

Looking for California Condors! Monterey Bay Summer birding, August 3, 2008

Quick Overview – This was a devastating summer for California as wildfires swept through the state. Over 1500 wildfires were started by lightening strikes during a summer storm. Big Sur was also hit hard & the California Condors were in the middle of it all. This trip was planned long before the fires hit and **Let's Go Birding** was not sure if the trip would actually happen. After weeks of burning and thousands upon thousands of acres lost the good news was that the fire was finally out and all the Big Sur condors made it including the three active nests. We headed down on this day to see the area for ourselves, find us some California Condors and fundraiser for the Ventana Wilderness Society. Let's Go Birding matched all contributions made by trip participants and the money raised will help re-build the condor enclosures lost in the fire. On the way south we stopped at the Capitola Wharf to study the Elegant Terns and then stopped at Jetty Road in Moss Landing. With the tide out we had hundreds of shorebirds all around us and had a great study in plovers. Once south of Andrew Molera we found distant condors on the wing. We were persistent and eventually found #35 who gave us fantastic views again and again and again!



Condor #35 put on a great performance. Images taken by trip participants Susan Hillyard above & Brooke Miller straight on.
Enjoy more images on page 2.

Memorable Observations!

- Pacific Loon in breeding plumage coming out of the water and preening on land
- Purple Martins and Purple Finches allowing for great views while at the Big Sur Ornithology Lab
- Great views of two different Osprey as they flew along the coast
- Meeting people from all over the world as they asked us about the condor in our scopes!

Total Species Counted for the Day = 67 includes heard only (H) and (R) in route
Birds are listed in the taxonomic order currently recognized by the AOU

Surf Scoter	Black-necked Stilt	Forster's Tern	American Crow
Mallard	Long-billed Curlew	Elegant Tern	Common Raven
Wild Turkey (R)	Willet	Common Murre	Barn Swallow
Pacific Loon	Killdeer	Rock Pigeon	Cliff Swallow
Double-crested Cormorant	Snowy Plover	Band Tailed Pigeon	Purple Martin
Brandt's Cormorant	Black-bellied Plover	Mourning Dove	Bushtit
Brown Pelican	Killdeer	Vaux's Swift	Wrentit (H)
American White Pelican (R)	Semipalmated Plover	White Throated Swift	European Starling (R)
Great Blue Heron Egret	Least Sandpipers	Anna's Hummingbird	Wilson's Warbler
Snowy Egret	Western Sandpiper	Nuttall's Woodpecker (H)	California Towhee
Turkey Vulture	Marbled Godwit	Northern Flicker	Song Sparrow
California Condor!	Sanderling	Acorn Woodpecker	Red-winged Blackbird
Osprey	Ruddy Turnstone	Black Phoebe	Brewer's Blackbird
White-tail Kite	Ring-billed Gull	Warbling Vireo	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red Shouldered Hawk	California Gull	Western Scrub-Jay	House Finch
Red-tail Hawk	Heermann's Gull	Steller's Jay	Purple Finch
Cooper's Hawk	Caspian Tern		Lesser Goldfinch



Images all taken during our day -

California Condor #35 banking, Pacific Loon & California Condor showing radio tags – Brooke Miller, Acorn Woodpecker and Warbling Vireo – Susan Hillyard / Burned Big Sur landscape, Purple Finch and Osprey fly over – Brooke Miller

