

Half Moon Bay to Santa Cruz!

Coastal Spring birding – June 10, 2007

Quick Overview – We started our day along the coast off Half Moon Bay and worked our way south on Hwy 1. We arrived to find fog & we could not even see the Pacific Ocean! So we walked the inland trails at Pescadero Marsh. The birds were very curious allowing for fantastic views of Wrentits, Spotted Towhees & Common Yellowthroats. We then headed onward to Pigeon Point. As the fog was now lifting we stopped several times along the way to scan the ocean. The wind created a challenge for viewing ocean waters through spotting scopes, but the group persevered. We were in search of spring visiting puffins as several had been reported recently. We then headed to Gazos Creek Road for yet another habitat & lunch. With the protection of this coastal forested canyon we were accompanied by singing Winter Wrens, Swainson's Thrush and Wilson's Warblers. We then left this beautiful area to continue southward. We kept checking the ocean waters and spent some time along Santa Cruz's West Cliff Drive. We never found puffins, but enjoyed whales, seals, otters and several other species of birds before ending our day at the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum. The exotic blooming Australian, South Africa and New Zealand gardens found here attract Allen's & Anna's hummingbirds in great numbers, plus a thrasher or two!



This (mated) pair of Black Oystercatchers called with great gusto as they flew in for a landing.
Picture taken during our day by trip participant Brooke Miller

Memorable Observations!

- Heron Rookery with both Great Blue and Great Egrets at Pescadero Marsh
- A hunting Caspian Tern diving for fish
- Helping a little Garter snake come in from the cold at Pigeon Point Lighthouse
- Pigeon Guillemots with their beautiful breeding plumage & handsome red feet

Total Species Counted for the Day = 69 includes heard only (H)

Birds are listed in the taxonomic order currently recognized by the AOU

Mallard	Killdeer	Pacific Slope Flycatcher (H)	European Starling
Common Merganser	Black Oystercatcher	Western Scrub-Jay	Wilson's Warbler
Gadwall	Ring-billed Gull	Steller's Jay	Orange Crowned Warbler (H)
California Quail	Western Gull	American Crow	Common Yellowthroat
Common Loon	California Gull	Common Raven	Spotted Towhee
Western Grebe	Heermann's Gull	Cliff Swallow	Song Sparrow
Clark's Grebe	Caspian Tern	Barn Swallow	White Crowned Sparrow
Brown Pelican	Common Murre	Chestnut Backed Chickadee	Lincoln Sparrow
Brandt's Cormorant	Pigeon Guillemot	Bushtit	Black Headed Grosbeak (H)
Pelagic Cormorant	Marbled Murrelet	Pygmy Nuthatch	Red-winged Blackbird
Great Blue Heron	Rock Pigeon	Winter Wren (H)	Brewer's Blackbird
Great Egret	Band Tailed Pigeon	Marsh Wren	Hooded Oriole
Turkey Vulture	Mourning Dove	Wrentit	Brown-headed Cowbird
Northern Harrier	White Throated Swift (in route)	Swainson's Thrush (H)	House Finch
Red-tail Hawk	Anna's Hummingbird	American Robin	Purple Finch (H)
Red Shoulder Hawk (in route)	Allen's Hummingbird	Northern Mockingbird	American Goldfinch
Sharp-Shinned Hawk	Western Wood Pewee (H)	California Thrasher	Lesser Goldfinch
American Kestrel			