

Baja California & Sea of Cortez

Naturetrek Tour Report

21 February - 6 March 2019



Dwarf Sperm Whales by Steve Joyner



Red-billed Tropicbird by Claire Sansom



Costa's Hummingbird by Michael Sansom



Grey Whale encounter by Peter Dunn

Report compiled by Peter Dunn & Rob Nawojchik
Images Courtesy of Michael & Claire Sansom, Steve Joyner & Peter Dunn



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Tour participants: Peter Dunn (leader), Rob Nawojchik (local naturalist) with 25 Naturetrek Clients
Crew of the Searcher: Captain Buzz Brizentine, Mike, Frank, Ryan and Bryce
Chefs: Dan and Roger (some of the crew and chef were captains in their own right)

Summary

Whale watching from a small boat is one of the best experiences to have and this is true of Baja where cetacean species are varied and at times plentiful. This particular tour had some magical moments; up close and personal with Grey Whales and we saw the best a Blue Whale can offer, when they fluke, and the huge tail is lifted out of the water. Humpbacks are always entertaining, and we had animals breaching continuously for over an hour. One day in the Sea of Cortez, with glass-like waters we saw a number of Dwarf Sperm Whales 'logging' and probably the rarest of them all, a sighting of what could only be Pygmy Beaked Whales. Add to this the birds and reptiles, swimming with Whale Sharks and exceptional weather, this tour can only be described as an astounding success.

Day 1

Thursday 21st February

London to San Diego

Eighteen of the group met up at the departure gate in Terminal Five and were soon boarding the flight to San Diego, which had quite a bit of spare space. The flight left on time and passed over Iceland and Greenland which were in full sunshine before curving down over Canada and the United States, eventually landing ahead of time at San Diego. The shock here was that it was raining and hail stoning and was a cool 13°C. After the usual customs and immigration checks, we gathered outside under shelter and were taken in groups to the Ramada Hotel where check in was quick. A few joined Peter for a fast-food supper of fish, meat or just a drink at Mitch's Seafood, just across the road, before we retired to bed pending our first full day in America.

Day 2

Friday 22nd February

San Diego area and leaving

The day dawned clear and cool after an unseasonably cold night but the rain had gone. Many had been awake since the early hours and those who ventured out before breakfast saw Lilac-crowned Parrot and the first of many Audubon's Warblers. Today most of the group had opted for the additional activity of some birdwatching accompanied by members of the local Audubon Society, whilst others were going to spend the day exploring San Diego.

The birdwatchers met with locals David, Rich and Susan after breakfast and set out on a short walk with the latter two along the harbour side where more Audubon's Warblers were seen together with many Western Grebes, some displaying, on the water. More familiar were European Starlings and House Sparrows but a highlight was watching the hummingbirds on the garden flowers, Two species were identified, Anna's, a common resident of California and Allen's, a recent settler to the area. Both Great and Little Blue Herons were seen here and Song Sparrows and House Finches were singing from most vegetation.

Returning to the hotel we boarded a bus and drove to Lindo Lake which was teeming with wildlife. Most obvious were the various species of waterfowl, some familiar such as Northern Shoveler and Mallard but some

very 'American' with Ring-necked Duck, American Wigeon and Ruddy Duck in good numbers, plus a few Cinnamon Teal and a Buffleheads. On the shoreline American White Pelicans preened and slept alongside Ring-billed, California and Western Gulls and Red-winged, Tricolored and Brewer's Blackbirds frequented the trees and rushes on the fringes. A surprise find was a pair of Cedar Waxwings which appeared to be displaying in the trees along with more warblers and diminutive Ruby-crowned Kinglets. At one point we were entertained by a Botta's Pocket Gopher busy pulling vegetation down its burrow, oblivious to our presence and to the Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks flying overhead.

We left the lake and headed up into the hills to the Audubon Reserve of Silverwoods, where the landscape was littered with huge boulders and the vegetation was dominated by Oak trees, mostly new growth after a devastating fire in 2003. Here at the picnic tables, we had our packed lunches viewing the bird feeders but because of the unseasonably cold and previous wet weather, activity was very quiet, and we only added Oak Titmouse, Cooper's Hawk and a California Scrub Jay to our list.

Heading back to the city our final stop was alongside the San Diego river, where a pair of Osprey were nesting and the mud banks were littered with Marbled Godwits, various gull species and American Wigeon. We were soon picking out other species here to add to the list such a Reddish Egret 'running about' frantically after food, and other waders such as Willet, Greater Yellowlegs and Long-billed Curlew. One or two huge Caspian Terns were seen and we were entertained by a flock of Horned Larks feeding on the rough weedy ground nearby and a big blue Belted Kingfisher watching the water from its bank-side perch.

Soon it was time to return to the hotel and we bade farewell to Rich and Susan, thanking them for an insight into the bird life of their home town. We started the process of moving the baggage from the hotel to the dock across the road where we were introduced to our home for the next 10 nights, the Searcher. We were greeted by Rob, the ship's naturalist and Celia the co-owner and shown to our cosy cabins where we stored our bags before partaking in some refreshments and getting an evening meal back ashore.

At 8pm all the group, including those independent travellers who had arrived today, met up in the ship's 'lounge' and had a welcome, orientation and safety briefing from the owners, Art & Celia, and were introduced to captain Buzz and his crew, Mike, Frank, Ryan and Bryce, cooks Dan and Roger and naturalist Rob.

We cast off just after 9pm and slowly sailed out of the harbour, marvelling at the huge red moon above the bright lights of downtown San Diego and all the noise and helicopters from the nearby military bases. We slowed down at some bait pens as we left to see (and hear) our first California Sea Lions, who were accompanied by herons, egrets and Brandt's Cormorants all looking for an easy meal. Afterwards, we headed out into the Pacific Ocean where we retired to our rooms for our first night aboard.

Day 3

Saturday 23rd February

Ensenada and the Pacific Ocean.

The engines stopped just after 6am which was the indication that we were at the Mexican port of Ensenada where customs officials boarded the boat to accept our entry into Mexico and give us our entry visas. This all occurred while many were still asleep and was one of the best entries into a foreign country many had experienced!

As we sailed out of Ensenada harbour in the cool light of day, we saw a few Black Skimmers resting on the banks together with feeding Grey Plover and Caspian Terns and several Surf Scoter in the water. After breakfast we arrived at Todos Santos, an island for nesting birds and added Peregrine, Black Oystercatcher and Pelagic Cormorant to our bird list, while mammal interest came in the form of three pinnipeds, Harbour Seal, California Sea Lion and some huge Northern Elephant seals hauled out on the small beach.

The rest of the day was spent steadily sailing south pausing for wildlife sightings such as a pod of about 100 Short-beaked Common Dolphin that visited the boat – a strange collection of young animals - and a number of migrating Grey Whales. For the birders, there were increasing numbers of Black-vented Shearwater, Cassin's Auklets and later Craveri's Murrelets, with occasional sightings of both Bonaparte's and Heermann's Gulls.

We finished the day with a healthy beef stew prepared by Dan and Roger, followed by a rundown of the next day's activities and a lecture on pinnipeds given by Rob, after which Peter completed the checklist for those who required it. Most had headed to bed by 9pm after a varied and exciting first full day on the Searcher.

Day 4

Sunday 24th February

San Benitos Islands

As the day dawned at 6am, people were up getting their morning cuppa and watching a glorious sunrise with clear skies. We were approaching the San Benitos Island chain and after breakfast we were to land on the large western island.

This was our first skiff landing so Buzz talked us through the procedure and soon we were all safely off the boat and ashore. Rob was taking most of the group on a circular walk of the island whilst Peter took eight along the southern shore to look for wildlife. We had our packed lunches with us and we set off to explore.

Both groups managed to see Elephant Seal and a few saw the rarer Guadalupe Fir Seal, American Oystercatcher, breeding Osprey and the local Peregrine. One group found a Costa's Hummingbird whilst the others saw Black-chinned Sparrow. Painted Ladies and Western Pygmy Blue butterflies were on the lower slopes while higher up some saw Horned Larks. All over the island the endemic races of Side-blotched Lizard and Savannah Sparrow were seen.

After a good five to six hours ashore we returned to the Searcher where Roger and Dan had a nice afternoon snack of fried chicken prepared for us. We then started the journey south aiming for the famous Ignacio Lagoon, the next day. On the way we saw the distant blow of a whale which managed to avoid us and a small number of Short-beaked Common Dolphin came briefly to the bow. Meanwhile all the time, shearwaters and auklets passed by.

That evening we dined on swordfish and Rob spoke to us about cetaceans after which Peter completed the checklist before we retired to bed.

Day 5

Monday 25th February

San Ignacio Lagoon

As the day dawned, we were approaching San Ignacio Lagoon, and in the bright orange morning light, Common Dolphins were swimming with the boat. As we prepared for breakfast, captain Buzz briefed us on the day ahead and what to expect in the Lagoon. We crossed the sand bar with Bottlenose Dolphins following the boat and a pair of 'spooned' Pomarine Skuas harassing Royal Terns.

Once we had anchored up, the pangas came over from the shore, we divided into three groups and had four sessions out in the Lagoon during the day. The morning sessions were just magical, with calm water and some very friendly Grey Whales, where everyone had the opportunity to get up close and personal with a massive animal! All the time, animals were spy-hopping around us and females with young encouraged them to approach the boat.

The afternoon sessions were good but with a little more wind and livelier water. We saw plenty of whales, some of which were spy-hopping and breaching but a few came up for personal attention. The day was better than most could imagine and smiles on faces and the excited chatter over dinner indicated how good it was.

At 8pm Captain Buzz turned off the lights and generator for half an hour and we marvelled at the huge star filled sky and the noise of whales "blowing" across the lagoon.

Day 6

Tuesday 26th February

San Ignacio Lagoon

The day dawned again with the sounds of Grey Whales blowing and huge lines of Brandt's Cormorants moving out from roost to feed in the Lagoon. The morning was again spent in the pangas, watching whales and we all had close encounters again with friendly whales. Added to this many Bottlenose Dolphins had moved into the bay to chase fish and a large gathering of American White Pelicans appeared on the shoreline.

At lunch time the local conservation group had brought shirts, sweatshirts and grey whale carvings to sell and many of the group purchased gifts.

In the afternoon 11 members went with Peter into the mangroves whilst the rest went back out whale watching. The mangrove group added many species including different herons such as Tricoloured and Yellow-Crowned Night Heron, waders like Greater Yellowlegs, a Ridgeway's Rail (recently split from Clapper Rail), Clark's Grebe and a brief view of a Mangrove Warbler. (Now accepted as a separate species to American Yellow Warbler).

The last trip of the day was again divided with whale watchers getting close personal attention from a Grey Whale, while two pangas went to the beach shoreline where Rob gave some expert information about a dead grey whale which was washed up, together with a short beach combing session.

Returning to the Searcher after our last Lagoon session we said bye to the pangeros for their expert driving, knowledge of whale finding and good humour and our boat made its way out of the Lagoon and through the sand bar.

We started to sail south into the night, enjoying a pork dinner and later listening to Rob talk about toothed whales and completing our checklist with Peter.

Day 7

Wednesday 27th February

Magdalene Bay

Another beautiful sunrise and the air felt a little warmer, as the sun rose in the east. Just before breakfast a few lucky observers saw a Laysan Albatross fly past the boat and a few summer-plumaged Sabine's Gulls appeared. Soon after breakfast the first whale blows were spotted along with some breaching by distant Humpbacks. However, a tall blow attracted our attention and suddenly there were two Blue Whales crossing the bow of the boat. We stopped and waited and soon re-found one of them and it proceeded to feed in the area for over two hours affording excellent views of the largest mammal on earth. We were lucky to witness its one and only 'fluke' as the tail was raised to dive, when it was facing away from us close to the front of the boat, eliciting a round of applause from the admiring group. All the time this whale was performing we had tantalising views of other cetaceans, mostly Humpbacks and some Common Dolphins, but a smart Fin Whale also showed on several occasions.

During all this time the birders in the back were also having success with more Sabine's Gulls and a distant Black-footed Albatross.

Eventually we had to drag ourselves away and the rest of the day was spent travelling south, stopping to observe breaching and 'pec-slapping' Humpbacks with other highlights being Loggerhead Turtles, a flying fish and more shearwaters, including Pink-footed. An adult and young Brown Booby circled the boat and the latter decided to land next to the crow's nest alongside Ryan for company. The birders added another Black-footed Albatross, an adult Long-tailed Skua and one group member had a tantalising view of a pterodroma petrel which could not be identified.

Dinner tonight was followed by Rob's talk on mangrove ecology and the usual checklist.

Day 8

Thursday 28th February

Gorda Bank & Punta Arenas

Another beautiful dawn and smooth seas as we turned the corner into the gulf of California with the lights of Cabo San Luca and San Jose del Cabo on our port side. As the light strengthened, we had both Bottlenose and Common Dolphins visit the bow briefly and later we started to see Humpbacks. The Brown Booby that roosted on the mast was joined by three Magnificent Frigate birds at one point.

During the course of the morning more and more Humpbacks were found and a smart Red-billed Tropicbird overflew the boat. One humpback started to breach and continued for an hour with others in the area reciprocating with breaches (both back and chin slaps), flipper slapping and tail-lobbing. Megabytes of data was used with the amounts of photos taken.

The plan for after lunch was a mainland landing at Los Frailles but the wind had increased making it unsafe to do so. Buzz told us we would go to the shelter of Punta Arenas which should be sheltered and although the wind was less, the swell was too high to get people into the skiff, so a landing was sadly abandoned. However, in preparation for swimming with whale sharks, a snorkelling session was done from the Searcher so those that were taking part in this had a chance to try out their equipment and boost their confidence.

As the anchorage was calmer than out in the gulf, we decided to stay to have our dinner in comfort watching the sun go down over the mountains of the Baja Peninsula.

Tonight's talk, following dinner was about marine mammal biology after which folks retired to bed, full of great expectations for tomorrow's whale shark experience.

Day 9

Friday 1st March

La Paz and Los Islote

After a bumpy first half of the night, the dawn was calm with clear skies as we approached the town of La Paz and the whale shark experience. Following breakfast we got prepared and eventually three pangas arrived and we went out to either swim or view the sharks. Each panga had its own experiences, some even visiting a Blue-footed Booby colony, but we all got our own whale shark experience, be it in the water or from the pangas. It was clearly a wonderful opportunity as the talk, when we returned to the Searcher, was never ending. Some of the birders had added the Yellow-footed Gull and also Laughing Gull to the list whilst anchored in the bay.

We lifted anchor around 10:45 and started to head back out into the Sea of Cortez with a plan to skiff ride and snorkel around Los Ilotes after lunch.

The weather remained sunny and warm, with a refreshing breeze, as we took our skiff ride around the islands, where there were many California Sea Lions on and around the rocks. Overhead were continuous processions of Magnificent Frigatebirds, Blue-footed Boobies and Turkey Vultures. A pair of Peregrines and a Raven were seen, and one skiff found a Wandering Tattler on the rocks which was seen later from the Searcher. After the ride, a good majority of the group kitted up and returned to the water to snorkel near the islands accompanied by young sea lions and mesmerised by the many brightly coloured rock/reef fish.

Once back on board, the Searcher headed towards San Jose Island while we enjoyed a dinner of lamb chops and upside-down pineapple cake followed by Robs talk on the history and formation of Baja and the checklist.

Day 10

Saturday 2nd March

Isla San Jose and Colorado Point

Most of the group were on deck before dawn awaiting the sunrise. When the first rays of light break the horizon the rocks of Colorado Point start to glow against the darker background affording wonderful photos.

Following breakfast, we were skiffed over to the island where we had a leisurely walk up the dry arroyo learning about the geology and plants from Rob while a group birded with Peter. Some of the bird highlights were White-

throated Swift, Verdin, Costa's Hummingbird, California Gnatcatcher and an Ash-throated Flycatcher and amongst the many plants were three species of Elephant tree, Ocotillos and two species of Cholla cactus and a magnificent red wasp called a Tarantula Hawk was nectaring on Milkweed. After two hours we returned to the Searcher where, after refreshment, the snorkelers went out for an hour with Rob to explore the life under water.

Once back on-board lunch was served and we spent the rest of the day exploring the Sea of Cortez for whales. The water was glass-like and still and we headed out over the shelf edge. Three distant, strange looking cetaceans caught our eye, looking bigger than dolphin but with a harbour porpoise-like dorsal fin but while we pondered two more cetaceans appeared nearer to us and proved to be a cow and calf Dwarf Sperm Whales. The crew and group were elated and we were able to watch these in the perfect conditions for at least 20 minutes. We then returned to looking for the original mystery animals and they were again seen, this time slightly closer, and the size and dorsal shape was confusing until the crew suggested they could be Pygmy Beaked Whales. The experts on board decided that this was a possibility as it had been previously suggested that they were beaked whales, even originally considering Cuvier's. However, the fin shape and colour was wrong. As with most beaked whales, they disappeared soon afterwards but their appearance was the bulk of the talk for the rest of the day. Surprisingly three more Dwarf Sperm Whales were seen, two quite close to the Searcher, and photographed well. What a great day!

We did not find any more cetaceans during the afternoon, apart from a few Bottlenose Dolphins, but we finished with a fine display of both Black and Least Storm Petrels, feeding over the water in front of Isla Santa Catalina, where we moored for the night.

Dinner that evening was a fish and rice dish, finished with peach cobbler and ice cream, after which Rob outlined the next two days itinerary and gave his final talk on marine mammal evolution.

Day 11

Sunday 3rd March

Isla Catalina

Yet another bright sunny morning with the sun rising behind Santa Catalina. As we prepared for our walk, a pod of Bottlenose Dolphins 'sailed' past and rafts of Black-necked Grebes drifted to shore from the open sea where they had roosted overnight.

Suitably attired we were 'skiffed' to the shore where we gathered and walked at various paces up the dry arroyo, first checking a flat area, unfortunately unsuccessfully, for the Rattleless Rattle Snake. The walk extended into three groups, those who wanted a brisk walk, a group with Rob and a slower birding group with Peter. The huge Cardon Cactus and Wavy Barrel Cactus were a feature here and were the subject of many photos, as some had started to flower. Bird life was more active early on before the temperature rose and most saw noisy Ash-throated Flycatchers, Black-throated Sparrows, Ladder-backed and Gila Woodpeckers and Northern Mockingbirds. Searching for snakes, we located several other reptiles, such as Emerald-tailed Side-blotched Lizard and Catalina Side-blotched Lizard but no live snakes were found, although Rob found a snake skeleton.

Returning to the Searcher, the snorkelers suited up and went for a swim with Rob near to the 'elephant' rock before lunch. Many more rock and reef fish were seen and photographed such as Panamic Fanged Blenny and

Giant Hawkfish but as the water was a little cloudy the snorkelers returned aboard early and we lunched at anchor before setting sail to do our afternoon whale watch.

We headed north and passed Montserrat island and started to see whale blows in the distance. The first pair we came across were Fin Whales, which passed slowly past the Searcher showing the diagnostic fin and the pale chevron over the back. A short time later we saw a Blue Whale, which came 'steaming' past us and headed north. Then things got a little confused as we started seeing blows in all directions. Some were identified as Blue, others as Fins but two smaller blows in the sun aroused our interest. The crew spotters and Peter both thought these were Bryde's Whales, after a curved back 'rose-thorn' type fin was seen and they were smaller than the Fin Whales. However, they motored south as we approached and we lost sight of them, after which we crossed paths with another Fin Whale which confused the matter even more. We spent the rest of the afternoon 'bouncing' from one Fin Whale to Blue to Fin before we finally had to break off and head south.

We moored up close to Montserrat where we had an outside barbecue meal of ribs, salad, black beans and walnut cake all washed down with margaritas, after which Peter showed a short film of some of the highlights of the trip.

The Searcher lifted anchor and continued the journey south so we could spend our last day at San Francisco Island.

Day 12

Monday 4th March

Isla San Francisco

One thing that could be said for this tour, the morning weather was consistent, and it was another beautiful sunrise with clear skies as we drifted into the flooded caldera of Isla San Francisco.

After breakfast we had the usual landing of two groups, hikers with Rob and birders with Peter, not before we witnessed an American fisherman land a huge yellowtail tuna. This was to our benefit, as he traded it with the crew for some beers and was to be our afternoon sushi snack!

The walkers headed up the hillside on a narrow path to get super views over the island and over to the headland and they also spied a Blue Whale from here! Meanwhile the birders searched the 'cactus garden' area and amongst the usual Black-throated Sparrows, Verdin and Costa's Hummingbirds found a winter male Lazuli Bunting. We returned to the shore to be picked up by the skiffs after two hours, disturbing a Snowy Plover in the process and the snorkelers went out for their final session near the rocks while others swam from the beach or just lazed in the sun.

Following a fine lunch, we headed out to start the journey back towards Cabo San Luca, whale watching as we went. It was quiet on this afternoon's leg with only a brief sighting of what was probably a cow and calf Fin Whale, a mobula ray, single Common Dolphin and Red-billed Tropicbird but good numbers of Grey and Red-necked Phalaropes. Highlight was the sushi platter arranged by chef Roger!

That evening we enjoyed a final dinner cooked by chefs Roger and Dan and served by Captain Buzz who later ran through the disembarking procedure. We said our thanks to them and the rest of the crew, Mike, Frank,

Ryan and Bryce and not forgetting Rob, a man with a wealth of knowledge, for all their hard work in making this tour such a success.

Day 13

Tuesday 5th March

Disembark and Journey home

When we awoke, we were already moored up at the fuel quay in Cabo and after a continental breakfast we started the process of the long journey home. Three taxis had been ordered and we were duly disembarked, said our fond farewells to the crew and were allotted our ride. Some were staying, some were going early and others had arranged their own flights but all were accounted for. For those who were travelling later, we stopped at San Jose del Cabo where we were given two hours of freedom to shop, relax or bird the estuary, while the taxi drivers minded our luggage.

The small group of birders walked 'the estuary' which was a small vegetation-fringed stream flowing to the sea. It had been ravaged by a hurricane in 2015 but now scrub and bushes had returned and it was very rewarding with 43 species of birds seen or heard. Highlights and new species included a female Xantus's Hummingbird feeding right next to us (a Baja endemic). Several Belding's Yellowthroats (another endemic) as well as Hooded Orioles, Wilson's, Audubon's, Yellow and Orange-crowned Warblers were also seen. On the stream were Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, White-faced Ibis and various waders. After a fulfilling walk, we returned to the main street where we took refreshments at the Tropicana Hotel café and then boarded the taxis at 11am to the airport.

The check-in and security were quick and easy and we were soon flying into Los Angeles on an empty aircraft, where we collected bags, cleared immigration and put them back into the transfer desk and headed for the gate for our flight to London.

The flight to London was also not full and was comfortable in an Airbus A380. It left on time and with a 200mph tail wind we sped across America and the Atlantic.

Day 14

Wednesday 6th March

Arrival in London

The flight arrived ahead of time into a quiet Heathrow where we sped through immigration and quickly located our bags. For those who flew back to Heathrow there were fond farewells at the baggage carousel after an exciting and memorable trip to one of the best whale watching areas in the world.

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Swimming with a
Whale Shark by Peter Dunn

Species Lists

Mammals (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March 2019												
			22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	
1	California Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>	2												
2	Botta's Pocket Gopher	<i>Thomomys bottae</i>	2												
3	Guadalupe Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus townsendi</i>			12										
4	California Sea Lion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	✓	✓	2			✓	✓	✓	✓				
5	Northern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>		8	✓										
6	Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>		14											
7	Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>										2			
8	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>						2				3	1		
9	Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>						2				5	2		
10	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>						14	✓						
11	Grey Whale	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>		16		✓	✓								
12	Long-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus capensis</i>			10			50	✓						
13	Short-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>		100		✓							✓		
14	Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓		20			
15	Dwarf Sperm Whale	<i>Kogia sima</i>									5				
16	Pygmy Beaked Whale	<i>Mesoplodon peruvianus</i>									3				

Birds

1	Brant Goose (Black)	<i>Branta bernicla nigricans</i>			4									
2	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	2											
3	Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	1											
4	Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	✓											
5	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Spatula discors</i>												✓
6	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	✓											
7	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	4											
8	American Wigeon	<i>Mareca americana</i>	✓											
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓											
10	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	2											

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March 2019											
			22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5
11	Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas carolinensis</i>												✓
12	Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	10											
13	Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	5				2							
14	Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>		10	6	✓	30							
15	Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	6											
16	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>				1	3							
17	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	20											
18	Red-throated Diver (Loon)	<i>Gavia stellata</i>		1										
19	Pacific Diver (Loon)	<i>Gavia pacifica</i>		1		2	1							
20	Great Northern Diver (Common Loon)	<i>Gavia immer</i>				✓	✓							
21	Laysan Albatross	<i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i>						1						
22	Black-footed Albatross	<i>Phoebastria nigripes</i>			1			2						
23	Least Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma microsoma</i>								2	10			
24	Black Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma melania</i>								20	50	3	10	
25	Pink-footed Shearwater	<i>Ardenna creatopus</i>		2	1			10					1	
26	Black-vented Shearwater	<i>Puffinus opisthomelas</i>		✓	✓		1	✓	10	✓	3			
27	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	4				1							
28	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	2	4			4	1		✓	2	50	✓	
29	Western Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓		1								
30	Clark's Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>					1							
31	Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>						1	1	3	2		1	
32	American White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>				✓	15							
33	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>												2
34	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	5				1							1
35	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>					5							
36	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	✓	3			4			1			1	1
37	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	2			1	6							2
38	Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>	1			1	7						1	1
39	Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>					3							
40	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	2				5							
41	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	✓				8					1	6	30
42	American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	20				60							

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March 2019											
			22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5
43	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
44	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>						10	✓	✓	✓		✓	
45	Blue-footed Booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>								✓	2	6	2	
46	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>						2	1	✓		1		
47	Brandt's Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax penicillatus</i>	✓	✓	1	✓	✓		✓	✓	3	✓	✓	✓
48	Pelagic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i>		1										
49	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	✓	3	1		1			1				
50	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	2			2	10		10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
51	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	2		4		2					4	2	2
52	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	3											1
53	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>					1							
54	Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	1											
55	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	7		2					1	1			
56	Ridgway's Rail	<i>Rallus obsoletus</i>					1							
57	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	✓											
58	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	✓											
59	Black Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus bachmani</i>		1										
60	American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>			2								2	
61	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	2											
62	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		2										
63	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>												4
64	Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius nivosus</i>											1	
65	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>					2							
66	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	1			1	✓							
67	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓							
68	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>				✓	2		4					
69	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>				✓	4							
70	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>				✓	✓							
71	Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>				20								20
72	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>									4		2	
73	Grey (Red) Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>		10	5			100	2	2		8	✓	
74	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	1	1										2

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March 2019												
			22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	
75	Wandering Tattler	<i>Tringa incana</i>									1				
76	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>													2
77	Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	✓			✓	5								
78	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	1				18								2
79	Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>		11											
80	Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>						40			4				
81	Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus philadelphia</i>		8				1	6		3	5			
82	Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>								1				1	
83	Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>		2	12	3	✓	✓					✓	✓	
84	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	✓	✓			8								
85	California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓					
86	Western Gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1					✓
87	Yellow-footed Gull	<i>Larus livens</i>								6	✓	✓	✓		
88	American Herring Gull	<i>Larus smithsonianus</i>			1										
89	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>						2							
90	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	1	3	1		1			2				1	
91	Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>			5	✓	✓	✓	1	✓		4			
92	Elegant Tern	<i>Thalasseus elegans</i>												3	
93	Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>								H					
94	Pomarine Skua (Jaeger)	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>				3	4								
95	Arctic Skua (Parasitic Jaeger)	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>		1			2								
96	Long-tailed Skua (Jaeger)	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>						1							
97	Scripps's Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus scrippsi</i>		1				2							
98	Craveri's Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus craveri</i>		✓							✓				
99	Cassin's Auklet	<i>Ptychoramphus aleuticus</i>		✓	✓										
100	Rhinoceros Auklet	<i>Cerorhinca monocerata</i>		4											
101	Rock Dove (Feral)	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>													✓
102	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	1		1										✓
103	Common Ground Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>													✓
104	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	2												
105	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>													✓
106	White-throated Swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>									15	6			

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March 2019											
			22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5
107	Xantus's Hummingbird	<i>Basilinna xantusii</i>												1
108	Black-chinned Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>			1									
109	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	6											
110	Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>			1					4	1	4		
111	Allen's Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>	6											
112	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	1											1
113	Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>										3		✓
114	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates scalaris</i>										2		
115	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	1		1				2					1
116	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			1					2		1		
117	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	4											1
118	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>									1	4		
119	Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>										1		
120	California Scrub Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>	1											
121	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	✓											
122	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓							1		2	1	1
123	Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	2											
124	Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>												2
125	Oak Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	4											
126	Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>									6	1	2	3
127	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	2											
128	Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>												H
129	Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>										1	1	
130	California Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila californica</i>									3			
131	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>									1	2		✓
132	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓											✓
133	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>												✓
134	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	✓									2		✓
135	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	✓											
136	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	1											
137	Savannah Sparrow (San Benito)	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis sanctorum</i>			✓									
138	Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>									1	6	5	

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			22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5
139	Hooded Oriole (Western)	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>												✓
140	Tricolored Blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>	6											
141	Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	5											
142	Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	✓											✓
143	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	3											
144	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis celata</i>										1		1
145	Belding's Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis beldingi</i>												3
146	American Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga aestiva</i>												1
147	Mangrove Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>					1							
148	Audubon's Warbler	<i>Setophaga auduboni</i>	✓											5
149	Wilson's Warbler	<i>Cardellina pusilla</i>												1
150	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>										4		
151	Lazuli Bunting	<i>Passerina amoena</i>											1	

Reptiles

1	Loggerhead Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>						2	1					
2	Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>				4	1			2			1	
3	Santa Catalina Spiny Lizard	<i>Sceloporus lineatulus</i>										1		
4	San Pedro Side-blotched Lizard	<i>Uta palmeri</i>								3				
5	Emerald-tailed Side-blotched Lizard	<i>Uta squamata</i>										1		
6	Side-blotched Lizard	<i>Uta stansburiana</i>			✓							2	✓	

Other Taxa

Sally Lightfoot Crab, <i>Grapsus Grapsus</i>	Pelagic Red Crab, <i>Pleuroncodes planipes</i>	Clouded Sulphur, <i>Colias philodice</i>	Western Sulphur, <i>Colias occidentalis</i>
Cloudless Sulphur, <i>Phoebis sennae</i>	Western Pygmy-Blue, <i>Brephidium exile</i>	West Coast Lady, <i>Vanessa annabella</i>	Soldier, <i>Danaus eresimus</i>

Fish

Balloonfish, <i>Diodon holocanthus</i>	Barberfish, <i>Johnrandallia nigrirostris</i>	Cape Garden Eel, <i>Heteroconger pellegrini</i>
Blue and Gold Snapper, <i>Lutjanus viridus Bluechin</i>	California Flying Fish, <i>Cypselurus californicus</i>	Cortez Sea Chub, <i>Kyphosus elegans</i>
Cortez Rainbow Wrasse, <i>Thalassoma lucasanum</i>	Corel Hawkfish, <i>Oxycirrhites typus</i>	Cortez Damsel fish, <i>Stegastes rectifraenum</i>

Finescale Triggerfish, *Balistes polylepis*
 King Angelfish, *Holocanthus passer*
 Mexican Hogfish, *Bodianus diplotaenia*
 Needlefish, *Strongylura exilis*
 Pacific Creolefish, *Paranthias colonus*
 Remora (Suckerfish), *Remora remora*
 Smooth-tailed Mobula, *Mobula thurstoni*
 Yellowtail Surgeonfish, *Prionurus punctatus*
 Whale Shark, *Rhincodon typus*

Flag Cabrilla, *Epinephelus labriformis*
 Giant Hawkfish, *Cirrhitus rivulatus*
 Mexican Goatfish, *Mulloidichthys dentatus*
 Giant Damselfish, *Microspathodon dorsalis*
 Panamic Sergeant Major, *Abuldefduf troschelii*
 Scalloped Hammerhead Shark, *Sphyrna lewini*
 Spotted Sharpnose Puffer, *Canthigaster punctatissima*
 Yellowtail Tuna, *Thunnus albacares*
 Thresher Shark sp., *Alopias sp*

Grey-barred Grunt, *Conodon nobilis*
 Leopard Grouper, *Mycteroperca rosacea*
 Moorish Idol, *Zanclus canescens*
 Guineafowl Puffer, *Arothron meleagris*
 Reef Cornetfish, *Fistularia commersonii*
 Scissortail Chromis, *Chromis atrilobata*
 Tinsel squirrelfish, *Sargocentron suborbitale*
 Spottail Grunt, *Haemulon maculicauda*

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A Baja sunset by Peter Dunn