

# Baja California & the Sea of Cortez

Naturetrek Tour Report

23 February – 7 March 2013



Gray Whale



Blue Whale fluking



Bottle-nose Dolphins



Humpback Whale tail slapping

Tour report and images compiled by Tim Melling



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## Day 1

**Saturday 23rd February**

We left Heathrow in the afternoon on the direct flight to San Diego, arriving about 10 hours later, at about 19:00 local time. After immigration, customs and taxis we arrived at the Vagabond Inn before 21:00.

## Day 2

**Sunday 24th February**

San Diego

We loaded our bags onto the Spirit of Adventure in the early morning leaving us to spend the rest of the day without baggage. On offer today was an optional extra activity to go birding at several local nature reserves with Wayne Harman and David Kimble from the local Audubon Society. Our boat wasn't scheduled to set sail until later in the afternoon, so we had most of the day to explore. Most people chose to stay local and do their own thing around San Diego, but twelve signed up for the birding tour. The weather was perfect – sunny, warm and calm, if a tad breezy. The plan was to visit a range of habitats and we started with a walk around part of the harbour to begin to get a feel for America's avifauna. The area was very charming – as were some of the waterfront houses – with some good birds including Reddish Egret, Western Grebe, Bufflehead, Surf Scoter, Anna's Hummingbird, Black Phoebe, and the ever-present Western Gulls, Audubon's Warblers, Brown Pelicans, and House Finches. We also rescued an injured Willet that was impaled on a fishing hook and tackle.

A short drive to the east and up into the low hills took us to chaparral habitat and a beautiful reserve called Silverwood. Most of our time here was spent at the idyllic feeding station where we saw a great range of species including lots of Anna's Hummingbirds at nectar feeders, White-crowned Sparrow, Oregon Junco, Lesser Goldfinch, Lawrence's Goldfinch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Spotted and California Towhee, Western Scrub Jay, Raven, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and California Ground Squirrel. A walk in the scrub revealed some brief views of elusive Wrentits and Tufted Titmouse.

Lindo Lake is a fairly large suburban freshwater lake and introduced us to Ring-billed Gull, Wood Duck, Ruddy Duck, Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, American Coot, Moorhen, Great Blue Heron, Great-tailed Grackle, Yellowthroat, Red-winged and Tricoloured Blackbirds, a Greenland White-fronted Goose, Tree Swallows and Western Bluebirds.

Next stop was the long tidal San Diego River Estuary channel, heading out to the coast, north of Point Loma. Rather canalised and engineered in appearance, it was however a great spot for waterbirds. Here we saw, Royal Terns, Black Brant, Least Sandpipers, Greater Yellowlegs, Whimbrels, Long-billed Curlews, Grey Plover, Lesser Scaup, Pied-billed Grebe, Blue-winged Teal, Pintail, Red-breasted Merganser, American Wigeon and Great Egret.

Famosa Slough was the final destination, a small urban wetland imaginatively restored and protected by a local group of enthusiasts. Star bird here was Little Blue Heron.

We returned to the Vagabond in good time to collect our belongings, rendezvous with the rest of the group and head down to the nearby harbour in preparation for boarding the much-anticipated 'Spirit of Adventure'. Before long, tour leader Scot Anderson located us, introduced himself, and we began to board the Spirit and meet the crew. This was a really memorable moment – starting to get to know the boat and the guys who would be looking after us (little did we know just how well) for the next 11 days and nights. Once settled, Scot gathered us to give an introductory talk over a tasty buffet, and explain the general pattern of the forthcoming days, and then skipper Brian covered the health & safety aspects of life at sea. We cast off around 10pm and cruised slowly out of the harbour via the large fish holding and grow-out pens, stocked with White Sea Bass, which are an irresistible magnet for every piscivorous bird and sea lion in the bay. These raft-like structures with slatted timber decks hold tens of thousands of fish and are permanently attended by California Sea Lions, hundreds of Brandt's Cormorants, Great Blue and Night Herons, which mop up any fish that dare escape the cages.

The long day's excitement over, we retired to our cabins for our first night of being lulled to sleep by the movement of the boat and the background drone of her engines.

## Day 3

Monday 25th February

### Todos Santos

After sailing south through the night, we arrived at Ensenada port before dawn, where the crew sorted out the Mexican customs formalities. We set off just as dawn was breaking and saw our first Common Dolphins soon after leaving the harbour. We headed for Todos Santos islands and saw Black and American Oystercatchers and two Peregrines. On a rock in the bay we saw five Brown Boobies plus a rare Masked Booby among some Brandt's Cormorants. We headed south and quickly saw our first Humpback Whales, plus several Grey Whales and lots of bow riding Common Dolphins. Birds included Black-vented and Pink-footed Shearwater, Cassin's Auklets, Rhinoceros Auklets and Xantus' Murrelets.

Our delicious lunch was interrupted by a lob-tailing Humpback Whale right next to the boat which posed for photographs. After lunch we encountered a single Minke Whale but it was only seen by a few. A little later we saw several Fin Whales and two rather interesting "Fin" Whales. Scot commented that they blew and showed their fins simultaneously so we should check the right lower lip colour. One animal had a black lower right lip, while the other was very dark grey. They also lacked a chevron, had spots, a long rostral ridge which curved down at the tip. All these features led us to conclude that they were Sei Whales, a species Scot had only seen once before in Baja. After this we managed to see a few more Humpbacks and Fin Whales, plus a few interesting birds such as Tropicbird, Laysan Albatross and numerous Phalaropes.

## Day 4

Tuesday 26th February

### San Benitos

Sailing south right through the night at the usual steady ten knots, we arrived at the islands of San Benitos just after breakfast. Just before that we had our first Blue Whale fluking in front of the boat. We followed it for a while but had to leave it to reach San Benitos. Seabirds were interesting too with a Tropicbird, two Laysan Albatrosses plus an extremely white Fulmar.

The remote volcanic islands of San Benitos west of the 'barb' half way down the Baja Peninsula are home to a small seasonal outpost of Mexican Abalone fisherman - and a wealth of marine wildlife including colonies of Elephant Seals, Guadalupe Fur Seals, and large numbers of burrow-nesting auklets, murrelets and storm-petrels. We visited the Elephant Seal colony on the south side where we also saw our first Guadalupe Fur Seals (which are actually sea-lions). Songbirds are not abundant on these rocky outcrops but we did see the local endemic race "sanctorum" of Savannah Sparrow, although it probably qualifies as a full species.

A pair of Ospreys (one of about eight pairs) had a huge nest on a rock stack behind the colony, and we saw our first American Oystercatchers here too. We all had to be careful where we stepped, as the ground was riddled with seabird burrows, many of which looked to be active.

We split the group at this point for the more energetic to follow Scot up to the top of the island's mountain, and the rest to stay with Tim and return along the coast towards a larger colony of Elephant Seals. Tim's saw more shore birds including Black Oystercatcher, Black Turnstone, Whimbrel and Grey Plover. Two Red-tailed Hawks were probably wondering where all the rabbits had gone (they were extirpated by one man and his Jack Russell's a few years ago). There were also a few Harbour Seals on the beaches among the Elephant Seals. Scot's hikers saw six Ospreys flying together, plus found another colony of Guadalupe Fur Seals on the windy north coast.

We then took the skiffs to get a closer look at the Guadalupe Fur Seals, plus some amazing views of Osprey. They played in the water just a few metres away from us, occasionally poking their heads out to look at us. This island used to be surrounded by giant kelp, which was home to many California Sea Lions, but the kelp disappeared after a warm water year (El Nino) and many of the Sea Lions vacated the area too.

Steaming south we soon encountered a large pod of c400 Common Dolphins, and a little later two White-sided Dolphins rode the bow for ages. They occasionally leapt clear of the water and also appeared to mate, pressing their bellies together while bow riding. We also saw one Grey Phalaropes plus lots of Black-vented Shearwaters and Cassin's Auklets. We identified all the Murrelets as Craveri's, unlike yesterday where we saw mainly Xantu's.

## Day 5

Wednesday 27th February

### San Ignacio

Gray Whale sightings became increasingly frequent as we approached the entrance to San Ignacio Lagoon. A submerged sand-bar lies just a few fathoms deep across the mouth of the lagoon, which can only be safely crossed when the tide is right. Most of the inner region of this lagoon is a no-go zone, part of the Parque Natural de la Laguna de San Ignacio, designated primarily for its global importance as the top site for breeding Gray Whales, but also for a vast wealth of other wildlife. Inside the lagoon the water seemed to be boiling with Gray Whales but with good numbers of Bottlenose Dolphins too.

One of the main events of the whole trip, the ridges on the skiff (or pangas as the Mexicans call them) around this lagoon are an experience to remember. Our first trip was in rather windy conditions and we all enjoyed close views of spy-hopping with a few boats enjoying close encounters. We managed another boat trip before lunch where one group had a spy-hopping baby whale next to the boat which allowed everyone to touch it. After lunch they seemed more relaxed and everyone managed to touch a whale! Splashing the water seemed to help attract the animals, but they were simply doing as they pleased and at their own pace. Barnacles frequently infest the whales' skin and any object in the water provides a hard surface to rub against, presumably to try and dislodge a few. It's also thought that the females are showing the newborn calves around their new world.

Bird life within the lagoon was very impressive, with lots of wintering Black Brants plus Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Willet, Marbled Godwit, Great Egret, White Pelican, Laughing Gull, American Herring Gull, Royal Tern, Great Northern and Pacific Diver, Surf Scoter and many Brown Pelicans. Rather unusual was a Blue-footed Booby, which usually remain in the Sea of Cortez. Several turtles were seen, and the ones positively identified were all Loggerheads. In the evening we managed to spot three Coyotes foraging on the beaches.

## Day 6

Thursday 28th February

### San Ignacio

A rather overcast morning and it was pretty windy for our early morning trip to the mangroves, but whilst there it was beautifully calm. Red Mangrove and the smaller leaved White Mangrove grow here, and they support lots of birdlife. Within an hour or so we had seen Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned Night Heron, Tri-coloured, Green-backed and Little Blue Heron, Great, Reddish and Snowy Egret, Spotted Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, Red-breasted Mergansers, Black Brants, White Ibis, Northern Harrier, Belted Kingfisher and Double-crested Cormorants. We heard a couple of Clapper Rails but nobody managed to spot one. Passerines were few, but we managed a few brief views of Mangrove Warblers (a localised endemic) plus the dark saltmarsh race of Savannah Sparrow known as Belding's Sparrow.

A late-morning panga trip gave some of us our penultimate chance to get up close and personal with the enormous Gray Whales. There was much mating activity going on in the shallower parts of the lagoon. Today every boat managed close encounters with friendly adult Grey Whales. Bottlenose Dolphins were much in evidence as usual, though not too many birds apart from two Long-tailed Skuas chasing a Royal Tern was a bonus.

Some people opted for an afternoon panga ride to the nearby beach, whilst others took their final opportunity on the pangas to get that perfect whale shot. The beach was vast, windswept and primal – covered in millions of shells and littered with the sun-bleached bones of dolphins and whales. We took a long walk along the shell-line and through the dunes before heading back to the skiff and the Spirit. Some of the living highlights of the walk were Snowy and Black-bellied Plovers, Sanderling, Dunlin and many Western Sandpipers. There were a number of Caspian Terns patrolling the beach, along with the more numerous Royal Terns. Unfortunately our only Skimmer was a dead one found by Chris.

The time had come by early evening to leave San Ignacio and continue our journey south. Waves were rolling nicely over the sand-bar on exit, but Brian again found a smooth route back out to sea, pausing to avoid colliding with Gray Whales en route. Bottlenose Dolphins also rode the bow on the way out.

## Day 7

Friday 1st March

### Magdalena Bay

Today was spent at sea relaxing and cruising steadily past the vast Magdalena Bay area on our way south. Soon after breakfast we saw a few Common Dolphins plus a Masked Booby and our first Frigatebirds. A little later we came across three Humpback Whales which we followed for a while before heading south again. We then encountered about 400 Common Dolphins that rode the bow but were not especially energetic leapers so we continued in search of bigger things. We had a rather calm period with little birdlife apart from one Tropicbird and a few Shearwaters. Several Loggerhead Turtles kept us amused though, some allowing quite a close approach. After lunch we spotted some distant large blows and as we approached we could see they were Blue Whales. They are difficult to count but there must have been ten, including a mother and calf that we followed, plus a lone adult that regularly fluked on diving. Bird life was rather sparse though a Pomarine Skua circled the boat a few times. As sunset approached we saw a number of Least Storm Petrels and a single Black Storm Petrel.

## Day 8

## Saturday 2nd March

### Cabo San Lucas & Los Frailes

After sailing through the night we awoke to mobile phone reception and several Frigatebirds circling round the boat. Unfortunately Mary had taken ill in the night so we had to take her to hospital in Cabo San Lucas. Tim and JP stayed with her until she had her fractured collarbone sorted, then we took a taxi to San Jose to rejoin the Spirit of Adventure. There was some dolphin activity and it wasn't long before we started seeing Humpback Whales. We saw lots of fluking and some brief breaches but the weather was a little choppy so we didn't follow for too long. We also saw four tropicbirds, two Elegant Terns and a few Black Petrels.

In the afternoon, we dropped anchor at the small settlement of Los Frailes on the east coast of the cape, and got ourselves ready for our first snorkelling adventure. The skiffs took us in to the beach, from where many of the group snorkelled around the neighbouring rocks. The water was tolerably refreshing, and a good diversity of underwater life was seen including Cortez Chubb, Damselfish and Rainbow Wrasse, Hogfish, King Angelfish, Moorish Idol, and Panamic Sergeant Major.

Tim took an advance party birdwatching, joined later by Scot and the snorkellers. During the walk around the Los Frailes area, we saw a good range of land birds making for a nice introduction to the desert/scrub avifauna of the cape region. Species included the endemic Xantu's Hummingbird, White-winged and Common and Ruddy Ground Doves, Turkey Vulture, Scott's and Hooded Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Verdin, Blue-gray and California Gnatcatchers, Lark and Black-chinned Sparrows, Gila Woodpecker, Cardinal, Costa's Hummingbird, Grey Thrasher, Loggerhead Shrike and Roadrunner. After sunset, about ten Lesser Nighthawks appeared in the bright western sky. We set off north after dark in extremely choppy conditions. Most opted for an early night.

## Day 9

## Sunday 3rd March

### Los Frailes and Baja Cape

As the swell was still high we decided to anchor at Los Frailes. Straight after breakfast we had a birdwatching walk while a few snorkelled. Everyone had great views of a Roadrunner plus a Zone-tailed Hawk among the Turkey Vultures. Best of all Chris found a Great Horned Owl on a nest with its mate in the nearby scrub. In addition to the species we saw yesterday we also saw Ladder-backed Woodpecker and California Quails. At about 9am we headed back to the Cape where we encountered a group of 8 male Humpback Whales that were fighting and interacting. Occasionally they tail slapped or flipper flopped. Birds of note were three more Tropicbirds, a Black Storm Petrel and a Pomarine Skua. Also seen were a large Hawksbill Turtle and another Hammerhead Shark. The whale watching interrupted lunch as nobody wanted to eat with 8 Humpbacks so close to the boat.

At about 2pm we headed north towards the Sea of Cortez, pausing to look at a Humpback Whale cow and calf. As we sailed into the Sea of Cortez we saw dozens of Smooth-tailed Mobulas leaping out of the water, pausing to try and photograph a particularly close group. The sun set as we cruised north towards the San Jose channel, but we found we were surrounded by thousands of Mobulas. We could see them flex their wings above the surface in large shoals, agitating the water surface into "breezers".

We also saw lots jumping in unison, plus a few Spiny-tailed Mobulas that spin like a coin rather than bellyflop. Just as light was fading, one last Tropicbird flew over calling, bringing the day's total to four.

## Day 10

Monday 4th March

### San Jose Channel

In the morning we discovered that the Searcher plus a cruise ship were heading for our destination of Punto Colorado on the island of San Jose, so we decided to search for cetaceans instead! We found a group of about 50 Bottle-nose Dolphins that were both energetic and photogenic, leaping repeatedly off the stern. A larger group later on sped off rapidly. A couple of Tropicbirds, both Petrels and a few Boobies and Frigatebirds kept the birders happy. We also saw a fabulous example of the Fata Morgana mirage which stretched offshore rocks and islands to look like towers.

Soon after we found a group of about 1000 Common Dolphins but we were soon distracted by Blue Whales! In all there were about 8 in the area, but we stayed with one that repeatedly fluked on the last dive. Everyone managed close photographs of Blue Whale today. A little later a single Bryde's Whale was seen by a lucky few right in front of the boat but it had gone by the time the crew were alerted.

Afterwards we visited an area on mainland Baja called El Gato (the Cat) where many snorkelled. Birdwatching was difficult in the dense desert scrub but quite a list of species were seen; Green-tailed Towhees, California Quails, California Gnatcatchers, Cactus and Bewick's Wrens, Phainopepla, Grey Thrasher, Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks, Black-chinned Sparrows, Orange-crowned Warblers, Hooded Orioles, Lesser Goldfinches, Ladderbacked and Gila Woodpeckers and Costa's Hummingbird.

After dark we saw the bioluminescence from the tiny surface diatom *Noctiluca scintillans*, though sadly no dolphins bow rode among it.

## Day 11

Tuesday 5th March

### Santa Catalina

After breakfast we set off in search of the elusive Rattleless Rattlesnake of Santa Catalina (*Crotalus catalinensis*). This island is just 9 miles long yet holds the only population of this rare snake. We saw Phainopeplas, Cardinals, Black-throated Sparrows, Gila Woodpeckers and found a nest of Loggerhead Shrikes with three well grown young. After about an hour Margaret spotted our elusive quarry curled up under a bush. Nearly everyone managed to see and photograph this rare snake. We also saw Spiny-tailed and Santa Catalina Side-blotched Lizards (*Uta squamata*).

After our walk some people snorkeled and some had skiff rides among a pod of about 40 Bottlenose Dolphins. Some also saw Wandering Tattler and White-throated Swifts. After lunch Brian induced the local Dolphins to breach and bow ride which was an absolute treat. We then set off west and found several more Blue Whales, one of which was a great fluker. We stayed with this whale all afternoon enjoying it at really close range. We also spotted a distant Bryde's Whale and several Common Dolphins.



## Day 12

## Wednesday 6th March

### Los Islottes

We anchored early morning off Punto Colorado and went for an early morning walk. Very little bird life but we did see Cardinal and Phainopepla, plus the fossilized whale bones and turtle shell. We also saw some feeding Common Dolphins on the skiffs back to our boat. The sea was mirror calm as we sailed south towards Los Islottes (and Espiritu Santo) and we soon spotted no fewer than twenty Dwarf Sperm Whales, showing about as well as they do. We also saw two Bryde's Whale and a Humpback Whale, plus many Common Dolphins. We also saw lots of Mobulas and at least six Marlins.

We arrived at Los Islottes and many had an experience of a lifetime snorkeling with Sea Lions. The sea was brimming with fish in this area, including huge shoals of young herring. We then took skiff rides around the rocks to see the Blue-footed and Brown Boobies, Magnificent Frigatebirds, Brandt's Cormorants, Brown Pelicans and Yellow-footed Gulls. We then headed south and soon encountered a young Mako Shark at the surface which remained for all to see in the glassy water. There was also a Marlin and a Hammerhead, though less cooperative. As the sun set we ran into a pod of about 100 Common Dolphins which rode the wake in the sunset. A fantastic end to a fantastic holiday...

## Day 13

## Thursday 7th March

### San Jose del Cabo

For our final sailing into the harbour at Cabo san Lucas, we had seen our last few Humpback Whales. With great reluctance we said our thank you's and goodbyes to the crew who had looked after us impeccably, and to Scot who had been a pleasure to be with and had given us all the benefit of his deep understanding of the marine wildlife of this spectacular region.

With our direct flight, we now had about four hours spare. Most opted to be taken to the pretty town of San Jose del Cabo about twenty miles away, where we were assured the birdwatching was good. They were not wrong! Very close to the town is a freshwater wetland which is a Ramsar site, protected as one of the few breeding sites for the rare Belding's Yellowthroat, a Baja endemic. Within minutes of arriving we had seen a Belding's Yellowthroat with many more during our stay. Other additions to the trip list were White-faced Ibises, Ruddy Duck, Redhead, Cattle Egret and Gilded Flicker, among other good species like Tricoloured Heron, Cardinal, Black-headed Grosbeak, Cactus Wren, American Kestrel, Rough-winged Swallow, Cinnamon Teal and Gila Woodpeckers. We still had time for a coffee before the taxi to the airport. Around the airport there were quite a few birds to enjoy, including Cactus Wrens, Scrub Jays, Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, California Towhee, Verdin and Pyrruloxias.

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## Species Lists

### Birds

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March											
			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>		1		10	10							
2	Pacific Diver	<i>Gavia pacifica</i>				10	10							
3	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	10	2		1	10				1		2	
4	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	2											10
5	Western Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	30											
6	Laysan Albatross	<i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i>		1	2									
7	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		30	20									
8	Pink-footed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus creatopus</i>		2	2			20				1		
9	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>		10	2									
10	Black-vented Shearwater	<i>Puffinus opisthomelas</i>		50	200	50		20	10	100	20	20	5	
11	Black Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma melania</i>						1	5	1	20	2	5	
12	Least Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma microsoma</i>						20			10			
13	Red-billed tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>		1	1			1	4	4	2			
14	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>						4	30	10	50	20	50	50
15	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	40	10	20	100	50	5	50	10	40	20	50	50
16	White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	16			25								
17	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>		5					1		10	1	50	10
18	Blue-footed Booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>				1		1			10	5	100	
19	Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>		1				1						
20	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	10	20	20	20	30		20	3	10			20
21	Brandt's Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax penicillatus</i>	200	50		20	20						100	
22	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea Herodias</i>	10			5	5						2	2
23	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	10			10	10							2
24	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	20			5	5							2
25	Cattle Egret	<i>Bulbulcus ibis</i>												2
26	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	1				5							
27	Tricoloured Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>					5							2
28	Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>	1				10							
29	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>					5							1

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March											
			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	5				4							2
31	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax violacea</i>			1		3							1
32	White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>				1	30							
33	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>												12
34	Black Brant	<i>Branta bernicla nigricans</i>	20		30	200	400							
35	White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>	1											
36	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	30											
37	Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	20											
38	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	50											
39	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	20											30
40	Cinnamon Teal	<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>	1											5
41	Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	20				30							
42	American Wigeon	<i>Anas Americana</i>	50											2
43	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	10											10
44	Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	10				100							10
45	Redhead	<i>Aythya americana</i>												2
46	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	6				20							
47	Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	10											
48	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	50											
49	Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	10											
50	Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>	30			500	50			30				
51	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	10						50	50	20	10	10	20
52	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	10		2					1	2	1		1
53	Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	1											
54	Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>								1				
55	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1		10				2	1	1	2	2	2
56	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrines</i>		2							1		1	
57	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>										1		2
58	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperi</i>	5								1			
59	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>					1							
60	Californian quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>								2	10			
61	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	5											20

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March											
			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
62	American Coot	<i>Fulica Americana</i>	100											20
63	Clapper Rail	<i>Rallus longirostris</i>					Heard							
64	Black Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus bachmani</i>		30	2									
65	American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliates</i>		2	4						2	2		
66	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	20											
67	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferous</i>	1											
68	Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrines</i>						10						
69	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1		8			20						
70	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	5			1	2							
71	Willet	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>	20			5	50							
72	Wandering Tattler	<i>Heteroscelus incanus</i>										2		
73	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	2		1		1				1	1		2
74	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus</i>	5		5									
75	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	10			20	40							
76	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>	20			50	70							
77	Black Turnstone	<i>Arenaria melanocephala</i>			20									
78	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>					1							
79	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>					30							
80	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>				200	200							
81	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	5											
82	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>					2		1					
83	Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>		100	1									
84	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>		10				30			5			
85	Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>				2		2	2	1				
86	Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>					1				2			
87	Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>					2							
88	Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>	15	5	30	50	50	5	5	5	10	20	10	10
89	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	50			1	20							
90	California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	100	100	30	1	5	5	5	10	5	5		10
91	Yellow-footed Gull	<i>Larus livens</i>									50	50	30	
92	Western Gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>	100	50	200	30	30	5	10					10
93	American Herring Gull	<i>Larus smithsonianus</i>				1	5							

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March											
			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
94	Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>				1								
95	Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>				1					2			
96	Boneaparte's Gull	<i>Larus Philadelphia</i>		2					1					
97	Royal Tern	<i>Sterna maxima</i>	50	50	200	100	100					2		
98	Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>				1	20							
99	Elegant Tern	<i>Sterna elegans</i>							2					
100	Xantus' Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus hypoleucus</i>		10										
101	Craveri's Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus craveri</i>		2	20			2	1		4	20	10	
102	Cassins' Auklet	<i>Ptychoramphus aleuticus</i>		100	200									
103	Rhinoceros Auklet	<i>Cyclorhynchus psittacula</i>		3										
104	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	c		2									
105	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>							30	20	1	5		20
106	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	5											
107	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	1											
108	Common Ground Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>							5	2				
109	Ruddy Ground Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>							3	1				2
110	Lilac-crowned Parrot	<i>Amazonia finschii</i>	8											
111	Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>							1	2				
112	White-throated Swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>	2									12		
113	Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>								2				
114	Lesser Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>							10					
115	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	20											
116	Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>							10	10	1	5	5	2
117	Xantus' Hummingbird	<i>Hylocharis xantusii</i>							8	10				
118	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>	1		1		1					1		1
119	Gilded Flicker	<i>Colaptes chrysoides</i>												5
120	Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>							5	5	5	6	1	20
121	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>								2	2			
122	Red-shafted Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>												
123	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>							2	2	2	2		
124	Pacific Slope Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficillis</i>								2	2	1		
125	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	5											

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March												
			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
126	Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis sayi</i>	1												
127	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>													5
128	Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	2												
129	Violet Green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>									2				
130	White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	1												
131	Western Scrub Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>	2												1
132	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	10		20					5	2	2	5		
133	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	C												
134	Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>								10	10	10	10	6	5
135	Wrentit	<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>	5												
136	Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>								2	2	5			10
137	Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>										1			
138	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>								10	5				
139	California Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliophtila californica</i>								2		10			
140	Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	8												
141	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	2							10	10	10	6		5
142	Gray Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma cinereum</i>								1	1	1			
143	European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	C												
144	Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>								2			10		
145	Gray Vireo	<i>Vireo vicinior</i>													
146	Hutton's Vireo	<i>Vireo huttoni</i>	1												
147	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	5												
148	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>								1	2	2			2
149	Mangrove Warbler	<i>Dendroica bryanti</i>						4							
150	Audubon's Warbler	<i>Dendroica auduboni</i>	40												5
151	Townsend's Warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>	10												
152	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	3												
153	Belding's Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis beldingi</i>													10
154	MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Oporornis philadelphia</i>	2												
155	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>								2	1		4	1	1
156	Pyrrhuloxia	<i>Cardinalis sinuatus</i>								5					2
157	Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>										1	2	1	

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March											
			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
158	Green-tailed Towhee	<i>Pipilo chlorurus</i>										5	2	
159	Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	1											
160	California Towhee	<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>	1											1
161	Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>							1		10	20		
162	San Benitos Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis sanctorum</i>			50									
163	Belding's Sparrow	<i>P. sandwichensis beldingi</i>	2				5							
164	Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	1											
165	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	5											
166	Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>							1					
167	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	C						C					C
168	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	2											
169	Oregon Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	3											
170	Scott's Oriole	<i>Icterus parisorum</i>							2	2				
171	Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>							20	10	10			20
172	House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	C						10			5		30
173	Lawrence's Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis lawrencei</i>	1											
174	Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>	5								30			5
175	Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>							2	2				2
176	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	20											
177	Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	4											
178	Tricoloured Blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>	2											
179	Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	2											
180	Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	2											

## Mammals

		February/March													
	Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	Grey Whale	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>		5		100	100								
2	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>			1			10			8	5			
3	Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>		10											
4	Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>		2											
5	Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>		1											
6	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>		8				3	50	20			1	5	
7	Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera brydei</i>									1	1	2		
8	Dwarf Sperm Whale	<i>Kogia simus</i>											20		
9	Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>				50	50				250	40			
10	Long-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus capensis</i>		200	400			400	50		1000	20	500		
11	Pacific White-sided Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus obliquidens</i>			2										
12	Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>													
13	California Sea Lion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	200	5	20		2				20		100		
14	Guadalupe Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus townsendi</i>			120										
15	Northern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>			500										
16	Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>				3									
17	Black-tailed Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>							1	2					
18	Whitetail Antelope Squirrel	<i>Ammospermophilus leucurus</i>							1	2					
19	California Ground Squirrel	<i>Citellus beecheyi</i>	5												

## Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!