

San Luis National Wildlife Refuge plus Tule Elk – Jan. 19, 2013 Winter Birding California's Central Valley - Trip Leader – Lisa Myers



Quick Overview – This would be the first time most of this group had ever been to the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge and there was a lot to see with the new visitor's center, all the wintering waterfowl and we can't forget the Tule Elk herd that reside here. Let's Go Birding & the Los Gatos Birdwatcher work together to plan new destinations so folks get to visit places they have never been. As we entered the refuge we were surprised to find a Barn Owl sitting on a fence post and all got great views. We then drove the waterfowl auto tour. The Bald Eagle was a target bird and we soon found a subadult circling overhead with several Red-tailed Hawks. With the hunting season in full swing the waterfowl were a bit cautious, but with each stop we'd find new species tucked away within the reeds. Snow & Ross's Geese were only observed overhead, but Greater White Fronted Geese were scattered throughout the ponds. We found some hard to find species like Wilson's Snipe & Common Gallinules, and a flock of several hundred Sandhill Cranes put on guite a show as the birds maneuvered between fields. We stopped for lunch near the Sousa Trail and ate outside near a large pond and a flock of Tundra Swans. These beautiful birds were moving about the entire time with birds leaving the flock and new birds arriving. All learned the "kwooo" of a wild Tundra Swan. We also observed large flocks of ducks & geese lifting by the thousands from far away fields. We then spent time at the visitor's center exploring their displays and enjoying a Lincoln's Sparrow from the observation window. We ended our day on the

Tule Elk auto tour where we had great views of the herd & ended our day with a Great Horned Owl sleeping in a tree.



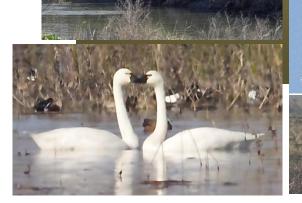




Birds Observed -Tundra Swans Greater White-Fronted Canada Goose Snow Goose Ross's Goose Mallard Gadwall American Wigeon Northern Pintail Northern Shoveler Bufflehead Canvasback Scaup in route Ring-necked Duck Green-winged Teal Cinnamon Teal Ruddy Duck Pied-billed Grebe Eared Grebe (Romero) **Double-crested Cormorant** American White Pelican Great Blue Heron Great Egret Snowy Egret Black Crowned Night Heron White Faced Ibis Turkev Vulture Bald Eagle Northern Harrier White-tail Kite Red Shouldered Hawk Red-tail Hawk American Kestrel Sandhill Crane Sora American Coot Common Gallinule Black-necked Stilt

Greater Yellowlegs Wilson'sSnipe Killdeer California Gull Rock Pigeon Mourning Dove Barn Owl Great Horned Owl Anna's Hummingbird Northern Flicker Black Phoebe Say's Phoebe Loggerhead-Shrike Common Raven Tree Swallow Marsh Wren Rock Wren (Romero) Ruby-crowned Kinglet Northern Mockingbird European Starling American Pipit Yellow-rumped Warbler Common Yellowthroat Orange Crowned Warbler Spotted Towhee California Towhee Song Sparrow White-crowned Sp Golden-crowned Sp Lincoln's Sparrow Savannah Sparrow Red-winged Blackbird Brewer's Blackbird Western Meadowlark American Goldfinch House Sparrow

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All images taken during our day – Bull Tule Elk taken from the Tule Elk Auto Tour / male Common Yellowthroat near the Visitor's Center / one of many, many Redtailed Hawks seen throughout our visit / Catching Tundra Swans in a perfect heart pose plus four Tundra Swans coming in for a landing directly over the group's picnic near the Sousa Trail all by trip participant Marti Wright / American Coots by the hundreds – and Barn Owl sitting on the fence post - Lisa Myers www.letsgobirding.com