 is on page 4]

- 8 We will start on the coast north of Santa Cruz with a visit to Ano Nuevo for **Black Swifts** that nest in shoreline caves. We then turn our attention to finding passerines that may include a variety of **warblers** such as **Wilson's**, **MacGillivray's**, **Townsend's**, and possibly **Hermit**. We'll return to the habitat that fringes Monterey Bay and look for **Snowy Plover**, **Baird's Sandpiper**, and rock-loving shorebirds including **Black Oystercatcher**, **Surfbird**, **Wandering Tattler**, and **Black Turnstone**. Additional opportunities include migrating flocks that may contain **Violet-green Swallow** and **Vaux's** (pronounced VOX' is) **Swift**. There will be owling in the evening for those who want to stay up late. Our third night in Watsonville.
- 9 We will bird the Watsonville area on the edge of Monterey Bay with an introduction to some of the common birds of this area, including **Long-billed Curlew**, **Marbled Godwit**, **Wilson's Phalarope**, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, **Black-necked Stilt**, and **American Avocet**. A stop in the oak woodland could yield **California Quail**, **Wrentit**, **Anna's Hummingbird**, **California Towhee**, **Nuttall's Woodpecker**, **Hutton's** and **Cassin's Vireos**, and **Chestnut-backed Chickadee**. Fourth night in Watsonville.
- 10 If there was no pelagic trip on Day 2, then today will be the Monterey Seavalley pelagic, also with *Shearwater Journeys*. Here are some of Debi's comments from past trips: This report covers *Shearwater Journeys'* three spectacular sea birding trips on Monterey Bay on Sep 9, 10, and 11, several years ago. This is surely one of the most productive times to search for seabirds. Birders who participated in all three of these trips recorded nearly 35 species of seabirds, including 12 species of tubenoses, and 12 species of marine mammals, and enjoyed some of the best weather conditions. Highlights were many. For three days in a row we found the storm-petrel flocks which included **Wilson's**, **Fork-tailed**, **Ashy**, **Black**, and **Least Storm-Petrels**; one **Manx Shearwater** was found each day; **Flesh-footed Shearwater** was found on two of the three days, with a high count of 10; **South Polar Skuas** were found every day; and it was a grand slam on all of the **jaeger species** on two of the three days; in a single day, 201 jaegers were recorded, of these an astounding **152** were **Pomarine Jaegers**; a **Short-finned Mako Shark** made a star performance; and finally, the **Orca** show was just great. For the full species list for these and other California pelagic trips, click on the following for all of the information: <http://www.shearwaterjourneys.com/>. Fifth and final night in Watsonville.
- 11 Today we journey southward along Highway 1 in search of **California Condors** that have been released in the area. We will spend ample time looking for this spectacular species brought back from the brink of extinction, although we are not guaranteed of seeing them. Our afternoon drive will take us to Ventura, with additional birding stops for migrants en route. Overnight in Taft or Ventura.



Search for **Wandering Tattler** on the rocks.

- 12 Departure for a full-day trip to Santa Cruz Island for the California endemic **Island Scrub-Jay** and the Santa Cruz Island races of **Bewick's Wren** and **Pacific-slope Flycatcher**. **Royal Tern** and **Black-vented Shearwater** are possible on the boat trip to the island, as are **Blue** and **Humpback Whales**. Overnight in the same motel.
- 13 We will head east to southern San Joaquin County in search of **Le Conte's Thrasher**. Dependent upon our previous sightings during the tour, we may also bird Mount Pinos in search of **Calliope Hummingbird**, **Mountain Quail**, and **Black-chinned Sparrow**. If this is not necessary, we will continue to the Los Angeles Basin where we will look for **Spotted Dove**, **Allen's Hummingbird** and, time permitting, **California Gnatcatcher**. Overnight near Long Beach or Redondo Beach.
- 14 For those participating in just the **Complete California Tour**, we'll arrive in Los Angeles for departing flights from Los Angeles International Airport, where the tour ends.

OR, for more California Birding Adventures, you may continue on to
***SAN DIEGO & the SALTON SEA*, 21-25 September 2017.**

See separate itinerary for the complete details.

There is a \$150 discount for participating in both tours.

A map of the tour route can be seen by clicking on:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=zDJlwFKF8JcU.kZJ2ZuDvsU3g>

PLEASE NOTE Portions of the itinerary may be adjusted to coincide with dates and locations of the pelagic trips.



Wilson's is the most likely of the three phalarope species to be seen at inland locations.

Some of the new species that were added on the record-breaking 2010 tour were:

Black Brant
Cook's Petrel
Least Storm-Petrel
Northern Pygmy-Owl
Spotted Owl
Common Poorwill
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Golden-crowned Sparrow
Pine Grosbeak

Leader The leader of our **Complete California Tour** has yet to be selected. We will provide a highly experienced birding tour leader and that will help you to have a bird-filled, worry-free experience. You can expect truly wonderful experience!

Price The tour fee is approximately \$4995, based upon double occupancy. Single accommodations can be arranged for an extra fee of approximately \$795. We will take a maximum of seven participants. On rare occasion we may extend the maximum to ten participants.

Includes Expert guide service, **THREE** pelagic trips, ground transportation and entrance fees within California, **ALL meals**, and lodging for the entire tour. **ALL tips** are also included in the tour fee, except for anything that you may wish to give to your tour leader and boat crews.

Does not include the cost of alcoholic beverages, items of a personal nature, or air transportation to San Jose and home from Los Angeles. Upon request, **BIRD TREKS** will help you obtain the best possible airfare and coordinate your arrival and departure.

Extra Services We offer the services of our exclusive Bird Treks travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel. Lori has 32 years of experience in the travel industry and is a veteran birder. Contact her through Bailey Travel / Travel Time at **1-800-224-5399**, or you can e-mail her at lori@baileytravel.com. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free telephone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There will be a small fee for these services.

Deposit A \$1000 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is due 8 July 2017. Send your deposit **SOON** so that we can secure the least expensive airfare to San Jose and **RESERVE YOUR SPOTS ON THE PELAGIC TRIPS**, which are always at a premium.



Buller's Shearwater is distinctively marked with a dark 'M' on the upper wing.

- - John Puschock

Refund and Cancellation Policy With written notice more than 60 days prior to the first day of the tour, 100% of your deposit will be refunded, minus a \$75 service fee. With 30-60 days notice, you will receive a 50% refund of the full cost of the tour. No refund can be made with less than 30 days notice. You will receive a full refund if you provide a replacement for your spot on the tour. No partial refund can be given once the tour begins. Bird Treks **STRONGLY RECOMMENDS** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment. Contact **Allianz Global Assistance** and mention **BIRD TREKS, ACCAM # F021096**. Apply via Internet at www.allianztravelinsurance.com, or by phone at **1-866-884-3556**.