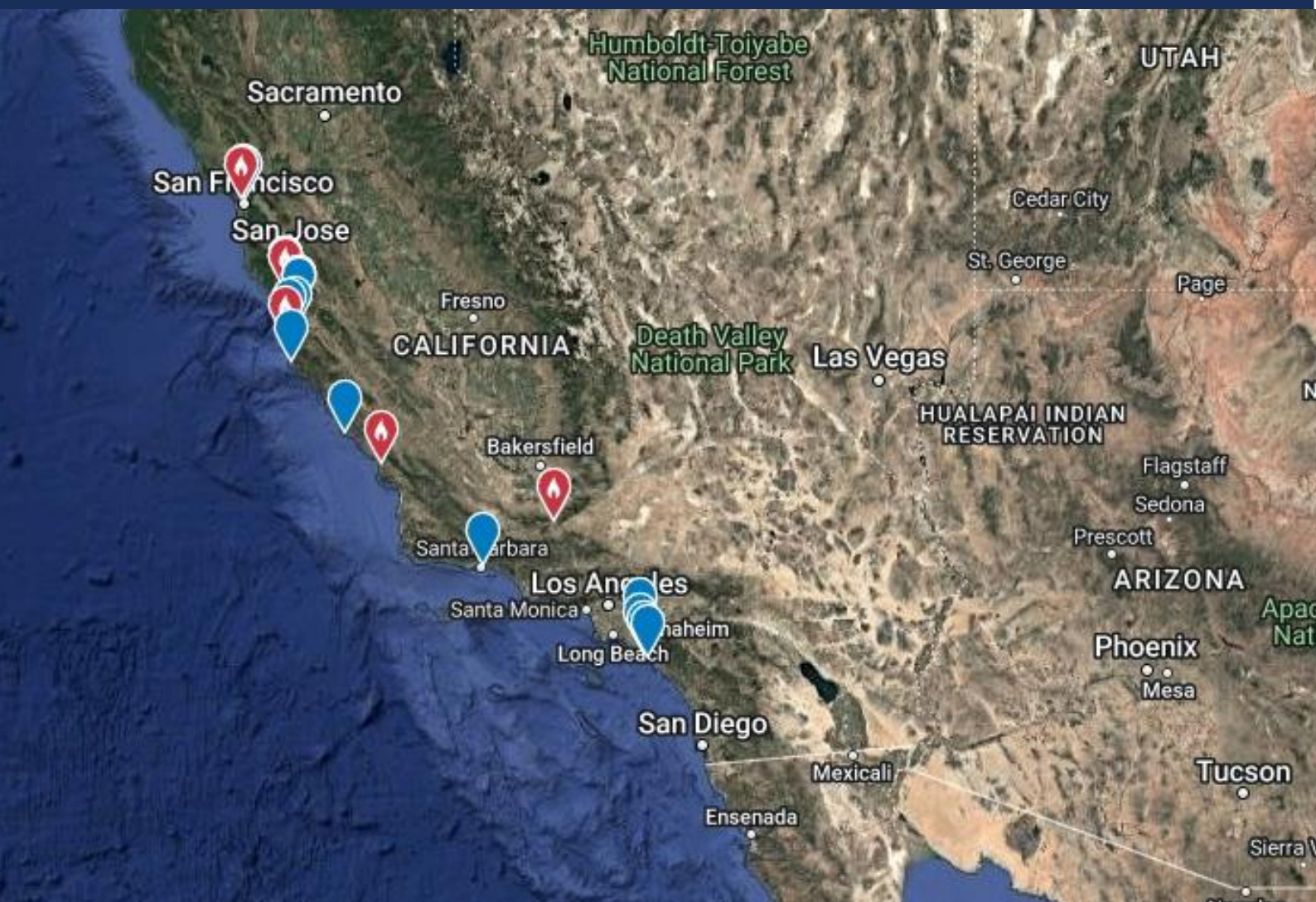


A Birding Trip to

California, USA



21st March to 7th April, 2025



Friday 21 st March	Capitola	Quality Inn grounds
		Soquel area
		Capitola beach and wharf
Sunday 23 rd March	Capitola to San Jose	Tejon rest area
Monday 24 th March	Anaheim	Upper Santa Ana River
Tuesday 25 th March	Anaheim	Upper Santa Ana River
	Newport	Crystal Cove State Park
		Laguna Beach
Wednesday 26 th March	Newport	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve
Friday 28 th March	Santa Barbara	
Saturday 29 th March	Santa Barbara to Monterey	Morro Bay Harbour
		Elephant Seals, Piedras Blancas
Sunday 30 th March	Moss Landing	
	Monterey waterfront	
Monday 31 st March	Moss Landing	Wheal Watch
Tuesday 1 st April	Pacific Coast Highway	Monterey to Big Sur
	Moss Landing	Salinas
Wednesday 2 nd April	Point Lobos State Preserve	
Friday 4 th April	San Francisco Waterfront	
Saturday 5 th April	Alcatraz Island	
Sunday 6 th April	San Francisco	Crissy Field Lagoon

BIRDseen

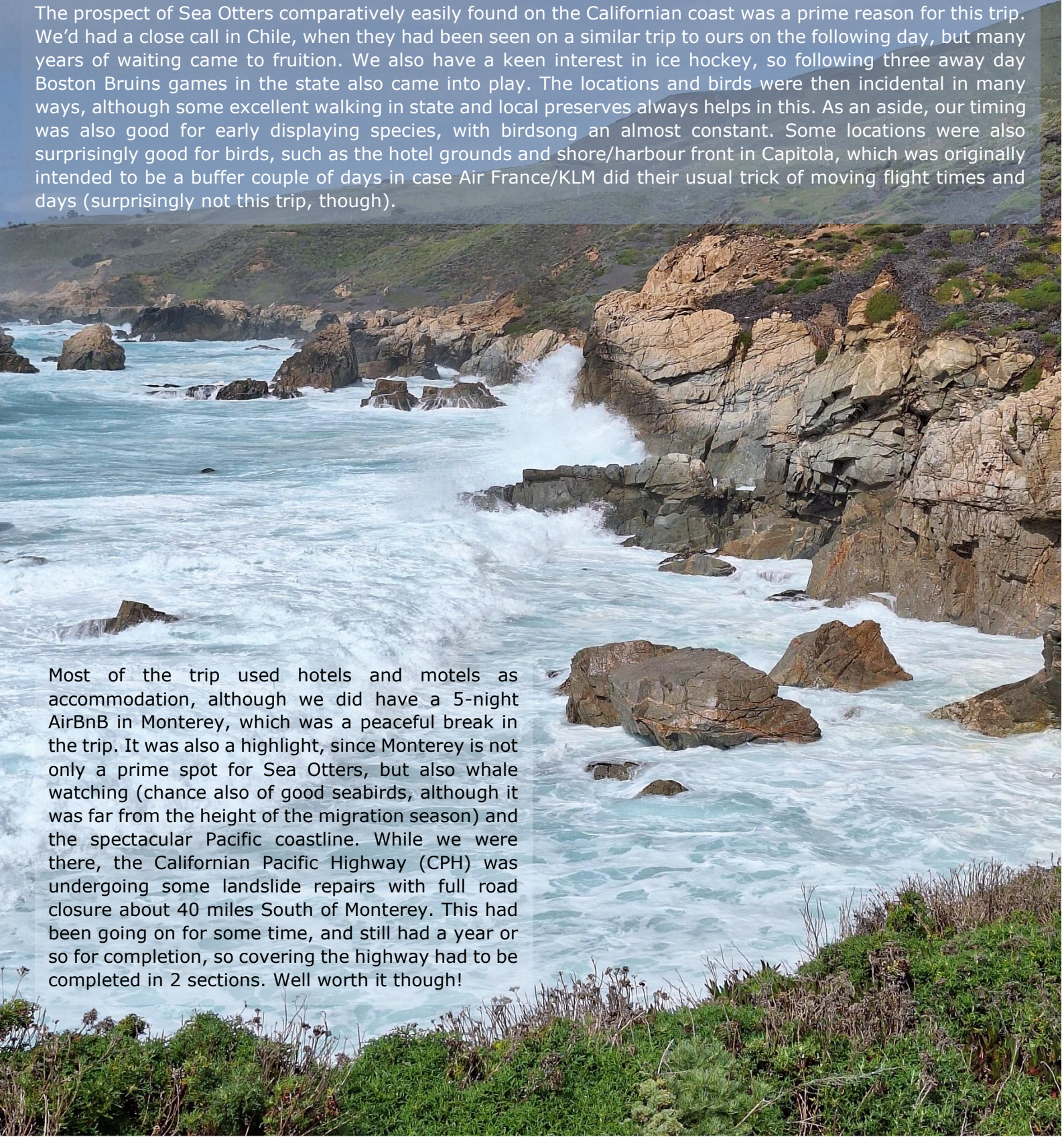
birdseen.com

California, USA

21st March to 7th April, 2025

The prospect of Sea Otters comparatively easily found on the Californian coast was a prime reason for this trip. We'd had a close call in Chile, when they had been seen on a similar trip to ours on the following day, but many years of waiting came to fruition. We also have a keen interest in ice hockey, so following three away day Boston Bruins games in the state also came into play. The locations and birds were then incidental in many ways, although some excellent walking in state and local preserves always helps in this. As an aside, our timing was also good for early displaying species, with birdsong an almost constant. Some locations were also surprisingly good for birds, such as the hotel grounds and shore/harbour front in Capitola, which was originally intended to be a buffer couple of days in case Air France/KLM did their usual trick of moving flight times and days (surprisingly not this trip, though).

Most of the trip used hotels and motels as accommodation, although we did have a 5-night AirBnB in Monterey, which was a peaceful break in the trip. It was also a highlight, since Monterey is not only a prime spot for Sea Otters, but also whale watching (chance also of good seabirds, although it was far from the height of the migration season) and the spectacular Pacific coastline. While we were there, the Californian Pacific Highway (CPH) was undergoing some landslide repairs with full road closure about 40 miles South of Monterey. This had been going on for some time, and still had a year or so for completion, so covering the highway had to be completed in 2 sections. Well worth it though!



Capitola



With a trip based in the first week on Ice Hockey games with set dates, the buffer of a couple of days in Capitola was set as mentioned above just in case Air France / KLM did their usual trick of changing flight dates. This didn't come to pass thankfully, but the buffer was still there, and we could enjoy the delights of the small town that abuts the larger Santa Cruz, just (without the predictable traffic) over an hour to reach from San Francisco airport. It turned out to be a rather canny little place, which also proffered a tantalising variety of mainly commoner species of bird. We stayed in the functional Quality Inn placed very close to one of the main highways, and this in turn was only a 15-minute walk from the Village, set on the shores of Monterey Bay.

The hotel grounds themselves proved to serve up a rather nice selection of birds, since it had fairly open areas, with surrounding trees to vary the habitat. The intention was to have a first light walk to start the list rolling, but being awake from just after midnight and a 7am breakfast (coinciding with first light) was enough to break the plan in favour of a much needed first meal. The aforementioned grounds were scoured a couple of times through the day. The regular cast included a good few singing (Oregon) Dark-eyed juncos, small parties of Bushtit, and House Finches. A Red-shouldered Hawk was picked out early on and subsequently proved to be a regular attender of a one of the specific branches of one of the trees downhill from reception. Others desperate to force their way on to the hotel list were California Towhee (Spotted Towhee nearby only moments later). Black Phoebe was as showy as usual, although a California Scrub-Jay mainly shunned the limelight. A few hirundines had been circling the area, which proved to be Violet-Green Swallows once a couple had been noticed on the reception roof.



Townsend's Warbler

American Bushtit

Red-shouldered Hawk





Black Phoebe

Hermit Thrush

A sweep later on in the grounds added yet more that had not been seen earlier. Hummingbirds had been irritatingly difficult to pin down, despite their calls being heard. So it took a while for the first of 2 separate female Anna's to show off perched briefly before continuing to tear up the area. Movement on one of the hedges was thankfully concentrated upon, with the prize a fairly shy Hermit Thrush. With Black Phoebe watching, a few scant trees opposite reception was host to a few active birds, principle amongst them being a few noisy Chestnut-backed Chickadees, with the further addition of a Townsend's Warbler directly above. Higher trees towards a back car park held a brief Black-throated Grey Warbler, and a small charm of Lesser Goldfinches.



Violet-green Swallow

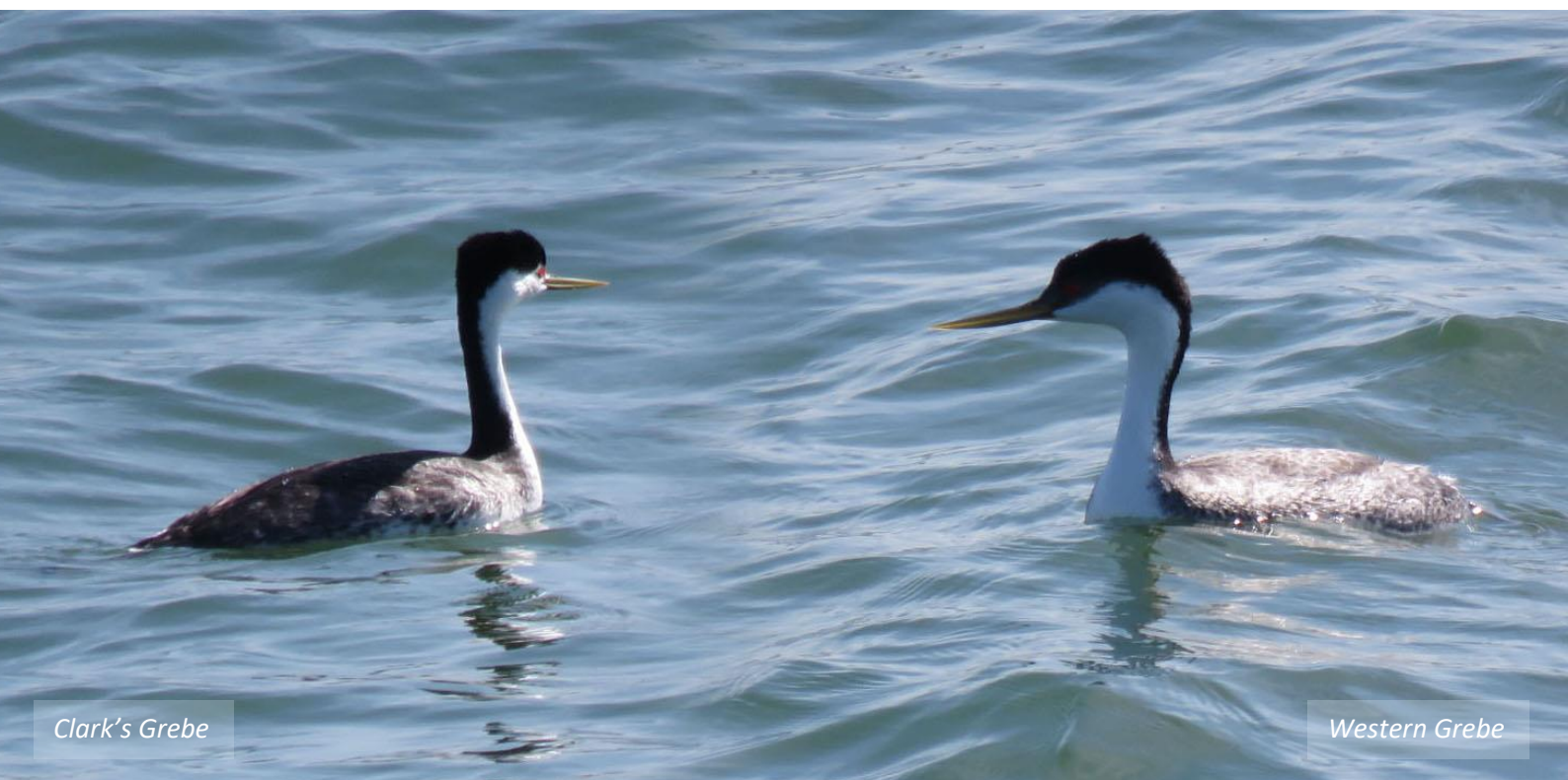


Chestnut-backed Chickadee

The shorefront location of the village was host to an excellent assortment of birds, some in large rafts, from the shoreline. A wooden built pier / wharf gave the opportunity of bisecting the large numbers of busy feeders, which in turn held good numbers of busy Common Seals. With some expectation tempered with a hidden common sense, we also spotted a few Sea Otters lazing on their back in a small patch of kelp. A bit too distant for anything other than confirmatory backup.



Largest numbers of birds were either large tight packed groups of Cormorants (mainly Brandt's, but careful checking picked out a few Pelagic and the much larger Double-crested). It was good to see that some Grebes had remained on the sea before departing inland for the breeding. Both Western and Clark's assume breeding plumage by mid March, which makes distinguishing them somewhat easier. However, searching through the myriads seemed to turn up only Western, and it wasn't until some of the photo images were looked through that a couple of Clark's had been missed. The only duck amongst this many birds on the water was a rather impressive male Surf Scoter. Overhead, a small group of Brown Pelicans buzzed the gulls, and regular dived from the air into the water.



Clark's Grebe

Western Grebe



Brandt's Cormorant

Pelagic Cormorant



Brown Pelican

Anaheim - Upper Santa Ana River (Katella Ave. to Taft Ave)



This very specific location refers to a small section of the Santa Ana River, located very close to our hotel (the Ayre's Hotel) and adjacent to the Honda Centre (the Ice Hockey stadium which was our intended goal). We were to stay in the Anaheim area for three nights, determined by the Ice Hockey game in Los Angeles and the following one three nights later in Anaheim. The hotel is right opposite, and also within a short walk of the "river". We walked across the road bridge to the restaurants, and the concrete sided dryness didn't look in the least bit tantalising, with a marginal amount of standing water. Apparently, the reason for this is that the river's flow (except during wet seasons) is diverted into spreading grounds for groundwater recharge, which is a crucial source of water for north Orange County.



American Coot

Tree Swallow



However, with this being the only potential for birds in the surrounding area, a walk along one of the banks for an hour or so had to be done, and surprisingly did reward with 20 or so species. There is a project to turn the area into a recreational attraction, so the banks support a decent pair of cycle paths. This overlooks the pools in the riverbed and so affords good views of any birds present. American Coots and Black-necked Stilts are the first and most obvious species, although the first of a couple of Killdeer could be discerned nearby. The first pair of a few American Avocets were a little further down, and Rough-winged Swallows sauntered back and forth. Mallard were the first ducks, but these were supplemented by small numbers of Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, two pairs of Cinnamon Teal, and a single Northern Shoveler. The earlier Rough-winged Swallows were found to host Tree & Barn Swallows. The few sparse trees forming a backing to the track were not to be ignored. Initially, a few Audubon's Warblers were heard then seen in the upper branches. Then a single Orange-crowned Warbler, with a trio of Savannah Sparrows peering from a chain link fence. A pair of Black Phoebe were hawking insects next to the (live) railway track.



Crystal Cove State Park (near Newport)

The \$15 entry per car to this SP is well worth the money, since it offers an easy walk around the area with some good birds, particularly hummingbirds. It is sandwiched between the Pacific Ocean coastline and a relatively busy coastal highway, located between the attractions of Newport & Laguna Beaches. The shore is sandy with some rocks and bounded by some low cliffs. Inland of this is a flat and interesting area of scrub and sage grass. There are 4 parking lots linked with some well-maintained walkways, some offering a path to the beach. Parking is included in the entry fee. As mentioned, one of the main attractions are the Hummingbirds, and we saw very active Allen's & Anna's on our walk (there is also the potential of Rufous, Black-chinned and outside chance of Calliope). Our time coincided with Spring, so there were plenty of Song & White-crowned Sparrows singing, along with plentiful sightings of California & Spotted Towhee, Cassin's & Western Kingbird, and a single California Thrasher. Overhead, Brown Pelicans regularly passed in tight V formation, and a single California Quail motored past us. There weren't too many birds on the shoreline, perhaps due to the presence of walkers, but a Willet and couple of Hudsonian Whimbrel were there.



Allen's Hummingbird



Anna's Hummingbird



Cassin's Kingbird



California Towhee



Song Sparrow



Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve

Situated at the upper end of the San Diego Creek tidal area, partly barred at Newport on the adjacent coast, this open area of low marsh and exposed mud at low tide was as expected easy to traverse, with well-made tracks following the western edge of the preserve. It was also free to park and to enter, perhaps since it was a local preserve rather than a state park, and this may have been reflected in the number of hikers, dog walkers, hikers, etc who also made use of the facilities. There is an interpretive centre with toilets, open from 10am, although the offerings for most, including birders, is meagre. There is one main hiking trail from the centre, which is a short walk below the car park, which then goes in two directions – upriver and downriver. The former is probably the preferred one, since it also offers more scrub and sparse trees as extra habitat, as well as being further from the road. The latter has half decent views of small stretches of exposed mud but definitely requires a telescope.





The most obvious birds along both sections of the trail were the passerines, since that habitat enveloped the trail itself. Allen's Hummingbirds were the most obvious and frequently seen since the males were in display mode at the tops of lookout perches. Song Sparrows and California Towhees were also in song. One of the species special to the preserve is California Gnatcatcher, and an early tick was thought to have been had, but closer inspection of the undertail revealed the identity as the more common Blue-Grey Gnatcatcher. Strangely, the interpretive centre held a busy flock of prospective Cliff Swallows before it opened at 10am, but they had all disappeared on passing by again later. Less numerous (i.e. singles) of species also seen along the upstream section were Bushtit, Spotted Towhee and Common Yellowthroat. Raptors also put in a bit of an appearance, with early perched Cooper's Hawk, followed by singles of Red-tailed Hawk, female Northern Harrier and Osprey.

Cooper's Hawk



Cinnamon Teal

The water-based birds were generally a little further away, since the track was above the marsh/river and somewhat further away. Closer birds amongst this group were a few Cinnamon Teal and American Coot, with a single Pied-billed Grebe on one of the streams. Further away, Blue-winged & Green-winged Teal, as well as American Wigeon, were in small numbers, and a pair of Bufflehead stood out. Amongst the waders that could be identified, a single non-breeding plumaged Spotted Sandpiper was close to, but a couple of Marbled Godwits thankfully showed plenty of their rufous tones in the distance on landing, with a few American Avocets on the mud.



Western Meadowlark

Northern Mockingbird

Santa Barbara



Most of the day was spent wandering the downtown and seafront areas of Santa Barbara, which included the odd stop off on State Street, the main thoroughfare of the town, to sample some local brews. The birding interest was not surprisingly away from the shops and restaurants along the beach front and harbour area. Despite the season being late for wintering shorebirds and waterbirds, both were still in evidence to some degree. The shoreline is split by the wooden built wharf and stone built sea wall, which together enclose the harbour area. Despite this being a busy location for a large marina and water sports, all also held significant numbers of birds.

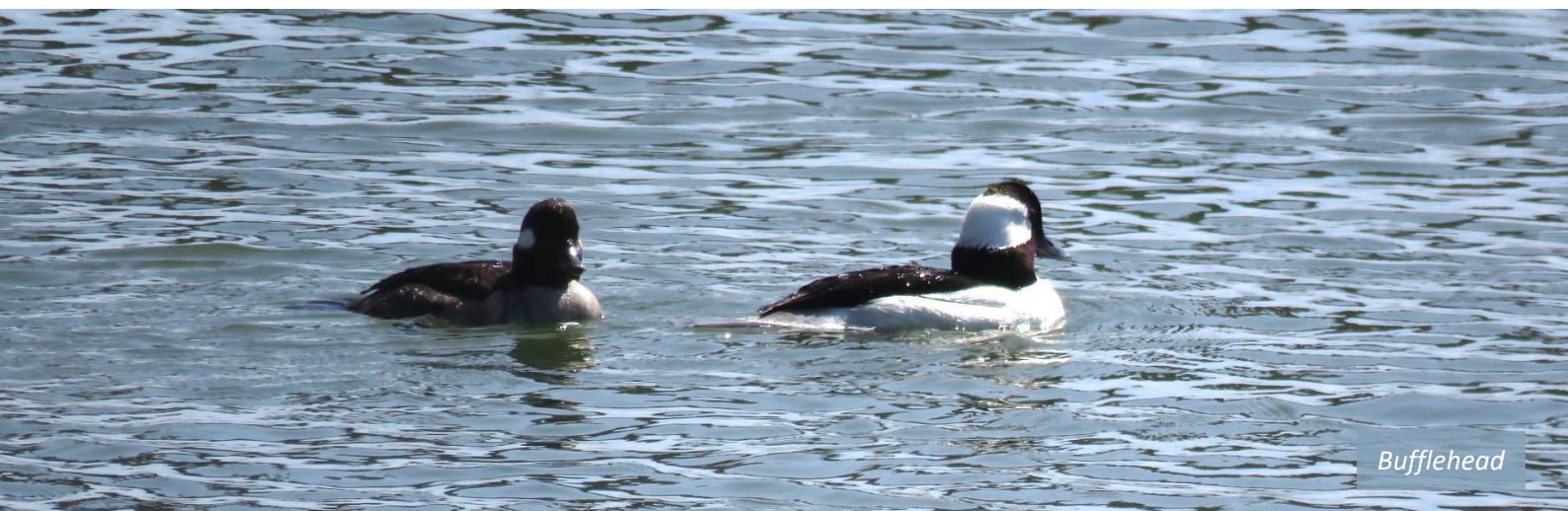




Western Grebe

Clark's Grebe

First to be traversed was the wooden built wharf, reached by crossing directly from the main avenue which was State Street. The wooden built structure is large enough to allow for 2 way traffic and has a decent sized car park towards the end. A walkway along the western side allows for good views of the surrounding water and then harbour/marina. Most obvious birds straight away were a group of a dozen or more Western Grebes, which were to become a very common site in large rafts along the beach shore. Closer inspection revealed one or two Clark's Grebes amongst them – not easy to pick out since most of the raft were asleep at any one time, hiding the facial features. A smaller group of Black-necked Grebes was feeding a little further along the wharf. On the wharf itself, the only adult Great-tailed Grackle was heard then seen, with a few House Finches around the buildings. One of the last new birds on leaving the wharf was a static Black-crowned Night Heron, perched between boats below the walkway.



Bufflehead

Leaving the wharf, we walked along the edge of the beach to the East along a well-made and well-kept track for pedestrians and cyclists. The first section, where there was a large stream cutting through the sand, was arguably the best birding spot of the day. Amongst the Gulls (mainly Californian, then Western, and then the odd American Herring), a pair of Bufflehead and American Coots were to be found, with a single non-breeding plumaged Spotted Sandpiper on the banks. A little further along the beach at another slightly smaller stream, a small gathering of Black Skimmers was close to a group of gulls containing Royal Terns, and shorebirds here were Grey Plover and Willets, with a larger collection of Hudsonian Whimbrel leaving soon after they were spotted (dog walker traipsing through the centre of the flocks!). Brown Pelicans were constant and in increasing numbers, with a couple passing along the shoreline in front of us. A single Osprey flew overhead, and at the turning point of the walk, a quartet of Marbled Godwits was also disturbed by walkers.

The marina predictably held a lot fewer birds, although a few Pied-billed Grebes added to the additional Western and Black-necked in amongst the expensive boats. It was here that we also saw our first Californian Sea Lions, noisily calling from a vantage point at the end of one of the central marina walkways. A Common Seal which had been sadly hauling out of the water on to the car park presumably was urged back in the water by the authorities, since another seen in the water further on seemed to have the same scars on its back as the earlier wandering individual



Pied-billed Grebe

Black Skimmer



Morro Bay



While travelling from Santa Barbara to Monterey, an unplanned pitstop at Morro Bay turned out to be gold dust. It was intended to be a coffee (and potential cake) break, but the first cafe we pulled into seemed positively underwhelming. So on to the harbour area we ventured, pulled into a parking space, and walked along the waterfront. Rather than chancing upon tempting eateries, we passed a giant of a Californian Sea Lion, seemingly mummified in its place near to the thoroughfare. There was even a sign-up warning of his potential and presence, so after spotting some Sea Otters in the bay, we were further treated to a small nursery raft of mothers and some young very close to. The dream of seeing Sea Otters was realised, and so close! The addition of Pied-billed & Black-necked Grebes swimming amongst them was a significant add on. Along the water's edge, a few Great Northern Divers were fishing, and throughout the noise of the gang of Californian Sea Lions noisily debating placings on a raft on the channel could not be ignored

Moss Landing



This harbour and marina was to be the departure point for our whale watching trip on the following day, so we decided a visit the day before would be a good idea to scope the place out. As we took a left turn from Highway 1 to the harbour area, there was a sign to beware of Sea Otters crossing the road – a great portent. In fact, Moss Landing is supposed to be one of the best locations to see Sea Otters close to – we did have a nosey around the marina and only found 2 on two out of our three visits, although they were very close to and in the company of California Sea Lions. The latter were more common, with a couple of noisy gatherings throughout the marina.

There weren't too many birds within the waters of the marina itself, apart from a couple of American Avocets and a few Cinnamon Teal on the salinas waterway on opposite side of the bridge, and a small collection of Great White Egrets on the banks of the marina. Closer inspection unearthed a small group of "peeps", which proved to be all Least Sandpipers, and a single Greater Yellowlegs. A large and chatty group of Blackbirds were mainly Brewer's, but did include a few Red-winged. The birdlife became more interesting as we approached the channel entrance, where a breakwater held good numbers of Brandt's Cormorant and Brown Pelicans. The seaward side of the channel was where the sea ducks were concentrated, with spread out rafts of Surf Scoters predominant (and a single female Hooded Merganser). Most numerous Grebes were Black-necked, with lower numbers of Western with them. A tight group of Marbled Godwits (*above*) were on the water's edge, with a single Killdeer in the dunes

Monterey



We had been looking forward to seeing how many Sea Otters were along the Monterey seafront, and did have regular small rafts within most of the kelp beds. These were predictably a hundred metres or so offshore, although a couple were seen in the Fishermen's Wharf harbour from a restaurant late evening. Much closer were the small collections of (again) noisy Californian Sea Lions, a few of which were almost touchable. In addition, Common Seals were dotted about. From the birding point of view, the handful of Pigeon Guillemots (*above*) close in were a pleasant surprise. Brandt's Cormorants had claimed many of the disused structures for breeding, and Divers were represented by both Pacific & Great Northern.



The Pacific Coast Highway was closed from just South of the Big Sur during our stay, so we decided to drive the section North of the closure from our base in Monterey. The day we chose had a mixture of fine weather and mainly rain, some heavy. The Highway 1 road follows the contours in the coast, occasionally coming inland a little, such as at the small section that includes the Big Sur River Inn, an excellent rest and food stop (one of the few). While there, a quick wander around the vicinity of the Inn found steps down to the river, and there was some bird activity here, which included singing Townshend's Warbler, as well as a couple of Dark-eyed Juncos and a Black Phoebe. Steller's Jays were very approachable on the opposite side of the road

Steller's Jay





Red-tailed Hawk

The many pull ins and occasional Vista stops offered some spectacular views of the coastline, and 2 which overlooked coves also held a pair of Sea Otters each. Another had a pair of (distant) Black Oystercatchers. Song & White-crowned Sparrows were most regular at these stops, with many Turkey Vultures overhead, as well as the odd Red-tailed Hawks and a trio of Ravens at a popular Vista.

Just South of Carmel in the Monterey area is Point Lobos State Preserve, which had been recommended to us earlier in our Monterey stay. It is a wooded peninsular coated with woodland and surrounded on the western shore by the Pacific Ocean. There is usually a \$10 fee per vehicle to enter and use the car park, but when we tried to pull in from the highway, there was a parking full sign, and cars were bumper to bumper on the verge of the road. We joined this at the end and walked into the preserve instead. Surprisingly, the car parks inside seemed far from full (the sign was still in place when we left!), so who knows what was happening. We walked 2 of the small loop trails, finishing with the longer North Trail, which eventually spurred off to the exit (/entrance) to the park.

Predictably, the views of the sea from all the trails was stunning, with a lively sea pounding the rocks with white in turquoise breakers. At least 7 Sea Otters were seen in coves along the shoreline, either singly or in pairs, with a sizeable haul out of California Sea Lions lying on top of one of the small islands from the Cypress Grove Trail. Birdlife was dominated by passing Cormorants (mainly Pelagic and Brandt's judging by the small numbers of (nesting?) birds on the cliffs, with two small groups of Brown Pelicans flying by. At the base of the cliffs were a few Pigeon Guillemots, which were also probably nesting here – 2 pairs of Black Oystercatcher likewise.

Passerines in the woodland and open scrub were occasional, with Dark-eyed Juncos, and Song & White-crowned Sparrows the usual suspects. 3 separate hummingbirds were seen, but none well enough for identification. 2 separate Californian Scrub Jays were fairly close but a little flighty, but the Bushtits seen weren't bothered by our presence at all.



California Scrub Jay

LIST OF SPECIES

BIRDS

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (2, then small numbers seen at irregular times elsewhere on trip)

Cinnamon Teal

Spatula cyanoptera

24 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (3)

25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (4)

26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (2)

30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (6)

Blue-winged Teal

Spatula discors

26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (3)

Northern Shoveler

Spatula clypeata

25 Mar 2025 Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (1)

Gadwall

Mareca strepera

25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (8)

American Wigeon

Mareca americana

26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (3)

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (16)

28 Mar Santa Barbara (10)

Green-winged Teal

Anas carolinensis

25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (10)

26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (20)

Surf Scoter

Melanitta perspicillata

21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (2)

30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (~20)

30 Mar Monterey waterfront (1)

2 Apr Pt. Lobos State Reserve (1)

Bufflehead

Bucephala albeola

26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (2)

28 Mar Santa Barbara (2)

Hooded Merganser

Lophodytes cucullatus

28 Mar Santa Barbara (2)

30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (1); Monterey waterfront (2)

Ruddy Duck

Oxyura jamaicensis

6 Apr Presidio - Crissy Field Lagoon, San Francisco (10)

California Quail

Callipepla californica

25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (1)

Anna's Hummingbird

Calypte anna

21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (1); Quality Inn, Capitola (1)

25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (3)

4 Apr San Francisco Waterfront (1)

6 Apr Presidio - Crissy Field Lagoon, San Francisco (3)

Allen's Hummingbird

Selasphorus sasin

25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (2)

26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (15)

Eurasian Collared Dove		<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
1 Apr	Moss Landing Salinas (1)	
Mourning Dove		<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
21 Mar	Soquel (2)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1)	
American Coot		<i>Fulica americana</i>
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (12)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (20)	
6 Apr	Presidio - Crissy Field Lagoon, San Francisco (5)	
Pied-billed Grebe		<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1)	
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (3)	
29 Mar	Morro Bay Harbour (3)	
Black-necked Grebe		<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (6)	
29 Mar	Morro Bay Harbour (6)	
30 Mar	Moss Landing harbour & beach (~40); Monterey waterfront (~30)	
31 Mar	Moss Landing Whale Watch (4)	
Western Grebe		<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>
21 Mar	Capitola Beach and wharf (~40)	
25 Mar	Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (7)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1)	
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (~180)	
30 Mar	Moss Landing harbour & beach (10)	
31 Mar	Moss Landing Whale Watch (~30)	
4 Apr	San Francisco Waterfront (5)	
Clark's Grebe		<i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>
21 Mar	Capitola Beach and wharf (2)	
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (2)	
Black Oystercatcher		<i>Haematopus bachmani</i>
1 Apr	Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (2)	
2 Apr	Pt. Lobos State Reserve (3)	
Black-necked Stilt		<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (11)	
American Avocet		<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (5)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (2)	
30 Mar	Moss Landing harbour & beach (2)	
1 Apr	Moss Landing Salinas (2)	
Grey Plover		<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (10)	
Killdeer		<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (2)	
30 Mar	Moss Landing harbour & beach (1)	
Hudsonian Whimbrel		<i>Numenius hudsonicus</i>
25 Mar	Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (3)	
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (30)	
Marbled Godwit		<i>Limosa fedoa</i>
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (2)	
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (4)	
30 Mar	Moss Landing harbour & beach (11)	
Spotted Sandpiper		<i>Actitis macularius</i>
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1)	
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (1)	

Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>
25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (1)	
28 Mar Santa Barbara (15)	
6 Apr Presidio - Crissy Field Lagoon, San Francisco (1)	
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>
1 Apr Moss Landing Salinas (1)	
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>
1 Apr Moss Landing Salinas (11)	
Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>
28 Mar Santa Barbara (24)	
Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>
25 Mar Laguna Beach (4)	
28 Mar Santa Barbara (~50)	
Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>
31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (1)	
Western Gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>
21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (10)	
25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (2)	
28 Mar Santa Barbara (4)	
29 Mar Elephant Seal Overlook, Piedras Blancas (8)	
30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (~100); Monterey waterfront (~50)	
31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (~50)	
1 Apr Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (~20)	
2 Apr Pt. Lobos State Reserve (~50)	
4 Apr San Francisco Waterfront (~30)	
5 Apr Alcatraz Island (~50)	
California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>
21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (~200)	
25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (~30)	
28 Mar Santa Barbara (~100)	
30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (~50)	
31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (~100)	
1 Apr Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (8)	
4 Apr San Francisco Waterfront (10)	
American Herring Gull	<i>Larus smithsonianus</i>
21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (4)	
28 Mar Santa Barbara (2)	
Rhinoceros Auklet	<i>Cerorhinca monocerata</i>
31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (1)	
Pigeon Guillemot	<i>Cepphus columba</i>
30 Mar Monterey waterfront (5)	
31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (1)	
2 Apr Pt. Lobos State Reserve (5)	
4 Apr San Francisco Waterfront (3)	
5 Apr Alcatraz Island (10)	
Common Murre	<i>Uria aalge</i>
31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (~100)	
Red-throated Loon	<i>Gavia stellata</i>
28 Mar Santa Barbara (1)	
30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (2)	
Pacific Loon	<i>Gavia pacifica</i>
25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (1)	
30 Mar Monterey waterfront (2)	
31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (4)	

Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>
29 Mar Morro Bay Harbour (3) 30 Mar Monterey waterfront (3) 31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (3)	
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>
31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (1 – apparently the first of the year from the tour boat)	
Brandt's Cormorant	<i>Urile penicillatus</i>
21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (~200) 25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (1) 30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (~100); Monterey waterfront (~100) 31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (~100) 1 Apr Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (3) 2 Apr Pt. Lobos State Reserve (~80) 5 Apr Alcatraz Island (~100)	
<i>Pelagic Cormorant</i>	<i>Urile pelagicus</i>
21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (5) 25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (1) 1 Apr Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (3) 2 Apr Pt. Lobos State Reserve (10)	
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>
21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (5) 25 Mar Laguna Beach (3) 28 Mar Santa Barbara (2) 30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (6) 31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (~100) 1 Apr Moss Landing Salinas (4)	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
28 Mar Santa Barbara (1)	
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (4); Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (2) 26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (10) 28 Mar Santa Barbara (12) 30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (4) 5 Apr Alcatraz Island (8 in nesting area)	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (2) 30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (11) 31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (1)	
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
28 Mar Santa Barbara (1) 6 Apr Presidio - Crissy Field Lagoon, San Francisco (1)	
Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (5) 25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (~40); Laguna Beach (~100) 28 Mar Santa Barbara (~200) 30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (~50); Monterey waterfront (~30) 31 Mar Moss Landing Whale Watch (1) 2 Apr Pt. Lobos State Reserve (10) 4 Apr (5)San Francisco Waterfront	
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
21 Mar Quality Inn, Capitola (1) 25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (1) 26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve(5) 1 Apr Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (~20)	

<i>Osprey</i>	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
25 Mar Laguna Beach (1)	
26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (91)	
28 Mar Santa Barbara (1)	
30 Mar Monterey waterfront (1)	
2 Apr Pt. Lobos State Reserve (1)	
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Astur cooperii</i>
26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (2)	
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>
23 Mar Journey from San Jose to Los Angeles (1 male)	
26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1 ringtail)	
Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
21 Mar Quality Inn, Capitola (1). More seen in flight on car journeys	
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (1)	
26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1)	
30 Mar Moss Landing harbour & beach (1)	
1 Apr Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (3)	
6 Apr Presidio - Crissy Field Lagoon, San Francisco (1)	
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>
21 Mar Soquel (1)	
26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1)	
Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>
21 Mar Capitola downtown (1)	
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>
21 Mar Capitola downtown (1)	
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1)	
Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
21 Mar Soquel (1)	
21 Mar Capitola Beach and wharf (2)	
25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (2)	
1 Apr Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (2)	
4 Apr San Francisco Waterfront (2)	
Cassin's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>
25 Mar Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (1)	
Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>
1 Apr Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (2)	
California Scrub Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>
21 Mar Quality Inn, Capitola (1)	
31 Mar Amador Avenue (3)	
2 Apr Pt. Lobos State Reserve (2)	
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
21 Mar Quality Inn, Capitola (3)	
25 Mar Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (6); Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (20)	
26 Mar Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (10)	
28 Mar Santa Barbara (8)	
1 Apr Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (5)	
2 Apr Pt. Lobos State Reserve (6)	
4 Apr San Francisco Waterfront (10)	

Northern Raven		<i>Corvus corax</i>
23 Mar	I-5 - Tejon Pass Rest Area (3)	
25 Mar	Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (2)	
1 Apr	Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (3)	
2 Apr	Pt. Lobos State Reserve (1)	
Cedar Waxwing		<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
4 Apr	San Francisco Waterfront (8)	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee		<i>Poecile rufescens</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (5)	
Tree Swallow		<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (2)	
Violet-green Swallow		<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (2 on hotel roof)	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow		<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>
21 Mar	Soquel (2)	
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (10)	
Barn Swallow		<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (2)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (4)	
American Cliff Swallow		<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (~40 nest prospecting visitor centre eaves)	
American Bushtit		<i>Psaltiriparus minimus</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (6)	
2 Apr	Pt. Lobos State Reserve (4)	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		<i>Corthylio calendula</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (1)	
Bewick's Wren		<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (1 - singing only)	
Blue-grey Gnatcatcher		<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve 91)	
Northern Mockingbird		<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
24 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (1)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (6)	
California Thrasher		<i>Toxostoma redivivum</i>
25 Mar	Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (1)	
Common Starling		<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (2)	
Hermit Thrush		<i>Catharus guttatus</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (1)	
House Sparrow		<i>Passer domesticus</i>
23 Mar	I-5 Tejon Pass Rest Area (~20)	
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (10)	
4 Apr	San Francisco Waterfront (6)	
House Finch		<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (1); Capitola Beach and wharf (4)	
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (4)	
30 Mar	Monterey waterfront (2)	
4 Apr	San Francisco Waterfront (1)	
5 Apr	Alcatraz Island (2)	
6 Apr	Presidio - Crissy Field Lagoon, San Francisco (2)	
Lesser Goldfinch		<i>Spinus psaltria</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (4)	

Dark-eyed ("Oregon") Junco		<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (2); Capitola Beach and wharf (4)	
31 Mar	Moss Landing Whale Watch (1)	
1 Apr	Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (3)	
2 Apr	Pt. Lobos State Reserve (5)	
White-crowned Sparrow		<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
25 Mar	Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (2)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (3)	
29 Mar	Elephant Seal Overlook, Piedras Blancas (5)	
1 Apr	Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (6)	
2 Apr	Pt. Lobos State Reserve (2)	
4 Apr	San Francisco Waterfront (2)	
6 Apr	Presidio - Crissy Field Lagoon, San Francisco (2)	
Savannah Sparrow		<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (3)	
Song Sparrow		<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
25 Mar	Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (3)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (6)	
1 Apr	Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (2)	
2 Apr	Pt. Lobos State Reserve (3)	
4 Apr	San Francisco Waterfront (1)	
5 Apr	Alcatraz Island (3)	
6 Apr	Presidio - Crissy Field Lagoon, San Francisco (1)	
California Towhee		<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (2)	
25 Mar	Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (8)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (3)	
Spotted Towhee		<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (1)	
25 Mar	Crystal Cove State Park, Newport (2)	
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1)	
Western Meadowlark		<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (6)	
Red-winged Blackbird		<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
1 Apr	Moss Landing Salinas (5 with greater numbers of Brewer's Blackbird)	
Brewer's Blackbird		<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>
21 Mar	Capitola Beach and wharf (6)	
23 Mar	I-5 Tejon Pass Rest Area (20)	
29 Mar	Elephant Seal Overlook, Piedras Blancas (6)	
30 Mar	Moss Landing harbour & beach (4)	
30 Mar	Monterey waterfront (~50)	
1 Apr	Moss Landing Salinas (~20)	
Great-tailed Grackle		<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
28 Mar	Santa Barbara (2)	
Orange-crowned Warbler		<i>Leiothlypis celata</i>
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (1)	
Common Yellowthroat		<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>
26 Mar	Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve (1)	
Audubon's Warbler		<i>Setophaga auduboni</i>
25 Mar	Upper Santa Ana River, Katella Ave, Anaheim (3)	
Black-throated Grey Warbler		<i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>
21 Mar	Quality Inn, Capitola (1)	

Townsend's Warbler*Setophaga townsendi***21 Mar** Quality Inn, Capitola (1)**1 Apr** Pacific Coast Highway - Monterey to Big Sur (1)**MAMMALS****Western Grey Squirrel***Sciurus griseus***21 Mar** Regularly seen around Capitola**California Ground Squirrel***Otospermophilus beecheyi***26 Mar** Upper Newport Preserve (3)**28 Mar** Santa Barbara beach (>6)**29 Mar** Piedras Blancas (~6)**Sea Otter***Enhydra lutris***21 Mar** Capitola Beach (8 on kelp ~200m offshore)**29 Mar** Morro Bay (10, with some additional young); Piedras blancas - ~8 at sea on kelp beds**30 Mar** Moss Landing (2); Monterey (~15)**31 Mar** Moss Landing (3) + 1 at sea during Whale Watch**1 Apr** Pacific Coastal Highway South of Monterey to Big Sur (2 pairs in 2 separate coves); Moss Landing harbour (2); Monterey Fishermen's Wharf (2 seen from restaurant late evening)**2 Apr** Point Lobos State Preserve, nr Monterey (7)**California Sea Lion***Zalophus californianus***28 Mar** Santa Barbara Harbour (6-8)**29 Mar** Morro Bay (~30+ on platform in channel)**30 Mar** Moss Landing (>25); Monterey (>20)**31 Mar** Moss Landing harbour (Many plus feeding at sea in large groups during whale watch)**2 Apr** Point Lobos State Preserve (At least 50 on a Pinnacle Cove island)**4 Apr** San Francisco waterfront (>100 on platform off Pier 39)**Northern Elephant Seal***Mirounga angustirostris***29 Mar** Piedras Blancas (At least 100 females)**Harbour Seal***Phoca vitulina***21 Mar** Capitola (At least 40 around the wharf structure)**28 Mar** Santa Barbara harbour (2-3)**30 Mar** Moss Landing (1); Monterey (8)**Humpback Whale***Megaptera novaeangliae***31 Mar** Moss Landing (6, including 2 pairs, on whale watch)**BIRDseen**

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