



A Raptor Workshop – a study in hawks, kites, falcons and eagles

A morning in Santa Clara County's "Coyote Valley" – Trip Leader Lisa Myers

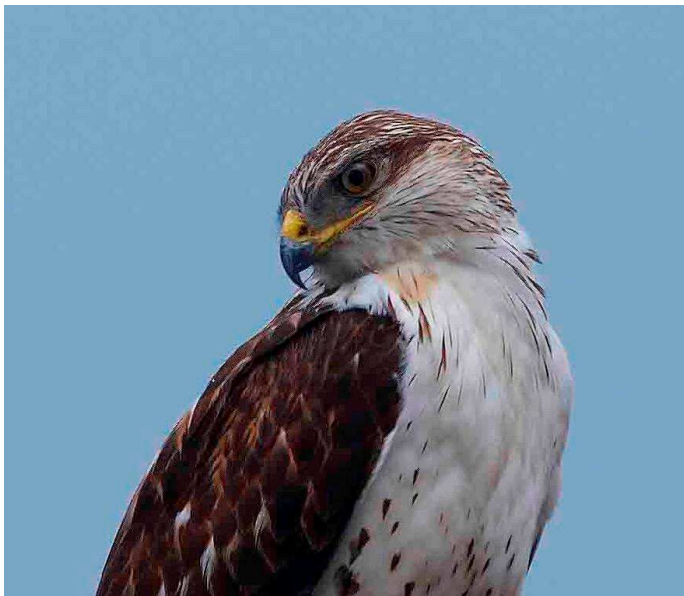
Quick Overview: The winter brings many great raptors to the San Francisco Bay Area and raptors are a real favorite amongst outdoor enthusiasts. That's why **Let's Go Birding** scheduled a morning "Raptor Workshop", so we could concentrate on this one group of birds. With rain in the forecast, the group remained positive and sure enough, we had a very productive morning in the field. In south San Jose, we spent the entire workshop in Coyote Valley. This area has escaped development and provides the ideal habitat for many different species of hawks, eagles and falcons. South on 101 to Bailey to Santa Teresa and then on to Laguna is where we started our day and found our first of many White Tailed Kites. While on Laguna we found several American Kestrels along with many Red Tailed Hawks. Plumage differences, wing shape, sexual dimorphism, juvenile versus adults, this all became part of the conversation. It was here we also found a Prairie Falcon. It provided great views as it perched in an oak before it took off into the horizon. A juvenile Northern Harrier was also hunting in the area throughout our morning; flying close over the fields it demonstrated typical harrier behavior. We returned to Santa Teresa Blvd. and turned left onto Richmond where we found the first of two Ferruginous Hawks. It was sitting in a field as is characteristic of this species. This bird moved around providing exceptional views. It eventually flew next to the cars and you can see its images below. While on Richmond facing north we found an adult Peregrine Falcon perched on a power pole. We soon moved on to Palm Ave, and turned right following it to the dead end. It had been a very cold morning, but as the hours passed the Turkey Vultures eventually started to take to the wing and we were now talking about the differences between vultures and hawks as they fly overhead. It was here we had fantastic views of our first of two Golden Eagles, and we found our 2nd Ferruginous Hawk here too. We then headed to Calero Reservoir passing a Red Shouldered Hawk along the way. Once at the reservoir we stood in the boat ramp parking lot and observed a sub-adult Bald Eagle eating something along the shore off the south side of the parking lot. It was about this time our workshop came to an end. We missed any accipiters during our morning, and never found a Merlin, but we know they are out there. Thank you all who joined in this morning's very productive adventure.

Raptors Observed This Day

- ✓ **Bald Eagle**
- ✓ **Golden Eagle**
- ✓ **Northern Harrier**
- ✓ **White-tail Kite**
- ✓ **Red-tail Hawk**
- ✓ **Red Shouldered Hawk**
- ✓ **Ferruginous Hawk**
- ✓ **American Kestrel**
- ✓ **Prairie Falcon**
- ✓ **Peregrine Falcon**
- ✓ **Turkey Vulture**



Hermit Thrush checking us out on Richmond
– image taken by Douglas Joo



Santa Clara County's "Coyote Valley" has had a Ferruginous Hawk return to the area for the past several winters. On this day we found two Ferruginous Hawks in the area. During our visit one flew to a pole next to our cars. We had fantastic views of this beautiful buteo as we remained inside our cars. It eventually flew off but not before trip participant Douglas Joo got these great images out the window.