

The Central Valley - Merced County Spectacular Winter birding - January 6, 2008

Quick Overview – Having just experienced one of the worst California storms in years no one was sure if this day would allow for any outside activities. We all brought positive attitudes to the day and it worked. With no rain falling from the sky our first stop was at the Romero Overlook where we found three Bald Eagles fishing the waters of San Luis Reservoir. From here we were off to Volta Ponds where a Merlin allowed for great views. The Merced NWR was our next stop. With the roads saturated after days of heavy rains birding was to be done carefully so no one would get caught on any soft shoulders. After some great fun with the Merced NWR Rock Wren we drove the auto tour. The Eurasian race of the Common Teal was an incredible find as it was amongst hundreds of other waterfowl and shorebirds. We ended our day at the San Luis NWR. Tule Elk and Tundra Swans were impressive additions to our day and we had a short chat with the Great Horned Owls before heading west.



Rock Wren at home at the Merced NWF

This little bird hangs out at the first parking lot at the entrance of the Merced NWR auto tour. It scoured each car for insects. Photo taken by trip participant Debbi Brusco

Memorable Observations!

- Starting our day with a beautiful, adult Bald Eagle at Romero Overlook.
- The spectacular sounds & sights of Sandhill Cranes and all the geese - Snow, Ross and Greater White Fronted
- Watching White-faced Ibis bathing in the sun light
- The antics of the male Common Yellowthroat
- Hey – that Green Winged Teal is Eurasian!

Total Species Counted for the Day = 88 includes heard only (H) and one dead (D)

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

Tundra Swans	Double-crested Cormorant	Black-necked Stilt	Tree Swallow
Greater White-Fronted Goose	Great Blue Heron	Greater Yellowlegs	Rock Wren!
Canada Goose	Snowy Egret	Long-billed Dowitcher	Marsh Wren (H)
Snow Goose	Great Egret	Least Sandpiper	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Ross's Goose	Black Crowned Night Heron	Wilson's Snipe	American Robin (H)
Mallard	White Faced Ibis	Killdeer	Northern Mockingbird
Gadwall	Turkey Vulture	Black-bellied Plover	European Starling
American Wigeon	Bald Eagle	California Gull	American Pipit
Northern Pintail	Northern Harrier	Bonaparte's Gull	Cedar Waxwing – fly over
Northern Shoveler	White-tail Kite	Rock Pigeon	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Red Shouldered Hawk	Mourning Dove	Common Yellowthroat
Canvasback	Red-tail Hawks ALL DAY	Barn Owl (D)	California Towhee
Ring-necked Duck	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Great Horned Owl	White-crowned Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Cooper's Hawk	Belted Kingfisher	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Prairie Falcon	Northern Flicker	Lincoln's Sparrow
Eurasian (Common) Teal	Merlin	Black Phoebe	Savannah Sparrow
Cinnamon Teal	American Kestrel	Says Phoebe	Red-winged Blackbird
Ruddy Duck	Sandhill Cranes	Loggerhead Shrike	Tri-colored Blackbird
Eared Grebe	Sora (H)	Western Scrub-Jay	Brewer's Blackbird
Horned Grebe	Virginia Rail (H)	Yellow-billed Magpie	Western Meadowlark
Western Grebe	American Coot	American Crow	Lesser Goldfinch
American White Pelican	Common Moorhen	Common Raven	House Sparrow