

# Birding Southern California with trips to Southeast Arizona and Baja California

December 04 - December 05

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## Introduction

During the year 2005 I and Tom van Noort, both post-graduate biology students from [Wageningen University](#) in The Netherlands, worked at the [Entomology Department of the UC Riverside](#). During this working year, which unfortunately took a weekend every now and then during spring, we were able to get a decent ornithological picture of the riches that are still to be found in this heavily populated area. Since we did not make an actual birding trip but several short trips instead, there is not a logical structure in this report. However, I split the birded areas into the following areas:

1. Riverside and surroundings, including the San Bernardino Co.
2. Salton Sea area (Riverside and Imperial Co's)
3. The closest coastal areas (Orange Co)
4. The Mojave Desert (San Bernardino Co)
5. The Monterey Bay area (Monterey Co), including Stanislaus Co. and surroundings
6. Yosemite N.P (Mariposa Co)
7. Southeast Arizona
8. Santa Cruz Island (Ventura Co)
9. Baja California (Mexico)

Sometimes I give rather accurate locations, but sometimes I forgot to note down where I saw a species more exactly, which might be the case in Yosemite NP. The maps connected to the links are from [maps.google.com](#) or, in the case of the two images used in the Yosemite NP section, from the downloadable and fantastic [earth.google.com](#). In the report I **highlight** species that are localized or overall scarce and/or hard to find in the specific area. This might have as a consequence that a species like Short-eared owl, which is not very unfamiliar to northern birders, is highlighted since in CA it is far from an every day bird.

## Costs and living

In spite of the soaring gas prices, gas was still very cheap compared to Europe. Rental cars are possibly cheaper than in The Netherlands, a nice thing since many a kilometer or mile has to be traveled to get a grip on the birds! Food was not more expensive than in The Netherlands and since we often camped, lodging wasn't expensive either. Campgrounds, as many of you possibly can attest, are often well equipped and often nicely set-up. Literally always, as far as we have experienced, has every camping spot its own bbq grill! This is a good thing to know if you don't take it too keen with Healthy Living!

## Problems and Other Annoyances

People we met were always very helpful and friendly and never have we experienced any hostility towards us, being Dutch.

## Books and other information sources

- Joe Cummings (2004) [Moon Handbooks Baja](#). *Avalon Travel Publishing*
- Brad Schram (1998) ABA/Lane birdfinding guide. [A Birder's Guide to Southern California](#). *American Birding Association, Inc.*
- D.A. Sibley (2000) National Audubon Society The Sibley Guide to Birds. *Alfred A. Knopf Publishers, New York*
- Richard C. Taylor (2005) ABA/Lane birdfinding guide. [A Birder's Guide to Southeastern Arizona](#). *American Birding Association, Inc*
- Mel White (1999) [National Geographic guide to Birdwatching Sites. Western US](#). *The National Geographic Society.*
- Michelin 2005 Road Atlas USA/Canada/Mexico. *Michelin North America, Inc*

Helpful too are the Yahoo! Groups:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/inlandcountybirds/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CALBIRDS/>

The former functions “to report bird sightings in Riverside, San Bernardino and Imperial Counties.” and the latter “CALBIRDS is for discussion of wild birds and birdwatching in California only”. As one can imagine, they're invaluable for finding rare migrants throughout your stay.

We always rented our cars at [Budget](#) which was just around the corner from our second house in Riverside CA. Their cars are good, prices modest and the people friendly, so I can recommend them.

## The Birds!

### 1. [Riverside and surroundings](#), including San Bernardino Mts.

- [Sycamore Canyon](#) and apartment complex there

We lived until June 05 at the Canyon Creek apartment complex, located at 600 Central Avenue in the southeastern corner of Riverside and immediately adjacent to the Westside of the Sycamore Canyon. The Sycamore Canyon served as our local patch and Sunday afternoon stroll area. This area consists basically of grassy hills with a small, tree lined stream and some construction fields on the east side where Shorelarks winter. Here, we made our first impressions with CA birdlife. I will mention some more special birds below.

Apparently, there is, at least in January, a blackbird-roost at the small reedy pond next to building 6659 [Sycamore Canyon Boulevard](#), S.C. Business Park just east of the Sycamore Canyon. Here, we found the near-endemic **Tricolored blackbird** together with the more common red-winged blackbirds. We were only able to safely identify females Tricoloreds, we were not able to detect usable differences between the males of both closely related species. Further birds of notice here during the winter months were flocks of Shorelarks, a hunting **Short-eared owl**, a group of flyby Canada geese and a pair of Mountain bluebirds. Vesper sparrows are present here as well during the year in the high grass, check for their white outer-tail feathers and a real treat are the localized and erratic **Lawrence's goldfinches** of

which we observed a group of 20 on January 29st. We saw this species with some regularity on the Canyon Creek apartment complex, for instance a pair on March 26<sup>th</sup> –perhaps local breeders? Omni-present birds are Housefinches, Lesser and to a lesser degree American goldfinches, Ruby-crowned kinglets, Yellow-rumped warblers and Hermit thrush during the winter months. Say's phoebe is regularly encountered as are **Nuttall's woodpeckers**. We had Downy woodpecker just once in our canyon. Both Canyon and Rock wren occur in the canyon as well, the latter more common than the former.

Spring arrived on March 25<sup>th</sup> at our housing complex, as we observed both Bullock's and Hooded oriole within five minutes from each other. Too, we had our first Pine siskins for the Riverside lowlands on this date. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, we had our first Olive-sided flycatcher for California here and a surprisingly scarce Townsend's warbler.

- *San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Mystic Lake and Lake Perris*

These three areas are all very close to each other, located east and southeast of Moreno Valley, a city adjacent located in between the I-60 and Hw 215. For more precise locations, I gladly refer to the ABA guide, mentioned in the Introduction. The wildlife area is open for hunting on certain days of the week, so beware of that. Here, many ducks are found on the ponds, some reedbirds and waders. Mystic Lake, if you are in a wet year, is full of interesting waterfowl and the neighboring fields can hold exciting species as Mountain Plovers and longspurs in the right time of the year. We visited these areas several times and I will give the daily reports below, in

[San Jacinto Wildlife Area](#) (p.211-212)

#### **24.12.04**

1300-1430, fine weather: no wind, pleasant temperature.

A first, though relatively short and hasty, visit to this interesting marshy area. Several man made ponds & some willows. Lots of waterfowl and apparently well worth another intensive visit. Highlights of course the superb adult fly-by Bald eagle, the magnificent Canvasbacks & the adult male Vermillion flycatcher (not a lifer though). Many not identified dowitcher sp., because of shortage in time! Ferruginous hawk and White-tailed kite (3) were rather attractive too, together with the glimpsed Sora! Other birds included: Eared grebe 3, Pied-billed grebe 2, plenty of Green-winged teal, Gadwall, Northern shoveler and Northern pintails, American wigeon 10, Cinnamon teal 3, Redhead 1m, Common merganser 3m, Ruddy duck 50, Northern harrier 10 female-types, Common moorhen 20, American coot 100s, Black-necked stilt 40, Greater yellowlegs 3, Western sandpiper 10+, Least sandpiper 150, Wilson's snipe 10, **Nuttall's woodpecker** 1, Northern flicker 3, Loggerhead shrike 3, Barn swallow 10, American pipit 10, Blue-grey gnatcatcher 2, Common yellowthroat 2, Western meadowlark 20, Red-winged blackbird 5 and 1 Cattle egret.

#### **31.12.04**

1330-1700. Dry after intensive rain upon arrival. Cold, no wind. Everything by foot.

Last change of the year 2004 to get some lifers, which we managed! We were very pleased with the American avocet, although it was either in winter plumage or 1st winter and moreover with the **American bittern** which we flushed from the swampy lands next to the road. Innumerable amounts of blackbirds sp. came flying in in the course of the afternoon, 100s and 100s, also some Great-tailed grackles. The Great-horned owl was magnificent: just before dusk we heard it calling and there it sat, on one of the rocks, sharply depicted en silhouette against the darkening sky, whilst some calling Black-crowned night herons flew by. Other birds included: American wigeon 5, Canvasback 10, Cinnamon teal 10, Marsh wren 1, White-tailed kite 2, Yellow-headed blackbird 10.

#### **05.02.05**

Horrible weather with almost continuous rain until the late afternoon when things were clearing. Arrived drenched, all by bike. Only walked pass the ponds from the entrance, didn't go to the viewing platform. The rain stopped and we were lucky to see 5 Northern Rough-

winged Swallows flying by as were either Tree-swallows or Violet-green swallows. Some impressive movements of pelicans going on here: in total we had four groups of American white pelican flying south, comprising 148 birds at least! Herman's first White-faced Ibis, 6, flew in. Long-billed Dowitchers are still around as were our first SJWA Buffleheads: males on one of the ponds.

### [Mystic Lake](#) (p.212)

This lake forms in wet years west of Gilman Spring Rd and north of Bridge Street. All during 2005 this lake was there, providing us with enormous amounts of waterfowl.

#### **05.02.05**

Great birds! This lake is very big and is only filled with water after heavy rains. We watched it from two sides: from *Gilman Springs Road* (GSR) and from *Bridge Street* (BS).

We started off at [Gilman Springs Road](#) with a great fly-by **Prairie falcon** and a surprising juvenile **Bald Eagle**, sitting on a stick! The first juvenile we see of this species. A Great-horned Owl was a lucky observation. More common birds include: Canvasback 50, Redhead 50, Little Scaup 30, Ring-necked Duck 200, Eared Grebe 5 and Canada Goose 2. Large amounts of Northern Shoveler and Pintail, the former in their 1000s and the latter in their hundreds. **Bridge Street Mountain Plover** 44! At last I've seen this –at least for me- wanted species after Tom saw it already a week ago on this well known location, the field adjacent to the south on Bridge Street. Very nice, blonde and long-legged birds, reminding of White-tailed Lapwings and Eurasian Dotterels in the Old World. An adult **Ferruginous Hawk** perched on a utility-pawl was beautiful but alas too far for picturing. Between the 200 Canada Geese we saw 3 Snow geese and a male Merlin flew in and landed on a fence. Around 50 Shorelarks were still present on the same fields as the plovers and around 200 American Pipits were found on the lake-side of BS.

#### **13.11.05**

I just came back from Mystic Lake, another Longspur quest and I have the impression I walked a whole marathon today. Walked all field east of Bridge Street this morning, thought I heard longspurs somewhere in the distance -> nothing to be found, though good amounts of Shorelarks present. OK, back again to these sandy fields (so shoes full with it!), around noon now. Yes, you can drive Bridge Street though it is signed 'closed'. I heard Longspurs again & saw them, in flight, 5 birds! They called very frequently; beside the non-specific dry 'prrrr' rattle, the birds called a distinctive 'kwirrup' as their specific call. Didn't see the birds very well on the ground since I flushed them after only seeing their heads vaguely. But this call is very distinctive: it is not Lapland since I know that well and Chestnut-collared should not have this strong 'rrr' pattern in the call (actually, I had them at Calipatria last winter where they said 'kiddip' or so, without any 'r'). So, the longspurs I saw at Bridge Str. concerned **McCown's longspurs** since many descriptions of its call say something like 'tsjirrup' and because of habitat. Longspurs can be expected here and are best known from around the Calipatria Prison near Salton Sea, where dozens of Chestnut-collareds and McCown's are present every winter, with Laplands and even the occasional Smith's!

### [Lake Perris](#)

#### **26.12.04**

1330-1600, no wind, 95% clouds, chilly.

Long ride by bike from our apartment, but the lake looks promising and we saw some good birds. We have to go again. Again we had an adult **Bald eagle**, soaring over the mountain ridge adjacent to the lake. Ospreys seem to winter here, we saw around five & 2 Long-eared owls in the flooded forest. The first Dark-eyed juncos and they didn't disappoint: nice birds! Others were: Common loon 1, Western grebe 2, Horned grebe 25, Eared grebe 5, Lesser

scaup 20, Common merganser 5f, Gadwall 2, Northern harrier 2, California gull 150, Bonaparte's gull 20, Belted kingfisher 1 and a Blue-grey gnatcatcher.

- [San Bernardino Mountains](#)

### 03.02.05

We went on an afternoon trip with the lab to collect galls at [Forest Falls](#).

My first **White-headed woodpecker**! Two females, stunning birds! First Pine siskins, a fly-by group. Further birds: White-breasted nuthatch and much to my surprise, a light-headed Dark-eyed Junco between 30 normal 'Oregon' DE Junco's. Not sure whether it concerned a 'brown female slate colored' DEJ or even a 'pink-sided' DEJ! Showed no apparent hood.

### 29.05.06

So, Tom and I had a Toyota Tacoma this Sunday so we could share the tracks with the '[offroaders for Bush](#)'. Which we did. Tried to make our way to Arrestre Creek as described in former messages in InlandCountyBirds (and the ABA Guide, p.202) & though we found it quite readily, the road to there is, we think, not suitable for normal cars. Being not experienced off-roaders ourselves, we had slight difficulties sometimes -but that was ok! So: at the (first) Creek crossing we saw two pairs of **Hepatic Tanager**! They were mainly working their ways through the high pines, so not in the bush around the Creek. Great birds! Guess the nighthawk we saw was a **Common nighthawk** since that's the only one occurring here? I am not sure though if Lesser doesn't occur here; saw the nighthawks reported from this area were identified as Commons & for what it is worth, after having seen quit a few Lesser nh. in the desert, the impression was indeed that the white wingband was closer to the wrist of the wing. Went on to the Rose Mine Junction (p.202) & the silence was impressive, that is: again no Gray vireos, not even an unknown song or so! Nice area though... Back to the main road and off to Bluff Lake (p.199-201) which should offer "the finest montane birding in Southern California", according to many birders. Was quite difficult to find however and after driving too far along 2N10, was found out from hikers that Bluff Lake is actually closed, since the road to the Conservancy Office or so was closed: a big gate closes the road. We walked in though & we had a very fine and nice and great and other superlatives needed **Williamson's sapsucker** -a male! Dusky flycatcher allowed close looks & called, which was very helpful! Golden-crowned kinglets were new as well here. Well that's it for now -had a **Black swift** at Monkey Face Falls (p.204)!

- [Lake Elsinor](#)

**08.01.05** 'Lake Elsinor Campground' on [Riverside Drive](#). Lots of rain.

I was very surprised to find and obtain great views of a **Plumbeous vireo**! Definitely no Cassin's vireo since the bird was 'all' grey with not a trace of yellow. Other birds: my first White-breasted nuthatch and some dark-eyed juncos and a Hermit thrush.

- [Mockingbird Canyon Reservoir, adjacent to the 'California Citrus State Historic Park'](#)

### 02.01.05

Small bike excursion to this historic park, which held a nice display about the ins & outs of how oranges reached the Americas and eventually, California. Next to this park was a small lake, which held a pair of **Wood duck**, much to our delight! Two Black-crowned night herons were present as well.

- [Rancho Jurupa Park](#)

### 25.12.05

This is a smallish, not really interesting park, mainly consisting of flood-forests (*Salix sp.*) and shrub. Small fishing pond with fishing people, many campers, but still around 15 **American White pelicans** & 30 Ring-necked ducks on this pond! And a nice **Prairie falcon** on one of

the wooden utility pawls in the adjacent fields! **Common ground-doves** were near the river and are birdwise the main attraction. Other observed birds include Red-shouldered hawk, Bonapartes gull, Downy and **Nuttall's woodpecker**, Cedar waxwings and **California thrasher**.

- [Botanical Gardens UCR](#)

The Botanical Garden on the UC Riverside campus was basically my local patch. I visited it many times during lunch brakes and saw some nice birds there. Moreover, it was nice to see the changes in birdlife throughout the year. The Gardens are public, but close at 17:00. Some interesting 'western' birds are found here quite easily, like Costa's hummingbird between the many Anna's hummingbirds and California thrasher, a near-endemic for CA. The latter I only saw in the upper regions of the Garden. Many more regularly occurring birds are found here too which I do not mention. Below I will give some more interesting records, as I post them on the [InlandCounty Group](#).

#### 29.12.04

some drizzle

Nice walk, good birds. Apparently, Costa's hummingbirds returned from their winter areas, since several singing males were present. Perhaps because of the rains which drenched our only week off? First Mountain chickadees and Golden-crowned sparrow and a very attractive Lark sparrow!

**14.1.05** Just saw a Rufous-Crowned Sparrow at the top of the Botanical Gardens, UCR. The bird sneaked around in the shrubby grassy slopes, just adjacent to the uppermost bushes of the Garden. Well seen, stunning eye-ring, darkish, slightly bicolored bill, pale malar, distinctive dark moustache and...rufous crown! More than one bird appeared to be present and probably bred here.

**19.1.2005** Greater Roadrunner, 1 on top of the hill. Seen on more than one occasion.

**12/14.01.05** Western tanager 1 f-type, Mountain chickadee 1, Orange-crowned warbler 1, Rufous-crowned sparrow 1, Lark sparrow 2-3, Lincolns sparrow 1

**31.01.05:** Green-tailed Towhee, 1! Good bird & not in the 'birds of the Botanical Garden' checklist. Garden is quite at the moment, still a few White Crowned Sparrows linger on and the (same?) Western Tanager was in early February.

**12.3.05** Went to the Botanical Garden, UC-Riverside yesterday, sunday 12th & had nice views of two recently arrived Western kingbirds together with 2-3 Cassin's kingbirds. Main thing however were one group of 40 & one of 12 **Swainson's hawk** that flew over de Garden. A Peregrine was good too.

**07.4.05** March 11th I had a Red-breasted nuthatch in the high pines on the edge of the Botanical Garden of the UC Riverside & to my surprise Tom & me saw it again yesterday, in the same high pines. Guess this is the southwest side of the garden. Western Tanager heard & two Pacific-slope flycatchers present together with a singing Orange-crowned warbler.

#### 12.4.05

Perhaps a bit superfluous, but had my first spring Black-headed grosbeaks yesterday. And today my first two Black-chinned hummers.

#### 13.4.05

No rarities, but some nice birds today: **Gray flycatcher** on the dry hill with scattered Junipers (?) in SW-corner of the Bot. Garden, our first here. Also pair Western tanager -> male full summer plumage. Pacific-slope flycatcher was still present. On 'Picknick Hill' my very first Black-throated grey warbler at last!

#### 2nd-5th May 2005

Migration seems to have reached our shores at last! Made several nice observations the first few days of May but hereafter migration slowed down again. Well, we had several Warbling vireos (max. two a day), a female Lazuli bunting, around 5 Western tanagers and at least the same number of Black-headed grosbeaks, our first Western wood-pewee, a Hammond's flycatcher, at last an expected Cassin's vireo, two Wilson's warblers. After the Hermit

thrushes this past winter, two Swainson's thrushes showed up at last in a fruiting tree near the entrance of the Garden. A female Brown-headed cowbird constituted our first for the Garden. Other birds: several Yellow warblers, two migrating Townsend's warblers and early June we had our first Canyon wren of the Garden, together with our second observation of a Greater roadrunner in the Garden. Several Rufous-crowned sparrows are still singing on the grassy hill and a pair of Hooded orioles still linger on.

**24.6.05** Just had a singing **Northern parula** in the Botanical Gardens of the UCR! Bird sang quite regularly and showed quite well sometimes. We had the bird last at the V-split around ~70 meters after entering the Garden. Found the bird along the 'Alder Canyon', after 50 meters or so!

**23.8.05** We had four Sage sparrows and a Bobcat on the highest point in the Garden. Saw Bobcats here on two occasions, this one was a young animal at 12:30 on the trail and the second observation was of an adult at around 25 meters sneaking through the grassy hillsides, providing excellent views of this cat. The first migrating Barn swallows and first Wilson's and Orange-crowned warbler.

**22.09.06** Curious what autumn will bring! We had 7 Cedar waxwings flying past the UCR & a 1st year **MacGillivray's warbler** in the Botanical Garden here.

**18.10.05** It took me a while to see something noteworthy for the group, but well, here I am again. I just had a **Red-naped sapsucker** just after the entrance to the Botanical Gardens of the UC Riverside. Well observed, also during dry conditions! Besides this bird, an unprecedented amount of Yellow-rumped warblers was present with still some Orange-crowned warblers. Couldn't find the Ash-troated flycatcher I still had last week.

**20.10.06** No, this is not an erratum: just had a splendid Red-breasted sapsucker in the Botanical Gardens of the UC Riverside. I couldn't relocate the Red-naped I saw Tuesday. Both birds were found in the high trees just after the entrance of the Garden.

## 2. **Salton Sea area (Riverside and Imperial Co's)**

The chapter in the [ABA book](#) is superb! Everything you need to know is there, including great maps. Since I don't have any decent maps of the area, I am glad to refer to this chapter, written by Stacy Peterson on pp.163-177.

**13.02.05**, Mainly clear sky, afternoon getting cloudier upon approaching of a frontal zone, temperature rising from a bit chilly to a fine 18 degrees Celsius, hardly any wind.

First visit to this famous area. We left Riverside at 04:30 & returned at 20:00. Our fellow countryman Gerco Hoogenweg has visited the area many times and knows where to go, which made it an even more pleasant trip. Salton Sea is a weird area; it feels as being literally in a corner of the country –which you are of course! 'Border-land'. Many agricultural fields, some big smoking factories (as on the Maasvlakte in the Netherland), a big flat lake & totally unattractive to birds, you'd think & so did I!

But of course, this famous area didn't let us down on this trip and we saw interesting birds. What was remarkable was the total absence of American crows and Ravens; we didn't see a single bird. We heard that this is probably due to the West-Nile virus which hits the *corvidae* hard for one reason. The scarcity of Red-Tailed Haws was surprising too, as, on the other hand, was the abundance of American Kestrels and the regular observations of Burrowing Owl (around 15) and of Greater Roadrunner (4) all through the day. Other scarce but already observed birds include Vermillion Flycatcher (2) and Common Grounddove (2 flocks).

Below I give a short overview per stop we made with the most interesting observations, either because they are scarcities or because they're great!

*Wister Unit*: a reedy hunting area, first stop (p.169)

First **Abert's towhees** which are neat birds & more attractive than their Californian brothers and sisters, first Virginia Rail heard and 100's of fly-by Snow geese with 3 Ross's Geese. A good observation was a full summer plumage male **American redstart** 100 meters from the parking place in the trees bordering the road!

*Davis Road:* very muddy and slippery road, along some ponds, dry flats and agricultural fields (p.169)

First observations of Snowy Plover (30), an off-coast Western Gull (1st winter), a Willet and two off-coast flying Brown Pelicans.

*Calipatria Prison* surroundings: agricultural fields

Famous for their wintering longspurs and Mountain Plovers, we did quite a thorough survey here. After locating the wintering Shorelarks, we saw longspurs sp. in flight among the larks. It proved to be very difficult to get decent views of the, already identified on tail pattern, Chestnut-Collared Longspurs because of their habits. But after all, we had reasonable views of two males which were much to our delight, in full summer plumage! Stunning birds, though we only saw their heads –but well, that is the most striking part! In the end, we had a flock of nine **Chestnut-collared longspurs**, but not a sign of other species. What a nice birds! Mountain Plovers are allegedly very scarce this year in the area and we saw none here.

*Lindsey-Leg Crossing:* pond with tamarisks, in between the Salton Sea and a big factory.

Our first **Green heron** and **Common goldeneye** of the trip. The heron looked quite different from south-American Birds.

*North end of Leg Road:* along the sea.

**Yellow-footed gull!** Yes! A second cy bird sat close by on rocks, eating a crab. Massive bill & great, tame bird. A pair of Blue-Winged Teal was also present, just the second location we saw this species.

*Headquarters:* short trail lined by Tamarisks towards a pond.

Much to our surprise, we saw an apparent pure Glaucous-Winged Gull, 1st winter turning to 1st summer here! The bird didn't show a vague tailband, nor did it show darker primary tips (primaries were Glaucous Gull-esque, but slightly darker), which one would expect when a Western Gull is involved. Bill was not as long as Glaucous Gull, more hooked and all dark with a slightly lighter colored base, G.G. bill is long, even and pink with a well defined black tip. Great bird!

Also nice were: 50 Buffleheads, a Pacific Peregrine Falcon, adult, a lovely & Bushtitesque Verdin, our first Lesser Yellowlegs of the trip and a well visible Gambel's Quail, a male!

*Cattle Call Park, Brawley:* just a few trees, a picnic-area, a soccer field and some reeds in a village!

**Gila Woodpecker!** A very confiding bird, well visible. The long-staying Gray Flycatcher (and indeed identifiable as such!) was still present & in the same tree we, at last, had a nice Chipping Sparrow which looks superficially like a 1st winter White-Crowned Sparrow, but more delicate, much smaller, darker bill and a very different call. Apparently a common bird. At last I, Herman, had my first Cactus Wren: what a giant, don't mess with that bird! Again, we saw two nice Verdins and 1ad and 2juv Brown Pelican flying overhead, straight north.

'Unit 1', Vandel Road: last stop of this Tour de Sea, between 1645-1745

At last, **Sandhill Cranes!** Around 61 stood behind a massive and impressive flock of 1000s and 1000s of Snowgeese with 100s of Ross's Geese! What a way of ending a great day! Some cranes were displaying already and in the nearby reeds Clapper, Virginia and Sora Rails made a lot of pleasant noise!

## 26.06.06

A San Bernardino Valley Audubon field trip to the Salton Sea and environs, led by John Green. Below mentioned species are just the highlights, as one can read too on the [InlandCounty Group](#).

We were able to find the expected specialties, such as **Wood stork**, **Laughing gull**, **Yellow-footed gull** and **Gull-billed Terns**. The field trip tallied 98 species, two others seen on the 25th made an even 100. Species of note are below.

**Franklin's gull**: one probable first summer bird identified at great distance by Tom van Noort & Herman van Oosten off the north end of Garst on the 26th. They studied it at great length while I was busy with field trip participants, but I did look at the bird briefly several times and agree with their conclusion. **Heerman's Gull**: Three adults at the north end of Poe on the 25th, one on the 26th. **Ruddy Ground-doves**: Several at the corner of Sperry and Eddins, west of Calipatria, on the 26th, glimpsed/calling. **Phainopepla**: One at Wister HQ, morning of 26th. **Bronzed Cowbird**: One male was at Cattle Call Park on the 26th. I add here that the sought-after Yellow-footed gull was seen with ease, most easy along Leg Road, where one has a good view at The Sea.

## 11.11.05

Left Riverside at 0430 & came back at 1730 –a long but nice day.

Started birding at the Wister Unit as usual and had a 1cy **American redstart** here, never saw this plumage before though we had a Redstart here before. I was pleasantly surprised by the four **Golden-crowned kinglets** which were on migration or lost since it is a typical mountain species. Not much special else, except for a few **Common grounddoves**. Drove then via Davis Rd. south where I had a nice perched Golden eagle on a telephone post, beside the usual shorebirds. Down to Calipatria where I did not see a single dove or pigeon on the Eddins & Sperry Rds. crossing! To hell with it, didn't need them anyway...Off to some real birding so towards The State Prison I went. Took from the 111 in Calipatria the Eddins east, then Blair north till Hooper and east on Hooper. I stopped the car at the second field east of the prison since there was a small bridge/dam so that I could cross the concrete walled stream. In this field I found at least 2 but very likely 3 **SPRAGUE'S PIPITS!** The birds were very distinctive with their call and indeed, their behavior: flushed a couple of yards in front of me and flying high away whilst calling. Then, just as described in the books, it returned and landed quite close. Had one bird on the ground in the scope & all characters were well seen, bit reminiscent of Sky lark in head pattern. Flight is remarkable different from American pipit (from which I had two in the same dry field!): really a 'good' and strong flight, very different from the fluttering flight of American pipit (and, in the Old World, of Meadow pipit) -reminded me of the Wagtail flight. Really a good species in CA!

No Longspurs or many Shorelarks.

Then drove via the 86 towards Brawley and checked the Cattle Call Park and the Cemetery but had nothing there; some rodeo-festival was going on in the Park and on the cemetery it was dead silent, as was to be expected indeed.

Continued out of this hell-hole on the 86 west/ north and took Vendel to the north to reach the Salton Sea National Wildlife Reserve. In February we had Sandhill cranes here, but not so this time. However, a large flock of Snowgeese and Ross' geese contained one **Aleutian Canada goose!** My first ever small Canada goose, this subspecies comes from the Aleutian Islands and winters in central CA, so it was a bit to the south. It differs from cackling goose by its squarish head, where Cackling should have a round head –quite a good mark after careful observation. Meanwhile I read some neckbands of Ross' geese; will send them off soon.

Went home hereafter & had an Osprey en route.

### 3. The closest coastal areas: [Huntington Beach](#), [Newport Beach](#) (Orange Co)

#### 15.01.05

[San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary](#), Irvine CA ([Read 'Duck Ponds' on map](#))

Blue sky, hardly any wind, 0900-1130

A new area! It has some ponds, a muddy channel, shrub, reed and some cottonwood trees. And looks fine for marshbirds and waterfowl and so it was. Wilson's warbler is stunning and so are **Allen's hummingbirds**. We had several common but yet new species as there are Pied-billed grebe, Black-necked grebe, Buffleheads, Cinnamon teals and Tree swallows.

#### *Huntington Beach*

We paid a brief visit at the beach at Huntington, merely to lunch at the pier, but in the meanwhile we saw some birds: Brown pelican 5, Caspian tern, Common loon, Red-throated loon, Heermann's gull, Western gull, Surfscooter, Western grebes etc.

#### [Upper Newport Bay](#)

We spent the whole afternoon birding at the Upper Back Bay area, a very fine area for waders etc, where also the Belding's savannah sparrow should occur -which we didn't see. However, we were very glad with outstanding views of the endangered **California Gnatcatcher**, showing its all-black undertail very clearly while giving the distinctive call. This bird was 150meters east on 'Back Bay' (street) at the crossing 'Back Bay' and 'San Joaquin Hills Bld.', on the steep slope (zoom in on the map). The local subspecies of Clapper rail was also briefly seen and we heard four different birds. In total we saw around 77 **Black Skimmers** and 50 male Buffleheads great! Besides, more common birds included Black-bellied plover, Least sandpiper, Marbled godwit, Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitchers and a White-tailed kite.

#### 03.04.05

[Bolsa Chica Reserve](#) ([Read 'Bolsa Bay' on the map](#))

Gerco Hoogenweg took us birding again, this time to the famous Bolsa Chica Reserve near Huntington, south of L.A. Weather wasn't great: overcast and almost cold. Still a bit early for terns, but we managed to see the following: Belding's savannah sparrow, dozens, (black) Brant 1, Canada goose 1, Semipalmated plover 30, Red knot 10, our first Ruddy turnstones (after many Blacks!), very slender and nice Elegant terns 10, a few Forster's terns, a few dozen Cinnamon teals, our first American Dunlin, a handful of Caspian terns and still two Northern harriers.

#### [Upper Newport Bay](#)

Here after we went down to the Upper Newport Bay which held some better birding and more sunshine. We heard and saw at least two **California gnatcatchers** along the road, just like last time we were here. New were the two Ash-throated flycatchers we saw –the first of many to come. Further birds include Blue-winged teal 5, Black-bellied plover, Elegant tern 5, 3 Golden-crowned sparrows (still!), around four Pacific-slope flycatchers, 2 Wilson's warblers, 30 American pipits, 20 Northern rough-winged swallows, 10 Caspian terns, 3 Orange crowned warblers and 40 American avocets, all beautiful in full summer plumage!

#### 30.05.05

[Bolsa Chica Reserve](#)

Tom and I went together with Paul to 'the beach' near Huntington, but not after we had a visit at the Bolsa Chica reserve here, famous for its terns. Well, terns it was! Amongst huge numbers of Elegant and Forster's terns, we found around eight **Least terns** and only two Royal terns. Caspian terns proved a bit more common with around 30 birds observed. Great were the around 40 **Black skimmers** we had on the 'tern-island'. Few stilts, 2 Red-breasted

mergansers and quite a number of Beldings's savannah sparrows. Views on the beach were outstanding!

#### 4. [The greater Mojave desert \(San Bernardino Co\)](#)

##### 16.01.05

##### [Joshua Tree National Park](#)

0900-1530, great weather, hardly any wind and up to 25 Celsius.

Great Park, impressive scenery and beautiful Joshua trees. A few birds present however, though a remarkable amount of juncos. Birds seen: Black-throated sparrow 40, Oak titmouse 1, Gambel's quail 5, a Cactus wren and 50+ Dark-eyed junco's.

##### 27.03.05

##### [Big Morongo Reserve](#) (Read map: drive on East Drive and park there, adjacent to Covington Park)

We only arrived at 14:00 on a Sunday afternoon, so it was very crowded and hot: not many birds. Nice, however, was the first Phainopepla, a few **Lawrence's goldfinch** and a Mountain chickadee near the parking lot! A bit out of the route the latter bird it seems. Furthermore some trash-birds like Orange crowned warbler, White crowned sparrows, California thrasher &c.

##### 11.06.05

Tom and I went again to Big Morongo last Sunday morning; one pair Summer tanager at the parking lot + a two females further in the reserve. Male Blue grosbeak as well & at least three singing Bell's vireos.

##### 02.04.05

##### [Barstow Road](#) (Hw 247) at Goat Mountains Pass

In these surroundings we had a Ladder-backed woodpecker and two very nice and subtly colored Brewer's sparrows, very nice birds. Close To Daggett we flushed a Lesser nighthawk.

##### 9/11 & 15/16 April 05

##### [Mojave National Preserve](#)

We went for butterfly egg collecting to the eastern Mojave these two weekends. We slept in the [Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Centre](#) which is run by the UCs. Despite the little time we had for birding we could bird a little & saw some good species. The Research Centre is not accessible for public, located at the Kelbaker Road.

Near the Center we had 3 **Le Conte's thrashers**, at least 1 **Crissal thrasher**, a Green-tailed towhee, some Black-tailed & Blue-grey gnatcatchers, a **Lawrence's goldfinch** with its distinctive call, a pair **Scott's orioles** (brilliant birds!), a **Common poorwill** at one meter at daytime (!), the first Rufous hummers, a Black-throated grey warbler, a handful of Phainopepla's, a singing Greater roadrunner, around 5 Ash-throated flycatchers, Cactus wrens, many Black-throated sparrows &c.

Don't worry: most of these species were seen on public areas as well, except for the Crissal thrasher & Green-tailed towhee!

A [good place](#) for **Le Conte's thrasher** is as follows: drive down I-40 E. until you reach the Kelbaker Road Exit and take this exit North. Go down this road until you reach a fairly big 'Mojave National Preserve' sign with some space to park your car. This is a few kilometers after the exit from the I-40 E. Park your car at the sign and when you look at the hills on this side of the road, you'll see some sandy spots near the foothills. Walk through the mesquite towards the hills and listen for the very distinctive 'wheep?' call of The Thrasher. We had two parties here, easily seen in the early morning. This road leads to Kelso where you can take the Kelso Cima Rd. for the Bendire's thrasher (see below).

Other interesting species on the spot were a male **MacGillivray's warbler** (stunning bird), around 4 singing Brewer's sparrows, a Gray flycatcher, many Gambell's quails and some gnatcatchers of both species.

**Bendire's thrasher** is quite easily found [as follows](#). Late in the afternoon we drove (with a normal car) the Kelso Cima Road (north-east) until we passed the Cedar Cyn. Rd. exit which leads East from the K-C Rd. into the Providence Mountains. Drive up C-C Rd. (east, towards the hills). After a few kilometers you'll drive through an area with many Joshua Trees on both sides on the road. This is the spot where we had 2 or 3 Bendire's thrashers in top of the Joshua trees. We were here perhaps an hour or less before sunset so maybe the birds tried to get the last beams of sunlight of the day in the tops? Other nice birds were 2-3 Scott's orioles (marvelous still!) singing in the yosh trees, 1 Pinyon jay (! Mostly seen in groups), a Ladder-backed woodpecker and Tom was as lucky to see a **White-winged dove** –which I didn't see.

### 13/15 May 05

#### [Mojave National Preserve](#)

Third trip to this desert area and this time we stayed in a research station on the south-side of the Granite Mts. Although there is a gate a few hundred yards before the Station, all the birds could be seen on public terrain. From the I-40, go north on the Kelbaker Rd. until you cross Granite Pass –in between the Granite and Providence Mts. Just after passing the Pass you'll come across a cattle guard on the road and then turn left on a dirt road towards the Granite Mts. From the Kelbaker Rd. via this dirt road to the gate is approx. 2 miles or so. First you'll drive or walk across a promising looking Juniper shrubbery and then in an open area with some Yucca. Actually, people do camp here so perhaps that is a nice idea to do. Bring own water!

In the Yucca area close to the mountains we had **Bendire's**, **Crissal** and **LeConte's thrasher**, so if you miss out on **Bendire's** on the Cedar Canyon Rd., try here! Enjoy the many Cactus wrens here, also had a female **Scott's oriole**.

The Juniper area was a bit disappointing: couldn't find Gray vireo and Juniper titmouse here so perhaps they do not occur here –as they do on the Providence Mts. Maybe it is too low here? Nice birds however were 2 **MacGillivray's warblers**, a **Cassin's vireo**, a **Warbling vireo**, Western tanager, Green-tailed towhee &c. Annoying was a fly-by female tanager sp. other than Western!

### 4/5 June 05

#### [Providence Mountains](#), eastern Mojave: [Mid Hills Campground](#),

At last we went to this famous campground in the Mid Hills next to the Providence Mts., situated at 5500 feet in a Juniper - Pine forest. Birds of interest are the Juniper titmouse and the Gray vireo which should occur here. Well, we arrived at the campground around 18:30 Saturday evening and some fast birding yielded already our first family of **Black-chinned sparrows**! Many Chipping and Brewer's sparrows were around in this beautiful area and nice were the around five Lesser nighthawks that were on the wing already before dusk. Had a barbecue at night with wine and many stars. Birded next morning between 0530-0830 and, though we couldn't locate any definite Gray vireo, we had in total around five **Juniper titmice**! This species occurs only here in California, and further to the east in Nevada. The bird was quite readily found by its loud calls, indeed different from the song of Oak titmouse. Further birds of interest: a family **Lawrence's goldfinch**, a Western meadowlark that perched in a Pine for a moment before flying off again!

Between the I-40 and the Hole-in-the-Wall campground, along *Essex Rd.*, we had two **LeConte's** and 1 **Crissal thrasher** viewed from the car. Between MidHills and the Cedar Canyon Rd. we had a large flock of around 40 **Pinyon jays** roaming the sagebrush desert and at least two **Crissal thrashers**.

19.12.05

### [Parker Dam](#)

I went to the Parker area today, after very useful tips of Roger Higson and had, just below the Dam itself, between the dam & a sort of rope to prevent boats to come nearer to the dam, 2 males & 1 female **Barrow's goldeneye!** Splendid birds, they look very 'sincere'. A male hybrid Common X Barrow's was there as well. A good bird too, I think, was a female type **Long-tailed duck** which was also just below the dam -> guess it must be pretty uncommon this far inland!

## 5. The Monterey Bay area (Monterey Co), including Stanislaus Co. and surroundings

### Monterey-area Trip: February 18th-20th 2005

Left Riverside CA at around 2200 on the 17th & drove all night, heading towards Santa Cruz for seeing some decent birds! We arrived at SC at around 0530 so still time for a little nap & some staring over the sea with our tired heads, but some a fresh sea-breeze brightened us up rather quickly. The weather during the whole trip was highly variable with one constant: RAIN!

At [Natural Bridges on Westcliff Drive](#) we had our first birds:

Black turnstone 10, Surf scoters, Brandts cormorant 40, Horned grebes, Brown pelican 1, Surfbird 3, several Glaucous-winged gull, Black oystercatcher 3, many hybrid gulls, Pelagic cormorant 1, several Mew gull and 1 Whimbrel.

In the adjacent park (*Natural Bridges State beach*) we had:

Several Chestnut-backed chickadees, Steller's jay 1, Purple finch 2, Pygmy nuthatch 3, Townsend's warbler 2, Winter wren 1 and 1 Clark's grebe.

But though these are all nice species from the northern state, we still didn't see the reported **Rock Sandpiper**, but after some searching we saw it really well at the [Lighthouse on Westcliff Drive](#), where you also can find the legendary Surf Museum! The bird was surprisingly hard to find between the similar colored, billed and legged Surfbirds.

Hereafter we head of for the centre of Santa Cruz, to 719 [High Street](#) were, with some waiting, we had great looks of two **White-throated sparrows**. Didn't look at all like WCSparrows what I initially thought, way more compact & well, different after having seen 83228 WCSparrows. The birds were reportedly present for months already.

In the afternoon we drove steadily towards [Monterey](#) which would be our base-camp the coming two days. After checking in a hotel, we quickly went to the [harbour of Monterey](#) to search for The Duck of all Ducks: nothing, nothing, then...HERE IT IS! And damn it man, there it was, a male **Harlequin duck!** What a beauty at 50 meters! Made 'some' pictures & later on we had even two males and one female.

Late afternoon we headed off to the crossing [Ocean View Bld. – Sunset Dr](#) for spending a good hour looking over the sea & had both Pigeon Guillemot and some Black-legged kittiwakes.

The next morning, February 19th:

We were back here and had an enormous amount of great **Rhinoceros auklets**, some in summer plumage, our first **Pacific loon**, one or two **Long-tailed ducks**, a **Pomarine skua** & a **Peregrine falcon**. Spend some hours after the seawatch in [Jack's Peak County Park](#) in the drenching rain. Still some birds as first **Wrentits**, Townsend's warblers, Hairy woodpecker and some Fox sparrows.

In the [harbour of Monterey](#) we again saw a pair of **Harlequin ducks**.

On our last day, February 20th,

We went on a whaling trip for a meager three hours; saw some good stuff like: nice **Cassin's auklet**, 2, many **Rhino auklets**, a **Pigeon guillemot**, some Short-tailed shearwaters & a few localized **Black-vented shearwaters**. This all with a few **Grey Whales** and a pod of **Risso's dolphins**!

Great trip but had to go back to Riverside. On the way back Tom saw a **Yellow-billed magpie** & we saw, between Los Alamos-Los Olivos, Hw 101, an adult **Ferruginous hawk**.

*Towards San Francisco and Berkeley*

**April 4th-May 1<sup>st</sup> 05**

We went to Berkeley and San Francisco for some sightseeing but as usual, we planned the route such that we had some decent birding en route! The birds we really wanted to see were *Lewis's woodpecker*, *Yellow-billed magpie* and *Marbled murrelet*.

We took the I-5 north and we were told that for the woodpecker we'd better take the [Patterson Exit near Patterson](#) (Stanislaus Co.) and so we did. If you come from the south like we did, take this exit from the I-5, drive W under the highway (under the overpass that is) and then turn right onto the *Del Puerto Canyon Rd*. After around 30 miles you will arrive at the (only) [junction](#) on the road where there is a café. Park your car here and walk around a mile or so to the left (south, on the *San Antonio Valley Rd*.). After a mile you will see a little grey shed on your left, close to a tall Oak just on the road. In this oak we had two magnificent **Lewis's woodpeckers**! Marvelous birds and indeed as beautiful as in the books, perhaps even better. In these beautiful surroundings we had in total around 5 individuals. Other birds of interest to us were our first Wild turkeys, around 4, a couple of Chipping sparrows with their distinctive song, many **Oak titmice**, some 5 Lark sparrows, 3 Golden eagles and indeed, between the I-5 and here we tallied perhaps a few dozen **Yellow-billed magpies**!

Close to the café we had our first great **Lazuli buntings**, two singing males and two **Lawrence's goldfinches**, beauties as always.

On the way back from San Francisco we took the Pacific Highway (Hw-1). From S.F., drive to [Half Moon Bay](#) on the coast and turn left onto Hw-1 (south). After around 20 miles you will arrive at the [Pigeon Point Lighthouse](#) on the Pigeon Point Rd, a known spot for Marbled murrelet! We had the best views a few 100 yards north of the lighthouse (here there is a sort of small bay with a sandy shore) and from here we had around 20 **Marbled murrelets**. Special birds, especially when you consider that they breed up to 40 miles inland in high pine trees! Further birds of notice: 2 fly-by **Cassin's auklets**, 3 **Rhinoceros auklets**, dozens Common murrelets, around 4 **Pigeon guillemots**, 2 **Black oystercatchers**, both Cormorants and a dozen 'sooty' shearwaters. And our first Wandering tattler!

**Monterey Bay Trip** with [Shearwater Journeys](#)

**22.08.05**

We arrived on Saturday the 21st of August and drove to the Monterey camp ground in the Veterans Memorial Park –very conveniently located, close to the center of Monterey. Had a Townsend's warbler there, the first we saw since April. Had a beer ('King Cobra!') and went to sleep. Woke up at six and showed up in the harbor at seven, ship left at 07:30. Let the games begin! The first bird of notice was instantly the best bird of the day, though for Europeans it might have been nicer if it were another species: a **Manx shearwater**! This bird is extremely rare on the Pacific coast of the US since it mainly is an Atlantic species; a subpopulation of which is found around New Zealand and that is where this bird came from. This species is seen annually on Shearwater tours here. Meanwhile, the first of many Sooty shearwaters made their first appearance as did a few Rhinoceros auklets. Still no lifers...Black-footed albatross! THAT was what we wanted to hear! Great bird, in more than one aspect indeed –we would see around 40 this day. Meanwhile, **Pink-footed shearwaters** showed up regularly and we had our first US Common terns...Birding was a bit slow, but so was I, Herman, since well, I thought it might help to add some more food particles to the north Pacific food chain! I didn't bring in the hoped for Short-tailed albatross though and that

made me feel slightly more miserable. But a **South-polar skua** was great and a lifer! Unfortunately it was only a fly by bird and not too close. Apparently, the bay was devoid of krill this autumn, perhaps because of the El Nino circumstances, so no stormpetrels were observed. After much waiting we at last saw the first of three or four **Buller's shearwaters!** That is a very clean and beautiful bird! The rest of the day didn't bring much news birdwise, except for a Cassin's auklet, but we had two **Blue whales** and two **Humpback whales** which were fantastic, as were the bow-riding **Pacific white-sided dolphins**.

## 6. Yosemite N.P (Mariposa Co)

31.08 – 02.09.05

### Yosemite NP

After our visit to Sequoia N.P., Agata (my girl) & I went along to Yosemite N.P. The first night we slept on the [Bridalveil Creek Campground](#) along the [Glacier Point Rd](#). Pleasant campground, great looking environs surrounding it...Drove towards Glacier Point the same day & made a brief stop at a



[view-point/parking/trail head](#) (read map: the parking lot is at the first side road left, coming from the south, on Glacier Point Rd –which of course is not a road but a trail) on the north side of the road. I crossed the road to check the forest at the south side of this viewpoint and was amazed to find a much hoped for **Black-backed woodpecker!** This beautiful bird is always very hard to find and there it was, 20 meters away from me working pine tree! Here, I also had my

very first **Clark's nutcrackers** of which I had many more around Tioga Pass later on. No Blue grouse on the parkinglot at [Glacier Point](#), though the impressive views were, well, there! The next day we drove via Yosemite Valley to the [Tuolumne Meadows Campground](#) near Tioga Pass. I had a nice Peregrine and some Mountain bluebirds near the [Tuolumne Visitor Center](#), beside many Red crosbills and 2 **Black bears** on the campground! Spend some time at Tioga Pass & walked up to one of the Gaylor Lakes as shown on the Yosemite Map you get upon entering the park. No rosy-finches because of the season, no Pine grosbeaks unfortunately, but what a landscape there on the pass!

02.9.05

### Mono Lake and Bodie State Historic Park

Via Tioga Pass we drove to this nice old gold-town in the barren sagebrush desert. What a different landscape comparing with that west of the Sierras! Very dry blue skies and dry air. Though the [Historic Park](#) was interesting, I was (even?!) more delighted with the **Greater sagegrouse** that we saw there! Perhaps we saw two or three parties of these big game birds. They're quite hard to miss I think. Two Black-billed magpies and three **Sage thrashers** were new as well for me, making this a very nice short & productive side-trip!

Went to [Mono Lake](#) on the way south where we had another **Sage thrasher** on the beach, and many Wilson's phalaropes &tc.

24/27.11.05

### Yosemite NP: the beauty of grey

This long Thanksgiving weekend Tom and I went to Yosemite, for both of us the second time. I spend a few days there with my girl & Tom two weeks ago with some friends -so it was time for some serious birding once and for all! We had a few target species to search for...

Left Riverside at 0615 on Thanksgiving and arrived at the [Wawona Campground](#) at around 1300, after we had two brief observations of fly-by **Lewis's woodpecker** in the oak savannah just before a place called [Coarsegold](#) -a promising beginning! Enfin, we were stupid enough not to make a reservation for a campground in time and since all other campgrounds were fully booked, we had to stay at [this bit off centre campground](#) -it is a nice one though with an **American dipper** in the stream just adjacent to the campground. After some wine and buns we left the campground towards Glacier Point: this appeared to be the last day we could actually get there since the road was closed on later days due to weather conditions! We were a bit in a hurry since we would try for the almost mythical Great grey owl that should occur in Yosemite. After a fruitless attempt for Black-backed woodpecker at the spot where I had one early September, we drove on towards [Glacier Point](#). After some frantic searching around it appeared that what I was after was at the spot where a family had just been eating lentils and rice: a very cooperative **Blue grouse** was snapping at some rice at around an arm's length! At last this species on this known spot; just walk around the parking lot and check the edges carefully since the birds, though big, move slowly and blend perfectly with the background. Off we went towards the [Crane Flats](#) area on the west side of Hw. 120 to try for The Owl. It was cold and damp so our shoes were quickly soaked and so were our socks. After waiting and searching with torches for about an hour we saw nothing and went home where we made a fire and did great things with wine and sausages. A big surprise was the calling **Northern saw-whet owl** which we heard from the tent singing somewhere during the night, and endless toot-toot-toot-toot &tc. Great bonus! Friday morning brought in clouds and after driving towards the beginning of Hw. 120 east which goes all the way to Tioga Pass, we saw to our dismay that this road was closed as well, so that meant once again no Rosy finches or grosbeaks for us. Planned to walk the trail (which starts just after the [Hw. 120 east \(also known as Tioga Pass Rd.\) splits from Hw. 120 west](#) (also known as Big Oak Flat Rd.), you see it on the Yosemite N.P. map you get when entering the park) to the [Tuolumne Grove](#) (a Giant Sequoia grove) but went back, forced by rain which started to fall incessantly from now on. But! I had, at last, my nemesis bird the **Townsend's solitaire!** And I heard five more. Drove back toward Yosemite Village in Yosemite Valley where it continued to rain. Complained, looked for shelter under trees, had coffee, complained, cursed, saw a movie at the visitor centre &tc...you can imagine! Well, it finally got dry at the end of the afternoon, providing fantastic cloudy views on the Valley. It was amazing, in short. We thought that The Owl would be hunting fanatically after such a miserable day so we drove all the way up to [Crane Flats](#) once again. It was very pleasant to stroll around in the wet meadows and get your shoes soaked once again, while it is a bit above zero and mist is starting to appear. No owl, no glory but wine and fire. No owls during the night. Woke up Saturday with low grey clouds and drove off to check whether or not [Tioga Rd.](#) was opened again. It wasn't, but the skies were of an amazing beauty: crisp clear blue like winter skies ought to be. Everything was still and frosty- needless to say it was cold. We had to fill up the car so we went to the gas station at the [Crane Flats](#) -we know this place by now. After fuelling we decided to walk the meadow once again, the one behind the gas station, because it would be nice if we saw The Owl during bright daylight sitting on a snag in the middle of the meadow. We all have our dreams, boys. At around 0800 we started walking in the silent frozen forest towards the meadow's edge and walked along to our right and we heard nothing except for calling Solitaires, no owl of course. Then upon arriving at the meadow's edge -how do I relive the moment second after second whilst writing!- we saw a big dark shadow flying off from the forest edge into the forest, allowing brief glimpses in the bins of a huge big flat head before settling down for a minute on a tree. This is one of those moments you have every once in a great while in your birding career: am I really here and



am I not dreaming? Do I really see in my binoculars a gigantic grey owl staring at us with the so familiar flat head? In other words: are we really looking at a magnificent **GREAT GREY OWL** perched on a dead tree? O yes, we were! The bird flew off, in the forest but it came back and this time it landed on a dead fallen tree in the meadow, allowing near perfect looks at 30 m of The Owl of all Owls. Look at its half-dome shaped head, look at the face, just look and savor the moment! What a bird, what a victory for those who where there -Tom and me. We looked for an hour or so, before leaving the bird on his snag.

Hereafter, we walked all the way down towards Hodgdon Meadow, via the Tuolumne Grove. The walk was around 13 km. roundtrip and we had wonderful views of very attractive **Varied thrushes!** We had 12 or so in total this walk, but all in the lower half of the walk. What a bird, what a day!

On the way back towards our campground we had a berry-eating **Pileated woodpecker!** This bird was at the one [way road, going north to south](#), just west of *Bridalveil Falls*. My 16th species of woodpecker in CA...and my 6th lifer this trip.

What a trip! Had all birds we wanted, except for the unreachable finches and grosbeaks. But what the hell, we had The Owl of all Owls!

## 7. Southeast Arizona

### Trip to SE-Arizona 2-4 July 2005

Riverside - Tucson – Sonoita – Patagonia – (Nogales) – Madera Canyon – Tucson –Riverside

This was the only opportunity we would have this spring and early summer to drive to this very beautiful and birdwise famous area of the USA. Though the trip was too short and bit too late (or too early), it was very productive. I refer here again to the [ABA book of Richard Cachor Taylor](#), which we used extensively during the whole trip, excellent and absolute necessary. The trip below is planned using this book. The mentioned page numbers refer to the information about the areas in this book.

Left Riverside at 2200 Friday 1st & arrived at [Mount Lemmon](#) (p.37-38), slightly northeast of Tucson, at 0600 Saturday 2nd. On Mount Lemmon, we went directly to the [Rose Canyon](#) (Read map: *East Rose Canyon Rd.*) because of the alleged good, quick birding there. In the two hours we spent here we had a good first impression of the riches of the Arizonan avifauna, new birds included: **Olive warbler**, 2 female-type birds, several beautiful **Red-faced warblers**, many evil looking **Yellow-eyed juncos**, 2 females and one male **Broad-tailed hummingbird**, many **Grace's warblers**, two observed and two more heard **Cordilleran flycatchers**. Their call is rather different from the (Californian) Pacific-slope flycatchers, but they look all the same. Our first **Mexican jays** and **Canyon towhees** were

nice, as were the lanky and Phoebe-shaped **Dusky-capped flycatchers**. At the parking lot we had our first Red crossbills and during the trip down the mountain through a beautiful Saguaro-cactus landscape, we observed our first (of two) **Zone-tailed hawk**! Just look for a darker trailing-edge on the underwing and check those birds; the tailband is quite readily seen.

We continued the trip to the famous [Sweetwater Wetlands](#) (*Read map: Sweetwater Drive, p.31*) in Tucson, on the west side of the I-10. These ponds are known especially for the **Least grebe** that inhabits the pond with the 'keyhole-shaped' observation platform, apparently since 2000. The bird proved quite easy to find and looked quite evil, just like the juncos! All black with a bright yellow eye.

All around this area and the rest of our trip **White-winged doves** were very common, but **Inca dove** and Common ground dove were much rarer with only scattered observations.

Because we couldn't find the **Harris's hawk** here, we walked over to the adjacent Roger Road Wastewater Treatment (p.31) area with two ponds. Birders have to sign in here and after some walking around this industrial looking area, we at last found a juvenile bird perched low in a small tree!

Hereafter we left the Tucson-area, heading south via the I-10 and later the 83 towards [Sonoita](#). A few miles before reaching Sonoita we birded the *Lower Gardner Canyon* (p.77-78) around two hours by walking along the [Gardner Canyon Rd](#). Unfortunately, it was very hot by now with temperatures estimated to be around 35 Celsius! In spite of these unfavorable conditions, we managed to see some nice birds, such as the localized **Botteri's sparrow**, of which we saw at least two individuals, well seen all. In the same bushy & grassy landscape we had our first **Curve-billed thrasher**, the first of quite a few to come –even in the centre of Patagonia. **Lucy's warbler** proved quite common and easily visible. Two other nice and new birds were the **Eastern meadowlark** of the distinctive *lillianae* subspecies, a possible near-future split, and an unexpected male **Virginia warbler**. We couldn't find either Cassin's sparrow or Montezuma quail: both should occur here; try earlier in the day!

Halfway the afternoon we continued our way to famous [Patagonia](#) & we decided to buy some cold drinks and sit down for a while at the famous hummingbird-feeders at the house of [Mrs. Paton](#) (p.71). We arrived there pretty worn-out, so it was good to be welcomed to sit down in the shade to watch the feeders for a while. Very quickly we had both **Broad-billed** and **Violet-crowned hummingbird**. Broad-billed was also quite common in the Madera Canyon & we saw another Violet-crowned at the Patagonia Roadside Rest area, but apparently, Mrs. Paton's feeders are the most reliable place in the US to see this species! We were very pleased as well with our very first **Northern cardinal**, a female and later a splendid male and the **Thick-billed kingbirds** opposite of her house. Blue grosbeaks were common all through the area.

After sitting here for an hour, we dragged ourselves, and the rental, to the campground at the [Patagonia Lake State Park](#) (p.65-68). Had a nap for half an hour, while listening to 6281768 people here, and their kids & their (Mexican) music... But well, it was the weekend of the 4th of July anyway! During the late afternoon we made a short stroll to the 4th wash on the south side of the lake (p.66: map). We couldn't locate the reported Black-capped gnatcatchers here or near here, which allegedly had bred here –they weren't reported recently though. But birding was nice anyway! We were very pleased with the **Black-bellied whistling-ducks** we saw: one on the water edge and later that evening at least 8 but perhaps as many as 14 came flying in to sleep on the lake. Great was the pair of **Varied bunting** of which we had great views; it took us a while to identify the birds however. Much more beautiful than in the book, great birds with a fiery red head. We saw these bunting at the Florida Wash and near Nogales Airport as well. On the lake itself, **Neotropic cormorants** were quite easy to identify by their small size, longer tail and sharply cornered bare skin at the base of the bill. We saw at least two. **Summer tanagers** were quite visible as well.

Sleepysleep.

We woke up early next morning, Sunday the 3rd, to go to the [Patagonia Roadside Rest Area](#) (*read map*: Blue Haven, p.68-71). Didn't see much here, except for **Brown-crested flycatchers** &tc. We missed out on the Rose-breasted becards here. Then we continued to the *Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve* (p.72-75) and spent a pleasant two hours here during which we saw our first **Bridled titmouse**, **Yellow-billed cuckoo**, **Northern beardless-tyrannulet** and an always great **Grey hawk**!

Off to Madera Canyon now: close to [Nogales](#) we had a **Chihuahuan raven** and north of Nogales we saw two **Black vultures** between the more common **Turkey vultures**.

Close to the Madera Canyon, [driving south on the Madera Canyon Rd.](#), we made a stop at the *Florida Wash* (p.84-87) to look for the highly localized (on a global scale) Rufous-winged sparrow –we couldn't find it. But Tom saw his first **Swainson's hawk** and we both enjoyed our first (and only) **Pyrrhuloxia's**, a nice pair. The birds were surprisingly shy actually. Furthermore no birds, again looking in the desert around noon!

*Madera Canyon*: a very famous and very productive area, birdwise. A detailed map is found on p.85 of the ABA book, and a description of the good locations at p.89-97. Parked the car at the *Madera Canyon Parking Lot* and started birding from here, both by walking the road as well as some trails, most noteworthy the *Vault Mine Trail*. Soon we sampled some nice Arizonan species like **Arizona woodpecker**, **Painted redstart** and **Magnificent hummingbird**. Many **Dusky-capped flycatchers**, but further few birds. We walked all the way up to the end of the road and walked the Vault Mine Trail for a mile or two, following up a tip we got about where we could find the trogon! And yes, there is was! A splendid male **Elegant trogon**, sitting very quietly in a tree, close to his nesting tree. Trogons are the best – we knew that already & we experienced it once again! In this same area we also had the first of several **Sulphur-bellied flycatchers**. Very glad that we had the trogon and the flycatcher, we headed off back again to spend the night on the [Bog Springs Campground](#), but before we went to sleep, we waited patiently to see the famous **Elf owl** crawling from its wooden utility pawl next to [Santa Rita Lodge](#), cabin one! What a 'great' bird, saw both a young and an adult; the young was continuously peering out of the hole! Very satisfied with these few hours of Madera birding, we had a barbeque without beer but with calling **Whip-poor-wills** (of the Mexican *arizonae* subspecies, another possible future split), but we were even more glad with one or two singing **Whiskered screech-owls**!

To bed.

Our last day of the trip, Monday the Fourth of July 2005. Birded the *Vault Mine Trail* again but saw nothing new here, though we had great looks again of the trogon and its female. Thought I heard a Greater pewee, but wasn't sure. We headed off towards Tucson, to try to find the **Purple martins** and to try again for **Rufous-winged sparrow**. We had great success! We had both the sparrow and the martins, all very easily! We had one singing sparrow at a few meters in the [western suburbs of Tucson](#) (p.20-21) & yes, it was a great bird. Listen for its song: tik-tik trrrrr. We had one singing on a garden fence, if I can remember correctly on the northwest corner of the Broadway Blvd-Shannon Rd. intersection. This area is just a quiet neighborhood, not a natural desert whatsoever! This might be slightly disappointing if you expect unspoiled panoramas. The martins were close by in the *Saguaro* areas on the same Anklam Rd. As a bonus and final lifer, we had our first and only **Gilded flicker**!

Back to Riverside, great weekend & great birding!

## 8. Santa Cruz Island

This island well known for the endemic Island scrub-jay is part of the [Channel Islands NP](#), located [WNW of Los Angeles](#). We went to Santa Cruz Island via [Island Packers](#) and they

depart from [Ventura Harbor](#). Remark that the main reason to go there as a birder only occurs on Santa Cruz Island, so don't be dismayed not to see it on other islands of the NP! Boating went smoothly and on the way back we went after some whales –in other words: the knowledgeable persons from this company are not entirely time-schedule restricted! They bring you to the Island and pick you up on the same day or the next, whatever suits you. We landed at Scorpion Anchorage but the Jay is apparently much easier to score at Prisoners Harbor, which is a bit more to the west. Both harbors are visited by the same boat. In fact, we had to walk and search very hard before we finally had our jays and you don't want to miss out on this species. [Here](#) is a very good .pdf map of the Islands, click on of the 'Park Maps'.

We left Riverside CA on June 11 at 0430 and came back at 2130, but it was all worth it. From the boat we had at least seven definite **Xantus's murrelets**, which breeds on the Channel Islands. The closely related Craveri's murrelet does not breed here, but winters here. On some of the birds we actually saw the light colored underwing. Rather than jet black, the birds appeared somewhat brownish or grayish above. This could be a lighteffect but we don't think so. Craveri's should be blacker too and show dark underwings. In addition, we observed around 10 **Pink-footed shearwaters** and 20 Sooties, and one Cassin's auklet. Upon arriving at Scorpion Anchorage, we fanatically hiked the Island and only after almost two hours we found our **Island scrub-jay**, 4, rather deep inland. We think the problem might have been the initial lack of any larger wooded areas. There's one at the campground and the Jay is sometimes seen there but not this time, so we walked past it, through the canyon and up the hills. Here we found a forested valley in which we had the rather shy Jays. At Prisoners Harbor however, the Jays apparently are visible on the beach and on the picnic tables so the choice is yours...During our walk we had the endemic *insulicola* subspecies of Pacific-slope flycatcher (which might merit specific status), a Peregrine &c. Looking at the ocean from the Island we had around 7 Pigeon guillemots and 1 Common murre. Most noticeable to me were the 2 singing **Grasshopper sparrows**, together with two non-singing individuals. These were the only Grasshopper sparrows we had in CA.

On the boat back to Ventura Harbor we had great views of 3 **Blue whales** just below the bow of the ship and a so distinctively 'floating' **Sunfish**.

## 9. Northern Baja California, Mexico

In the morning of September 12<sup>th</sup>, I and Agata started to drive down towards lovely [Bahia de los Angeles](#) (not the best map, but could not find any better on the WWW!) on the east side of the Baja peninsula, roughly one third down from its start. The idea was that we would relax a little, to do some site-seeing and see how far we would get down south on the peninsula. At the border crossing at Tijuana you're requested to fill in a '*Forma migratoria para turista, transmigrante*' which allowed me, being Dutch, and Agata, being Polish, to stay for seven days. This form is obtainable at the border and is free of charge. You will be directed to an office where you get it without hassle and trouble. Be advised that you are obliged to have Mexican car insurance on your vehicle! We were able to get this easily at [Budget](#) (recommended!) where we rented our car in Riverside and cost a rather pricey \$25 a day. You have no choice though: border officials could allegedly send you back without this insurance! We found our way on Baja using the detailed and interesting volume [Moon Handbooks Baja](#), by Joe Cummings, which contains all the maps and info you will need about Baja.

Once on the other side on the border, we drove surprisingly smoothly through Tijuana where we preferred to take the toll-road (Mexico 1-D, often without the prefix 'Mexico') to get to Ensenada and avoiding the traffic on the non-tolled Mexico 1 road further south. After Ensenada, you'll enter the normal Mexico 1 road. Landscape was all right, bit messy but the

further to the south we came the more unspoiled and less trashy it looked. Rolling hills and a cactus-clad desert added much to our joy of driving on the roads of Baja California. However, since we drove on a Monday, many trucks were on the road to supply all kinds of warehouses and since those trucks drove very slow uphill, the average mileage per hour was very low. Downhill, they apparently want to make up for the slow ascend so they speed down which is quite frightening when you're just ascend from the opposite direction –take care in the hills guys! A little frustrated by this slow speed we decided to turn west on a dirtroad in the small town of El Rosario. Here we drove towards the cape called Punta Baja to spend the night. This took us a great deal of time, driving through the maze of intersecting dirtroads and the thought concerning whether or not all our tires would get punctured in combination with the nearing sunset, didn't add to a completely tranquil state of mind! The landscape *en route* was marvelous though: many, many cacti and especially along the dirtroad between El Rosario and Punta Baja we had an occasional and endemic **Gray thrasher**. The nice species was quite easily seen, also from the car and they perch sometimes atop of cacti. This was the only Baja endemic we would see since the others occur more to the south. Once at Punta Baja we decided not to drive the rather steep and gravelly road down because we were afraid our car wouldn't manage to drive back uphill the next morning! Magnificent views of the Pacific from up the cliff and many a star at night.

Dawn saw us driving back to El Rosario and further south, heading for Bahia de los Angeles. The surroundings are very beautiful and interestingly shaped trees and cacti decorate the desert and an occasional **Harris's hawk** or **Gilded flicker** was observed. Once arrived in Parador Punta Prieta, take the eastern branch of Mexico 1 leading towards Bahia de los Angeles. Here, at this lovely and very quiet village (apparently it was off-season, which was perfectly all right to us!) we looked for a campground and decided to spend two nights in the primitive but highly romantic (according to Agata, but indeed, I could nothing but agree with her!) **Campo Archelon** ("Primitive camping on the water"). Sitting by our hut, we would obtain great views of mixed groups of **Blue-footed boobies** with the occasional **Brown booby**, while **Magnificent frigatebirds** soared high overhead or circled leisurely above the ultramarine water in which Common bottlenose dolphins swam. Life was good to us.

The next morning early we went onto the Sea of Cortez (a.k.a. Gulf of California) with Joel's Ecoturismo. Just ask for him in the village. He has a nice boat but without a roof from whatever sort so bring head protection against the bright sun! I guess we paid around \$70 for two persons which we bring us for around six hours on the sea. Apparently it wasn't a big deal to Joel if we wanted to stay a bit longer. By the way, the \$70 was for the whole boat, so the more persons, the cheaper the price per person gets. From the boat I had good views of **Black stormpetrels** and at last of the aptly named **Least stormpetrel** which made my day. Both boobies were seen again, but no tropicbirds were encountered nor whales. We saw however Pacific white-sided dolphins riding on the bow. Though not many species were seen on the trip (too late in the season perhaps?), it was a nice day on the very blue Gulf of California, surrounded by the baking hot islands and coastline.

That evening and the next morning early I did some rather productive beach birding, seeing very welcome **Savannah sparrows** of the large-billed subspecies **rostratus**. This subspecies merits specific status, *Passerculus rostratus* according to Zink *et al.* (1991) and Zink *et al.* (2005). Other interesting birds were unexpected **Wilson's plovers**, of which I saw several between the Semi-palmated plovers, **Reddish egret**, many **Yellow-footed gulls** and a surprising **Northern waterthrush**, foraging in the beached debris.

As I, for one reason or another, didn't take ANY birdnotes here, I think I forgot some species. However, there might be nothing of great interest in them or else I would have remembered!

**Please feel free to email me about certain species or observation, always welcome!**

## Systematic list of all species observed in the USA

### **Gaviidae**

Red-throated loon

*Gavia stellata*

Pacific loon

*Gavia pacifica*

Common loon

*Gavia immer*

### **Podicipedidae**

Pied-billed grebe

*Podilymbus podiceps*

Horned grebe

*Podiceps auritus*

Eared grebe

*Podiceps nigricollis*

Least grebe

*Tachybaptus dominicus*

Western grebe

*Aechmophorus occidentalis*

Clark's grebe

*Aechmophorus clarkii*

### **Diomedidae**

Black-footed albatross

*Phoebastria nigripes*

### **Procelariidae**

Northern fulmar

*Fulmarus glacialis*

Pink-footed shearwater

*Puffinus creatopus*

Buller's shearwater

*Puffinus bulleri*

Sooty shearwater

*Puffinus griseus*

Short-tailed shearwater

*Puffinus tenuirostris*

Black-vented shearwater

*Puffinus opisthomelas*

(Manx shearwater

*Puffinus puffinus*)

### **Pelicanidae**

American white pelican

*Pelicanus erythrorhynchus*

Brown pelican

*Pelicanus occidentalis*

### **Phalacrocoracidae**

Double-crested cormorant

*Phalacrocorax auritus*

Neotropic cormorant

*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

Brandt's cormorant

*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*

Pelagic cormorant

*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*

### **Ardeidae**

American bittern

*Botaurus lentiginosus*

Least bittern

*Ixobrychus exilis*

Great blue heron

*Ardea herodias*

Great egret

*Casmerodius albus*

Snowy egret

*Egretta thula*

Cattle egret

*Bubulcus ibis*

Green heron

*Butorides virescens*

Black-crowned night-heron

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

Yellow-crowned night-heron

*Nyctanassa violacea*

### **Threskiornithidae**

White-faced ibis

*Plegadis chihi*

### **Ciconiidae**

Wood stork

*Mycteria americana*

### **Anatidae**

Black-bellied whistling-duck

*Dendrocygna autumnalis*

Snow Goose

*Chen caerulescens*

Ross's Goose

*Chen rossii*

Cackling Goose

*Branta hutchinsii*

Canada Goose

*Branta canadensis*

Brant

*Branta bernicla nigricans*

Wood duck

*Aix sponsa*

Gadwall

*Anas strepera*

American wigeon  
Mallard  
Blue-winged teal  
Cinnamon teal  
Northern shoveler  
Northern Pintail  
Green-winged teal  
Canvasback  
Redhead  
Ring-necked duck  
Lesser scaup  
Harlequin duck  
Surf scoter  
Long-tailed duck  
Bufflehead  
Common goldeneye  
Barrow's goldeneye  
Hooded merganser  
Common merganser  
Red-breasted merganser  
Ruddy duck

**Cathartidae**

Black vulture  
Turkey vulture

**Accipitridae**

Osprey  
White-tailed kite  
Bald eagle  
Northern harrier  
Sharp-shinned hawk  
Cooper's hawk  
Gray hawk  
Harris's hawk  
Red-shouldered hawk  
Swainson's hawk  
Zone-tailed hawk  
Red-tailed hawk  
Ferruginous hawk  
Golden eagle

**Falconidae**

American kestrel  
Merlin  
Peregrine  
Prairie falcon

**Phasianidae**

Chukar  
Greater sage-grouse  
Dusky grouse  
Wild turkey

**Odontophoridae**

Mountain quail  
California quail  
Gambell's quail

**Rallidae**

Clapper rail

*Anas americana*  
*Anas platyrhynchos*  
*Anas discors*  
*Anas cyanoptera*  
*Anas clypeata*  
*Anas acuta*  
*Anas crecca carolinensis*  
*Aythya valisineria*  
*Aythya americana*  
*Aythya collaris*  
*Aythya affinis*  
*Histrionicus histrionicus*  
*Melanitta perspicillata*  
*Clangula hyemalis*  
*Bucephala albeola*  
*Bucephala clangula*  
*Bucephala islandica*  
*Lophodytes cucullatus*  
*Mergus merganser*  
*Mergus serrator*  
*Oxyura jamaicensis*

*Coragyps atratus*  
*Cathartes aura*

*Pandion haliaetus*  
*Elanus leucurus*  
*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*  
*Circus cyaneus hudsonicus*  
*Accipiter striatus*  
*Accipiter cooperii*  
*Buteo nitidus*  
*Parabuteo unicinctus*  
*Buteo lineatus*  
*Buteo swainsoni*  
*Buteo albonotatus*  
*Buteo jamaicensis*  
*Buteo regalis*  
*Aquila chrysaetos*

*Falco sparverius*  
*Falco columbarius*  
*Falco peregrinus*  
*Falco mexicanus*

*Alectoris chukar*  
*Centrocercus urophasianus*  
*Dendragapus obscurus*  
*Meleagris gallopavo*

*Oreortyx pictus*  
*Callipepla californica*  
*Callipepla gambelii*

*Rallus longirostris levipes*

Virginia rail  
Sora  
Common moorhen  
American coot

**Gruidae**

Sandhill crane

**Charadriidae**

Black-bellied plover  
Snowy plover  
Semipalmated plover  
Killdeer  
Mountain plover

**Haematopodidae**

American oystercatcher  
Black oystercatcher

**Recurvirostridae**

Black-necked stilt  
American avocet

**Scolopacidae**

Spotted sandpiper  
Wandering tattler  
Greater yellowlegs  
Willet  
Lesser yellowlegs  
Whimbrel  
Long-billed curlew  
Marbled godwit  
Ruddy turnstone  
Black turnstone  
Surfbird  
Red knot  
Sanderling  
Western sandpiper  
Least sandpiper  
Rock sandpiper  
Dunlin  
Short-billed dowitcher  
Long-billed dowitcher  
Wilson's snipe  
Wilson's phalarope  
Red-necked phalarope

**Laridae**

Laughing gull  
Franklin's gull  
Bonaparte's gull  
Heermann's gull  
Mew gull  
Ring-billed gull  
California gull  
Herring gull  
Yellow-footed gull  
Western gull  
Glaucous-winged gull  
Black-legged kittiwake  
Least tern

*Rallus limicola*  
*Porzana carolina*  
*Gallinula chloropus*  
*Fulica americana*

*Grus canadensis*

*Pluvialis squatarola*  
*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*  
*Charadrius semipalmatus*  
*Charadrius vociferus*  
*Charadrius montanus*

*Haematopus palliatus*  
*Haematopus bachmani*

*Himantopus mexicanus*  
*Recurvirostra americana*

*Actitis macularius*  
*Tringa incanus*  
*Tringa melanoleuca*  
*Tringa semipalmata*  
*Tringa flavipes*  
*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*  
*Numenius americanus*  
*Limosa fedoa*  
*Arenaria interpres*  
*Arenaria melanocephala*  
*Aphriza virgata*  
*Calidris canutus*  
*Calidris alba*  
*Calidris mauri*  
*Calidris minutilla*  
*Calidris ptilocnemis*  
*Calidris alpina*  
*Limnodromus griseus*  
*Limnodromus scolopaceus*  
*Gallinago delicata*  
*Phalaropus tricolor*  
*Phalaropus lobatus*

*Larus atricilla*  
*Larus pipixcan*  
*Larus philadelphia*  
*Larus heermanni*  
*Larus canus*  
*Larus delawarensis*  
*Larus californicus*  
*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*  
*Larus livens*  
*Larus occidentalis*  
*Larus glaucescens*  
*Rissa tridactyla*  
*Sternula antillarum*

Gull-billed tern  
Caspian tern  
Black tern  
Common tern  
Forster's tern  
Royal tern  
Elegant tern  
Black skimmer

**Stercorariidae**

South polar skua  
Pomarine jaeger

**Alcidae**

Common murre  
Pigeon guillemot  
Marbled murrelet  
Xantus's murrelet  
Cassin's auklet  
Rhinoceros auklet

**Columbidae**

Rock pigeon  
Band-tailed pigeon  
Eurasian collared-dove  
White-winged dove  
Mourning dove  
Inca dove  
Common ground-dove  
Ruddy ground-dove

**Cuculidae**

Yellow-billed cuckoo  
Greater roadrunner

**Tytonidae**

Barn owl

**Strigidae**

Western screech-owl  
Whiskered screech-owl  
Great horned owl  
Elf owl  
Burrowing owl  
Great gray owl  
Long-eared owl  
Short-eared owl  
Northern saw-whet owl

**Caprimulgidae**

Lesser nighthawk  
Common nighthawk  
Common poorwill  
Whip-poor-will

**Apodidae**

Black swift  
White-collared swift

**Trochilidae**

Broad-billed hummingbird  
Violet-crowned hummingbird  
Magnificent hummingbird  
Black-chinned hummingbird

*Gelochelidon nilotica*  
*Hydroprogne caspia*  
*Chlidonias niger surinamensis*  
*Sterna hirundo*  
*Sterna forsteri*  
*Thalasseus maximus*  
*Thalasseus elegans*  
*Rynchops niger*

*Stercorarius maccormicki*  
*Stercorarius pomarinus*

*Uria aalge*  
*Cephus columba*  
*Brachyramphus marmoratus*  
*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*  
*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*  
*Cerorhinca monocerata*

*Columba livia*  
*Patagioenas fasciata*  
*Streptopelia decaocto*  
*Zenaida asiatica*  
*Zenaida macroura*  
*Columbina inca*  
*Columbina passerina*  
*Columbina talpacoti*

*Coccyzus americanus*  
*Geococcyx californianus*

*Tyto alba*

*Megascops kennicottii*  
*Megascops trichopsis*  
*Bubo virginianus*  
*Micrathene whitneyi*  
*Athene cunicularia*  
*Strix nebulosa*  
*Asio otus*  
*Asio flammeus*  
*Aegolius acadicus*

*Chordeiles acutipennis*  
*Chordeiles minor*  
*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*  
*Caprimulgus vociferus arizonae*

*Cypseloides niger*  
*Streptoprocne zonaris*

*Cynanthus latirostris*  
*Amazilia violiceps*  
*Eugenes fulgens*  
*Archilochus alexandri*

Anna's hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>
Costa's hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>
Broad-tailed hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus platycercus</i>
Rufous hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>
Allen's hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>
<b>Trogonidae</b>	
Elegant trogon	<i>Trogon elegans</i>
<b>Alcedinidae</b>	
Belted kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>
<b>Picidae</b>	
Lewis's woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>
Acorn woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>
Gila woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>
Williamson's sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus thyroideus</i>
Red-naped sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus nuchalis</i>
Red-breasted sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus ruber</i>
Ladder-backed woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>
Nuttall's woodpecker	<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>
Downy woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>
Hairy woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>
Arizona woodpecker	<i>Picoides arizonae</i>
White-headed woodpecker	<i>Picoides albolarvatus</i>
Black-backed woodpecker	<i>Picoides arcticus</i>
Northern flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus cafer</i>
Gilded flicker	<i>Colaptes chrysoides</i>
Pileated woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>
<b>Tyrannidae</b>	
Northern beardless-tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma imberbe</i>
Olive-sided flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>
Western wood-pewee	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>
Willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>
Hammond's flycatcher	<i>Empidonax hammondii</i>
Gray flycatcher	<i>Empidonax wrightii</i>
Dusky flycatcher	<i>Empidonax oberholseri</i>
Pacific-slope flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis difficilis</i>
	<i>E. d. insulicola</i>
Cordilleran flycatcher	<i>Empidonax occidentalis</i>
Black phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
Say's phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>
Vermilion flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>
Dusky-capped flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>
Ash-throated flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>
Brown-crested flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>
Sulphur-bellied flycatcher	<i>Myiodynastes luteiventris</i>
Cassin's kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>
Thick-billed kingbird	<i>Tyrannus crassirostris</i>
Western kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>
<b>Laniidae</b>	
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
<b>Vireonidae</b>	
Bell's vireo	<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>
Plumbeous vireo	<i>Vireo plumbeus</i>
Cassin's vireo	<i>Vireo cassinii</i>
Hutton's vireo	<i>Vireo huttoni</i>
Warbling vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>

**Corvidae**

Steller's jay  
Island scrub-jay  
Western scrub-jay

Mexican jay  
Pinyon jay  
Clark's nutcracker  
Black-billed magpie  
Yellow-billed magpie  
American crow  
Chihuahuan raven  
Common raven

**Alaudidae**

Horned lark

**Hirundinidae**

Purple martin  
Tree swallow  
Violet-green swallow  
Northern rough-winged swallow  
Barn swallow

**Paridae**

Mountain chickadee  
Chestnut-backed chickadee  
Bridled titmouse  
Oak titmouse  
Juniper titmouse

**Remizidae**

Verdin

**Aegithalidae**

Bushtit

**Sittidae**

Red-breasted nuthatch  
White-breasted nuthatch  
Pygmy nuthatch

**Certhiidae**

Brown creeper

**Troglodytidae**

Cactus wren  
Rock wren  
Canyon wren  
Bewick's wren  
House wren  
Winter wren  
Marsh wren

**Cinclidae**

American dipper

**Regulidae**

Golden-crowned kinglet  
Ruby-crowned kinglet

**Sylviidae**

Blue-gray gnatcatcher  
California gnatcatcher  
Black-tailed gnatcatcher

**Turdidae**

*Cyanocitta stelleri*  
*Aphelocoma insularis*  
*Aphelocoma californica californica*  
*A.c. woodhouseii*  
*Aphelocoma ultramarina*  
*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*  
*Nucifraga columbiana*  
*Pica hudsonia*  
*Pica nuttalli*  
*Corvus brachyrhynchos*  
*Corvus cryptoleucus*  
*Corvus corax*

*Eremophila alpestris alpestris*

*Progne subis hesperia*  
*Tachycineta bicolor*  
*Tachycineta thalassina*  
*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*  
*Hirundo rustica*

*Poecile gambeli*  
*Poecile rufescens*  
*Baeolophus wollweberi*  
*Baeolophus inornatus*  
*Baeolophus ridgwayi*

*Auriparus flaviceps*

*Psaltriparus minimus*

*Sitta canadensis*  
*Sitta carolinensis*  
*Sitta pygmaea*

*Certhia americana*

*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*  
*Salpinctes obsoletus*  
*Catherpes mexicanus*  
*Thryomanes bewickii*  
*Troglodytes aedon aedon*  
*Troglodytes troglodytes*  
*Cistothorus palustris*

*Cinclus mexicanus*

*Regulus satrapa*  
*Regulus calendula*

*Polioptila caerulea*  
*Polioptila californica*  
*Polioptila melanura*

Western bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>
Mountain bluebird	<i>Sialia currucoides</i>
Townsend's solitaire	<i>Myadestes townsendi</i>
Swainson's thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>
Hermit thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>
American robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
Varied thrush	<i>Ixoreus naevius</i>
<b>Timaliidae</b>	
Wrentit	<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>
<b>Mimidae</b>	
Northern mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
Sage thrasher	<i>Oreoscoptes montanus</i>
Bendire's thrasher	<i>Toxostoma bendirei</i>
Curve-billed thrasher	<i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>
California thrasher	<i>Toxostoma redivivum</i>
Crissal thrasher	<i>Toxostoma crissale</i>
Le Conte's thrasher	<i>Toxostoma lecontei</i>
<b>Sturnidae</b>	
European starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
<b>Motacillidae</b>	
American pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>
Sprague's pipit	<i>Anthus spragueii</i>
<b>Bombycillidae</b>	
Cedar waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
<b>Ptilonotidae</b>	
Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>
<b>Peucedramidae</b>	
Olive warbler	<i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>
<b>Parulidae</b>	
Orange-crowned warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>
Nashville warbler	<i>Vermivora ruficapilla</i>
Virginia's warbler	<i>Vermivora virginiae</i>
Lucy's warbler	<i>Vermivora luciae</i>
Northern parula	<i>Parula americana</i>
Yellow warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>
Black-throated gray warbler	<i>Dendroica nigrescens</i>
Black-throated green warbler	<i>Dendroica virens</i>
Townsend's warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>
Grace's warbler	<i>Dendroica graciae</i>
American redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>
MacGillivray's warbler	<i>Oporornis tolmiei</i>
Common yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>
Wilson's warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>
Red-faced warbler	<i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>
Painted redstart	<i>Myioborus pictus</i>
Yellow-breasted chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>
<b>Thraupidae</b>	
Hepatic tanager	<i>Piranga flava hepatica</i>
Summer tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>
Western tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>
<b>Emberizidae</b>	
Green-tailed towhee	<i>Pipilo chlorurus</i>
Spotted towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>
Canyon towhee	<i>Pipilo fuscus</i>
California towhee	<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>

Abert's towhee	<i>Pipilo aberti</i>
Rufous-winged sparrow	<i>Aimophila carpalis</i>
Botteri's sparrow	<i>Aimophila botterii</i>
Rufous-crowned sparrow	<i>Aimophila ruficeps</i>
Chipping sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>
Brewer's sparrow	<i>Spizella breweri</i>
Black-chinned sparrow	<i>Spizella atrogularis</i>
Vesper sparrow	<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>
Lark sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>
Black-throated sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>
Sage sparrow	<i>Amphispiza belli</i>
Savannah sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi</i>
Grasshopper sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>
Fox sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca megarhyncha</i>
	<i>P. i. schistacea</i>
Song sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Lincoln's sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>
White-throated sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>
White-crowned sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
Golden-crowned sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i>
Dark-eyed junco	<i>Junco hyemalis hyemalis</i>
	<i>J. h. caniceps</i>
Yellow-eyed junco	<i>Junco phaeonotus</i>
McCown's longspur	<i>Calcarius mccownii</i>
Chestnut-collared longspur	<i>Calcarius ornatus</i>
<b>Cardinalidae</b>	
Northern cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>
Pyrrhuloxia	<i>Cardinalis sinuatus</i>
Black-headed grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>
Blue grosbeak	<i>Passerina caerulea</i>
Lazuli bunting	<i>Passerina amoena</i>
Varied bunting	<i>Passerina versicolor</i>
<b>Icteridae</b>	
Red-winged blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Tricolored blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>
Eastern meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna lilianae</i>
Western meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>
Yellow-headed blackbird	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>
Brewer's blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>
Great-tailed grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
Bronzed cowbird	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>
Brown-headed cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>
Hooded oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>
Bullock's oriole	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>
Scott's oriole	<i>Icterus parisorum</i>
<b>Fringillidae</b>	
Purple finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>
Cassin's finch	<i>Carpodacus cassinii</i>
House finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
Red crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
Pine siskin	<i>Carduelis pinus</i>
Lesser goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>
Lawrence's goldfinch	<i>Carduelis lawrencei</i>
American goldfinch	<i>Carduelis tristis</i>
<b>Passeridae</b>	

House sparrow

*Passer domesticus*