

Really Quick Weekend Overview: This Monterey Bay birding weekend was a new venue provided by Let's Go Birding. The goal - to spend the weekend birding the various hot spots of Monterey Bay during the fall migration. It proved to be a magnificent weekend with the weather providing wonderful opportunities to see great birds. We started our weekend birding Santa Cruz's Lighthouse Field. We hoped the low overcast would help to keep the migrants down. As we walked the trails of this popular open space we found several mixed flocks of warblers including one Nashville Warbler in the company of Black Throated Gray, Townsend's and several Yellow Rumped Warblers. Pygmy Nuthatches, American Kestrel, Hermit Thrush and both Bewick's and House Wren were also found. From here we moved on to Antonelli Pond where we added Say's Phoebe, Green Heron and had great looks at a Spotted Towhee. We had lunch overlooking the ocean along West Cliff. Brown Headed Cowbirds and Black Turnstones were found in numbers. We then moved south to Harkins Slough where we spent time on both sides of Highway 1 birding this large area. Belted Kingfishers, American White Pelicans, ducks and two American Bittern were the favorites of this stop. We ended our day with a quick visit to Moss Landing. Studying the three species of cormorants is made easy here as Elkhorn Slough meets the ocean. The California Sea Lions and Sea Otters also got a lot of our attention before checking in to our hotel in Marina. After a fantastic dinner at Moss Landing's, The Whole Enchilada we called it a day. We awoke on Sunday to a magnificent sunrise and clear skies. Just a hop skip from the hotel we started our day at the Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge. Lawrence's Goldfinch were a nice find in addition to Western Meadowlarks. We walked the beach trail past the saline pond where we had the chance to witness a flock of shorebirds being hunted by a Peregrine Falcon. A Northern Harrier also landed near and started to feed. Once at the beach we found American Pipits throughout along with a large flock of Sanderlings. We also had a study of the different loons found off shore. After an eventful morning here we headed to Big Sur. It was glorious weather with temperatures rising by the hour. Our first stop south of Bixby Bridge revealed a pair of Golden Eagles and a California Thrasher. After a welcome tip from a couple of condor loving motorcyclists we continued a short distance south of Grimes Point where we found 5 California Condors soaring overhead. This was a life bird for many in the group so we spent time enjoying the site. The condors circled over us providing great views. We reluctantly left the area to head north for home. Our last stop on Jetty Road provided shorebirds up-close to the road as they crowded onto the remaining exposed shore to escape the rising water. This mixed flock included Sanderlings, Dowitchers, Semipalmated Plovers, Marbled Godwits and our weekend's only Snowy Egret, and we can't forget the "black" Merlin sitting behind us. We went home with many memorable moments in nature and a fantastic weekend on California's coast. A thank you goes out to all that fit this adventure into their fall activities.



Double Crested Cormorant & Black Turnstone taken by trip participant Mickie Lee - More photos on pages 2 & 3.

Our final list includes 118 species which were seen or heard (H) during our weekend.

Canada Goose	Great Egret	Ruddy Turnstone	Say's Phoebe	Cedar Waxwing
Mallard	Snowy Egret	Black Turnstone	Hutton's Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Gadwall	Green Heron	Willet	Warbling Vireo	Common Yellowthroat
American Wigeon	Black Crowned Night Heron	Dunlin	Western Scrub-Jay	Townsend's Warbler
Northern Pintail	Turkey Vulture	Sanderling	Steller's Jay	Orange Crowned Warbler
Northern Shoveler	California Condor	Red Necked Phalaropes	American Crow	Black Throated Gray Warbler
Cinnamon Teal	Golden Eagle	Killdeer	Common Raven	Nashville Warbler
Wood Duck	Northern Harrier	Black-bellied Plover	Tree Swallow	Yellow Warbler
Ruddy Duck	White-tail Kite	Semipalmated Plover	Chestnut Backed Chickadee	Spotted Towhee
Surf Scoter	Red Shouldered Hawk	Ring-billed Gull	Oak Titmouse	California Towhee
Pied-billed Grebe	Red-tail Hawk	California Gull	Bushtit	Song Sparrow
Wild Turkey (in route)	American Kestrel	Western Gull	Pygmy Nuthatch	White-crowned Sparrow
Eared Grebe	Peregrine Falcon	Heermann's Gull	White Breasted Nuthatch	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Western Grebe	Merlin	Elegant Tern	Bewick's Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
Common Loon	Sora (H)	Forster Tern	House Wren	Savannah Sparrow
Pacific Loon	American Coot	Rock Pigeon	Marsh Wren	Red-winged Blackbird
Red Throated Loon	Greater Yellowlegs	Mourning Dove	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Brewer's Blackbird
Double-crested Cormorant	Long-billed Curlew	Eurasian Collared Dove	Western Bluebird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Pelagic Cormorant	Whimbrel	Anna's Hummingbird	Hermit Thrush	Great Tailed Grackle
Brandt's Cormorant	Dowitchers	Belted Kingfisher	Wrentit (H)	Western Meadowlark
American White Pelican	Marbled Godwit	Nuttall's Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird	House Finch
Brown Pelican	Western Sandpiper	Northern Flicker	California Thrasher	American Goldfinch
American Bittern	Least Sandpiper	Black Phoebe	European Starling	Lawrence's Goldfinch
Great Blue Heron			American Pipit	House Sparrow

A weekend on the coast with Let's Go Birding - Saturday



Let's
go BIRDING

We started our day in Santa Cruz's Lighthouse Field & West Cliff Drive, the Santa Cruz Boardwalk in the distance – Lisa Myers. California Sea Otter feeding at the mouth of Elkhorn Slough – Mickie Lee. Cinnamon Teal & one of two American Bitterns at Harkins Slough – Mickie Lee. The group birding Harkins Slough off Lee Rd. – Al Lowder. A few of the many napping Sea Lions at Moss Landing – Lisa Myers. All images were taken during our trip.

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A weekend on the coast with Let's Go Birding - Sunday



Let's BIRDING



We started our Sunday at Salinas River Mouth National Wildlife Refuge and found a large flock of Sanderlings – Mickie Lee. This area is also shared by hunters during the season – Lisa Myers. Snowy Egret chasing a meal and Sanderlings in the surf - Mickie Lee. Big Sur Coast and a stop a Bixby Bridge – Lisa Myers. A California Condor and Turkey Vulture share a thermal – Mickie Lee
All images were taken during our trip