



# California Birding: Resident Specialties and Fall Migrants

## Detailed Itinerary

### **Day 1: Arrival in San Diego, CA**

Participants should plan to arrive by 1:00 PM today. You will be met at the airport by your guide, and either taken to the hotel or to a nearby beach to bird while awaiting any further arrivals. Once everyone has arrived, we will head down to Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge to try for Ridgway's Rail. Here we will also be on the lookout for California Towhee, California Thrasher, Anna's Hummingbird, Western Gull and the local Belding's and Large-billed subspecies of Savannah Sparrow. We may also drive a nearby road to try for our first look at California Gnatcatcher.

Overnight in San Diego

### **Day 2: San Diego Birding with Emphasis on Finding Specialties**

If needed, we can return to look for Ridgway's Rail first thing in the morning. Otherwise we will head a little north to Lake Murray, where we have chances for California Gnatcatcher, Tricolored Blackbird and the now countable Scaly-breasted Munia. We will also watch for California Quail, Bushtit, Cassin's Kingbird and numerous waterfowl. Later on, we will go to the nearby Mission Trails Park to look for Wrentit, California Scrub-Jay, Bell's Vireo, California Towhee, Spotted Towhee, and possibly Pacific-slope Flycatcher.

The afternoon will be spent searching for any other possible birds we may still need, and we may go down to the beach to look for Black Turnstone, Surfbird, Wandering

Tattler, Heermann's Gull and Elegant Tern, though we will have ample chances to see these later in the trip.

Overnight in San Diego

### **Day 3: Early Departure for the Laguna Mountains and Salton Sea**

Today we will have an early departure so we can be in prime birding habitat for the morning. As we begin gaining altitude we will start looking for Bell's Sparrow, Black-chinned Sparrow, Oak Titmouse, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Gray Vireo, Rock Wren, Bullock's Oriole, Mountain Chickadee and the ever elusive Mountain Quail.

Depending on time we may bird the short route to our destination in Brawley, or take a longer route that increases our chances of finding Crissal Thrasher. Either route should have chances at Costa's Hummingbird, Black-throated Sparrow, Verdin, Cactus Wren, Scott's Oriole and more.

Depending on our arrival time, we may have a chance to try for Yellow-footed Gull in the late evening before heading to the hotel.

Overnight in Brawley



### **Day 4: Birding the Salton Sea**

Today we start early and check one of the local parks for Gila Woodpecker, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher and Abert's Towhee. Afterwards we will begin working our way north through farmland to begin our search for Yellow-footed Gull. Along the way we will likely encounter Burrowing Owls, and we may have more chances to see Ridgway's Rail

around the Salton Sea. As we search for the Yellow-footed Gulls we should see many other shorebirds and gull species. We will spend as much time as needed working our way north and checking the usual gull spots.

Later in the day we will drive north to Big Morongo, a desert oasis and migrant trap, where we will spend the afternoon looking for Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Townsend's Warbler, Hooded Oriole and more.

Overnight in Morongo Valley or San Bernardino



### **Day 5: Birding the Mountains of Angeles National Forest**

Today we will start out with the option to return to Big Morongo, or head right up into the mountains to look for other new birds. In the mountains we will have a chance to find Mountain Quail, White-headed Woodpecker, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Nuttall's Woodpecker, California Scrub-Jay, Oak Titmouse, Hermit Warbler, Steller's Jay, Wrentit and others.

We will spend most of the day up in the mountains looking for these species, likely having lunch in a small town. At the end of the day we will descend the far side of the mountain range to end up in Lancaster.

Overnight in Lancaster

### **Day 6: AM Birding at Piute Ponds, PM Drive to Mount Pinos**

This morning we will head out early to arrive at Piute Ponds, a site on a US Air Force base that is an excellent place to see the elusive Le Conte's Thrasher. Others that can be seen here are Bell's Sparrow, Tricolored Blackbird, California Quail, Sora and a number of migrating birds and waterfowl.

After a great morning birding we will drive towards Mount Pinos, where we will be looking for Golden Eagle, Mountain Chickadee, White-headed Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Green-tailed Towhee, "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow, Cassin's Finch, Mountain Quail and, with some luck, California Condor.

Overnight in Taft



### **Day 7: Birding Mount Pinos and Surrounding Areas**

Today we will have one last chance for the high mountain birds, and we will optionally drive back up Mount Pinos to find any birds we missed. We will also be able to bird the lower sagebrush habitat around Taft for Bell's Sparrow and Le Conte's Thrasher.

Later in the afternoon we will head westward and enter the range of the endemic Yellow-billed Magpie. We will check several known locations for this intriguing bird before heading to our lodging.

Overnight in Pismo Beach

### **Day 8: Birding Coastal Savannas and Rocky Shorelines to Santa Barbara**

This morning we will have another chance to look for the Yellow-billed Magpie, and we will also spend time along the beach looking for shorebirds and seabirds. Pigeon Guillemots can be seen along the San Luis Obispo Bay, and we will look for shorebirds like Black Turnstone, Wandering Tattler, Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird and more.

On our drive towards Santa Barbara we will make stops to look for Allen's Hummingbird, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Varied Thrush, Wrentit, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Hutton's Vireo and others.

We will have an early night tonight in order to prepare for the boat trip in the morning.

Overnight in Santa Barbara/Ventura

### **Day 9: Santa Cruz Island Boat Trip for Scrub-Jay and Pelagics**

While the main reason for making this trip is to see the endemic Island Scrub-Jay, the boat trip also gives us a great chance to see some seabirds, like Brandt's Cormorant, Pelagic Cormorant and Red-necked Phalarope, as well as some pelagic species like jaegers, Black-vented Shearwater, Sabine's Gull, Craveri's Murrelet or Black Storm-Petrel.

On the island itself, we will look for the resident races of Allen's Hummingbird, Orange-crowned Warbler, Song Sparrow and of course the Island Scrub-Jay. Hopefully a Pacific-slope Flycatcher will still be around.

Once back on shore in the early evening, we will do some additional coastal birding, as well as checking farm fields for plovers – Pacific Golden-Plover is always a possibility.

Overnight in Santa Barbara/Ventura



### **Day 10: Departure for Home**

Birding this morning will depend on when departing flights begin, or if any folks are continuing on with a pelagic birding extension.