

# Baja California & the Sea of Cortez

Naturetrek Tour Report

8 – 21 March 2014



Close Blue Whale



Short-beaked Common Dolphin



False Killer Whales



Mobula Ray

Report and images compiled by Lee Morgan



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## Day 1

**Saturday 8th March**

### London to San Diego

After a slightly delayed flight from London Heathrow the group arrived in San Diego a little after 6.30pm. Everyone had cleared customs by 7pm and we quickly shuttled to the hotel where a little exploration of the harbour front appeared to be the order of the evening, before most people opted for an early night.

## Day 2

## Sunday 9th March

### San Diego – Board Searcher

Having enjoyed a leisurely breakfast and taken an early morning look around the harbour, the majority of the group congregated in the lobby to get ready for a day out bird and wildlife watching with the San Diego Audubon Society. We started our tour with a walk along to the nearby harbour front where we scanned the garden trees to find Yellow-rumped, Townsend's and Orange-Crowned Warblers as well as Lilac-Crowned Parrots, Annas Hummingbirds and House Finches. The bird activity on the sheltered waters of the harbour and along the shore was fairly quiet but the colourful flower filled gardens were buzzing with Black Phoebe, Northern Mockingbirds, Savannah and Song Sparrows.

We then walked back to the hotel where we were met our bus that took us on a drive across town where we called in at Lindo Lake, usually a good spot to get a closer look at a variety of ducks and geese. We spent some time watching a large group of White Pelicans, Ruddy and Wood ducks and Cinnamon Teal, American Coots Moorhens, and stilts on the lake while Red-shouldered Hawk, Cassin's Kingbird and numerous herons and egrets were spotted as we walked around the margins of the lake (including a particularly handsome Black-crowned Night-heron that eye-balled us from its roost in a nearby tree). We also had a nice introduction to the differences between California and Ring-billed Gulls.

Having spent a little time at Lindo we headed on to Silverwood, a small nature reserve in the hills to the north of the city. We located ourselves around a feeding station in the heart of the reserve but a Sharp-shinned Hawk (and some particularly noisy locals) had been keeping the birds from the feeders for most of the morning and it was quiet when we arrived. However, with a little patience and some good observer etiquette we were soon enjoying some lovely views of Gofer, California Ground Squirrel, Spotted and California Towhee, Dark-eyed Juncos and White-breasted Nuthatch, Acorn Woodpeckers and plenty of Anna's Hummingbirds and Lesser Goldfinches too.

After enjoying our lunch in the reserve we moved back across town to visit the San Diego River estuary where we enjoyed some outstanding bird-watching including Osprey, Royal and Elegant Terns, Great and Little Blue Herons and Snowy and Great Egrets, Marbled Godwits, American Avocet, and Least Sandpipers to name but a few. On the water we also saw a variety of ducks too including Bufflehead, Lesser Scaup, American Wigeon, Black Brant etc.

By 4pm we had all transferred our luggage to M/V Searcher and most people then took the chance to explore the harbour some more, buy some last minute items and to grab a bite to eat before we all boarded the Searcher and got ourselves ready to set sail. After a quick welcome orientation and a chance to meet Captain Art and his crew we had lines away at about 10pm and we sailed out into the lights of San Diego Harbour.

A quick detour via the bait pens at the entrance to the harbour meant we were treated to some lamp-lit views (and smells) of dozens of noisy California Sea Lions, Double-crested Cormorants and numerous herons and egrets before darkness fell. We left the harbour on a flat calm pacific and headed southwards. It was a great start to our voyage and everyone was very excited about the wildlife watching we could expect in the days ahead.

## Day 3

Monday 10th March

### Ensenada

Most people awoke to the sound of the slowing engines and were enjoying our morning coffee when we arrived at Ensenada as the sun slowly crept up above the horizon. After Captain Art had dealt with Mexican Customs and Immigration, we departed the sleepy harbour and slowly motored out just as it was starting to get light.

Just as everyone was finishing breakfast we noticed one or two unusual dolphins breaking the surface in the distance and all our plans for the morning were instantly cancelled when we found ourselves amidst a large group (50+) of hunting False Killer Whales. It would have been rude not to follow them and miss the opportunity to watch this rarely encountered species at really close range and our decision proved to be a good one when we had close encounters with numerous False Killer Whales that surfaced all around us, including some nice views of some very tiny calves too.

Our morning with the false killers meant we had to forego our usual plan to cruise slowly past Todo Santos...but...False Killer Whales!!! Anyway, all was more than forgiven when we were then treated to an onslaught of whale and dolphin activity that included a large feeding group of Long-beaked Common Dolphins, close encounters with North bound Gray Whales...then more Common Dolphins, then a Humpback Whale that we watched playing with kelp, then more dolphins, then a playful Minke, a nice size *Mola mola*, then more dolphins, then a group of feeding Fin Whales (including a very inquisitive animal that circled the boat to check us out) and then a couple more groups of very playful Short-beaked Common Dolphins (that provided good chance for everyone to get their perfect dolphin picture). It really was a truly outstanding day and we were less than 18hrs out of port in San Diego? What else could this trip throw at us? This didn't even include the sightings of the birds, which included Northern Fulmars, both Black-vented and Pink-footed Shearwaters, Red (Grey) Phalaropes, Pomarine Skua, Scripps Murrelets, Cassin's Auklets, and a brief view of a Laysan Albatross too.

It was a truly amazing day of wildlife watching only topped off by a lovely evening meal and a beautiful sunset that was all topped off with a reasonable view of a green flash too. Honestly, whale watching in Baja can be quite exhausting – in a good way!

## Day 4

Tuesday 11th March

### Isla San Benitos

An early start to the day but after a night motoring through flat calm water everyone had had a good nights sleep. By 6am everyone was enjoying a fantastic breakfast and preparing themselves for our day ashore on Isla San Benito.

Calm seas and wonderfully clear blue skies make for a gentle introduction to boarding our skiffs and we all enjoyed a quick skiff ride to set ashore. Once on the shore we congregated to look at a variety of shells on the beach including some nice examples of the beautiful Abalone and Turban shells that form an important part of the fishery for the fishermen occupying the seasonal fishing village. The fabulous weather made for a very pleasurable walk along the islands cliffs and camera motor drives were whirring as we paused by beach after

beach of angelic looking Elephant Seal pups. Many also took the time to admire the islands unique flora with some fine displays of the San Benito Tarweed and the endemic Mallow.

Our stop at the old lighthouse for lunch provided everyone with a chance to rest and admire the wonderful scenery from some of the highest points on the island; a real treat given the wonderfully clear conditions. Birding around the island was good too with numerous good views of Peregrines, Ospreys as well as Horned Lark and the endemic island race of the Savannah Sparrow too. We eventually found the Guadalupe Fur Seal colony that had shifted but was still visible from some of the higher vantage points on the island, and seeing nearly 70 + of these rare marine mammals was a great treat. A stop at the last Elephant Seal beach also turned up a female nursing a pup and a few younger bull Elephant Seals as well.

Once back aboard the Searcher we all settled in as we set off southwards in search of more whales. We did not have to wait too long as we happened upon a large Blue Whale that surfaced numerous times close to the boat before it gave us the slip and we moved off to look at another whale. The new whale turned out to be another massive Blue Whale and it wasted little time giving us the slip too. However, to have seen two of the largest mammals ever to have lived in the space of just a couple of hours...we were all pretty happy as the day finally came to an end.

## Day 5

Wednesday 12th March

### San Ignacio

We awoke bright and early again, providing everyone with some time for a leisurely breakfast and some early sea watching as we approached the entrance to San Ignacio Lagoon. Good numbers of Royal and Elegant Terns patrolled the skies and we were joined by a few Short beaked Common Dolphins as we approached the lagoon. A few people even managed to spot another Laysan Albatross as it drifted past to investigate the boat. There were lots of Gray Whales concentrated at the entrance to the lagoon and choppy seas and a stiff breeze that lifted the white caps from the tops of the waves at the entrance to the lagoon made for an exciting first introduction to this magical place. The breeze did little to deter anyone from excitedly watching from the lower decks of the boat as Art and his crew skilfully weaved the Searcher across the shallow sandbar at the lagoons entrance, carefully avoiding the inquisitive whales as he did so. Once safely at anchor in the lagoon we were soon ushered into pangas for our first close up introduction to the Gray Whales, and they duly obliged us with some wondrously friendly encounters where everyone got to stroke a whale!

After a quick lunch, we boarded the pangas once more and spent the remainder of the afternoon out with the whales providing everyone with the chance to interact with females and calves, watch spy-hops and flukes and even some exciting breaches too.

But our day did not finish there... once back at the boat dinner was delayed by a cow-calf pair of Gray Whales that repeatedly approached the stern of the boat to have their noses and bellies scrubbed with a deck brush by an enthusiastic crew that hung upside down from the stern rail in order to oblige the whales.

After dinner we all made our way out to the rear deck of the boat and, with the ship's generator and lights turned off...we spent a little while enjoying the peace of the lagoon, listening for the whales blowing around us and watching the stars. We then spent a little time with a fun demonstration of how whales hear. It was a great way to end an amazing day.

## Day 6

Thursday 13th March

### San Ignacio

Once again, a leisurely start to the day and our morning's trip out on the pangas was delayed slightly by another spell of 'whale curling' when the same cow and calf returned to the Searcher for another scrub. However, with the morning breeze settling and the lagoon like a mill pond we quickly boarded the pangas and headed out. We didn't get far as each of our three boats were set upon by playful cow calf pairs and enjoyed a whole 90 minute trip of up close and personal whale interaction and we all returned to the Searcher soaked by whale blows and all grinning like cheshire cats. Well after a quick break, our repeat trip out onto the lagoon was another crazy adventure of friendly whales and spy hops near the boat, cuddling whales, kissing whales and even stroking whale tongues and baleen. After lunch the whales had cooled down a little and we settled into a more tranquil scene of female Gray Whales with calves relaxing in the afternoon sunshine; a great reminder of how much our interaction with the whales was entirely on their terms.

After another break most of the group opted to go for a walk on one of the lagoons wonderful beaches and spent an hour or so taking a closer look at some of the shells that get thrown up by the Pacific surf and amidst the numerous robust Surf Clam shells we also found nice examples of Pacific Calico Scallop, Baja Pen, Wavy Turban, and Sand Dollars and even a few large whale bones. The beach bird watching also revealed some nice views of Sanderling, Western Sandpiper and Semi-palmated Plover, Grey Plover, Greater Scaup and a solitary Slavonian Grebe too. We returned to the Searcher late in the afternoon and immediately raised anchor and motored out of the lagoon, being careful to avoid the numerous friendly Gray Whales that breached around us and swam up to the boat to play.

## Day 7

Friday 14th March

### Magdalena Bay

It was a good chance to enjoy the sunrise over the Pacific as we continued our journey south but for many the chance of some extra rest was equally valuable too. It was a little overcast but immediately after breakfast we spotted a Masked Booby flying over the boat and we were soon joined by a few scattered Long-beaked Common Dolphins, good numbers of Black-vented and Pink-footed Shearwaters and even a few Sabine's Gulls too.

A rolling ground swell and a stiff breeze began to kick up a few white caps but clear water and clearing skies helped our wildlife spotting immensely and by 9am we had had some brief views of a single Humpback and then a Humpback cow with a very tiny calf. Scattered Common Dolphins remained with the boat for much of the morning and a nice flurry of Least and Black Storm Petrels added to the mix.

At midday we began a slow approach on a Bryde's cow and calf, that provided us with some nice views of this immensely boat-shy species before more dolphins, and some Loggerhead Turtles distracted us. More Humpbacks continued to be a theme for the day as we encountered a tail-lunging individual shortly after lunch and then a nice pair of animals that we followed for a while as they were travelling north. Having left the humpbacks behind, the afternoon remained quiet as we travelled over a large area of green water. However, after a quiet afternoon of travel we put out a chum line and some popcorn and successfully encouraged a good flock of gulls and frigates and even a few shearwaters to follow us, and everyone took the chance to photograph the birds as they followed in our wake.

By 4pm a minor detour to look at a few Royal Terns feeding in the distance brought us up on a huge flurry of birds over a vast herd of 2000+ feeding Long-beaked Common Dolphins. Amidst the frenzy of activity two Humpbacks started breaching too and just when we thought it was all over and started to head away, a small group of 20 or so Pilot Whales came porpoising past the boat! What a way to draw an end to a day of travel. Amazing!

## Day 8

Saturday 15th March

### Gorda Banks – Los Frailes

We rounded the southernmost tip of the peninsula in the early hours of the morning. During breakfast we cut engines off the Gorda Banks and drifted for a while whilst listening for singing Humpbacks on the ships hydrophone.

As we travelled along the end of the peninsula (and well within sight of Cabo) we encountered our first Humpbacks and Bottlenose Dolphins and a full morning of fun started amidst the wind induced white caps as we enjoyed watching a wonderful display of boisterous Humpbacks (totalling well over 40 different animals over the course of the morning) that repeat breached around the boat, surfed in the growing ground swells and synchronised fluked close to the boat. All the time we were also surrounded by numerous Bottlenose Dolphins that surfed the swells, rode the bow and breached joyously in the waves. A spectacularly intimate view into the lives of these animals...

We anchored at Los Frailes soon after lunch and went snorkelling. Warm weather, clear water and plenty of beautiful fish made for an excellent first snorkel session and, having returned to the Searcher to get changed, we all spent the afternoon on shore birding around the desert scrub on the margins of the rather quirky RV park. A Greater Roadrunner proved to be a popular first bird of our landing but we added nice views of Costas and Xantus Hummingbird, Verdin and Grey Thrasher amongst other things during our successful exploration of the desert scrub.

It was not long before we had to drag ourselves away and return to Searcher where we had dinner at anchor before heading out for a nights motoring though rough seas to ensure that we could get far enough north before a forecast day of strong winds inevitably meant we would have to hunker down in a sheltered bay somewhere.

## Day 9

Sunday 16th March

### Isla San Jose

After a rough nights motoring into the Sea of Cortez we awoke to the sound of the slowing engines and dropping anchor off the mangroves at the southern tip of Isla San Jose. The wind was howling, so our morning's excursion to venture into the mangroves by skiff started a little 'splashy'. Nonetheless, once in the sheltered waters of the mangroves we enjoyed nearly three relaxed hours of watching herons and egrets and a wide variety of small waders, Belted Kingfishers and Mangrove Warblers as well as Balloon fish, Stingrays and Cornet fish too. We also enjoyed spectacular views of Brown Pelicans, Brown and Blue-footed Booby's and numerous Elegant and Royal Terns feeding on a bait ball in the mangrove lagoon. We also got some amazingly close views of dozens of roosting Frigatebirds too.

The wind hadn't diminished by midday so we had lunch at anchor before we set out to see if it would be possible to whale watch in the sheltered lea of the San Jose channel for the part of the day. It absolutely wasn't and within three miles we decided that the big swells and the choppy conditions were of little benefit to anyone. We anchored up at Punta Salinas and set ashore for an afternoon of exploring the salt pans and cactus scrub in search of birds, plants and whatever else we could find. After an afternoon ashore, the gale force winds had not diminished and we returned to the Searcher where we reset the anchor and hunkered down for the evening.

## Day 10

Monday 17th March

### West side of Isla San Jose to Catalina

After a night tucked into our sheltered anchorage while the winds continued to howl, we woke to a more tranquil scene. The high winds had calmed to a cool breeze and the sea had flattened off nicely. Having been hampered by the weather thus far we decided to make the best of the conditions and press north with a full days whale watching. Moving through the sheltered waters of the San Jose channel we found a few whales including Bryde's, Fin and a Blue but most of them were being long winded and a little boat-shy so after a nice look at the Fin we opted to continue onwards to explore the rich waters further north. It was a long day with very little to be found although there were plenty of Storm Petrels and Red-billed Tropicbirds to distract the keen observers.

By evening the water was flat calm and we pressed onwards to the lea of Isla Monserrat where a large group of feeding Long-beaked Common Dolphins, a couple of Humpbacks and lots of diving pelicans and booby's provided a welcome break from the open ocean. Continuing to venture north to the glassy slick waters towards Isla Carmen were we encountered an amazing feeding frenzy of Grey Phalaropes with a few Sabine's Gulls that were frantically feeding on krill that were coming to the surface in dense vortices' of pink . We then watched as large Mobula Rays fed at the surface, powering through the krill and cruising effortlessly past the bow of the boat. We anchored up for dinner before moving on to anchor off Catalina for the evening.

## Day 11

Tuesday 18th March

### Catalina

This morning there was a beautiful sunrise and a gentle breeze off the ocean. We spent some time watching birds fly by Elephant Rock as we enjoyed our morning coffee. A leisurely breakfast and we set ashore on Catalina for an early walk. During a morning exploring the island we found a couple of nice Baja Rattlesnakes, some good lizards and Desert Iguanas too. The birding was slow to start but soon warmed up and Loggerhead Shrikes and Cardinals proved to be real crowd pleasers. The cacti and the plants were also as impressive as ever.

After returning to the boat to get changed we were soon back in the skiffs and ready for snorkelling. The usual bay was catching a swell so we opted to snorkel in the lee of Elephant Rock, a new site for all of us. We had an amazing time exploring the rocky reef, finding numerous common reef fish and at least two new fish species none of us had ever seen. We also found a nice Reef Octopus too.

We raised anchor a little before lunch and headed south into a brisk southerly breeze in search of new whales. Numerous phalaropes and storm-petrels indicated there was plenty of food around but whales were thin on the ground. Nonetheless, we kept the faith knowing that we would find our hotspot soon enough. When we eventually found it, it was seriously hot too...at least a 100 Sperm Whales spread out feeding over an area of about three miles and we spent the rest of the afternoon watching whale after whale at close range as they surfaced and rested for a while before diving to feed again...each time raising their flukes high into the air.

By the time we had left our whales it was getting late and we slipped into a quiet anchorage on the lee of Isla San Jose again and enjoyed a great margarita-fuelled evening on the back deck with some barbeque food and great company!

## Day 12

Wednesday 19th March

### Punta Colorado – Los Islotes

We start the day watching the sunrise illuminate the sandstone cliffs at Punta Colorado and then set ashore for a pre-breakfast walk along the nearby desert arroyo where lovely views of Costas Hummingbird, Mockingbirds and Black-throated Sparrows. We raised anchor and headed south where Bottlenose Dolphins, joined us during breakfast. As we travelled south we stopped briefly to watch a lob-tailing Humpback then continued onwards.

At midday we arrived at Los Islotes and dropped anchor. Brief skiff rides around the islands provided us with some nice views of the Blue-footed and Brown Booby's nesting on the cliffs and some intimate views of female Sea lions nursing their young and male Sea lions boisterously guarding their harems. It was the snorkelling that really won everyone over though. We entered the water and enjoyed a whole hour of interacting with playful Sea lion pups that nibbled at our fins and climb over our backs. One pup took a particular liking to David too (don't worry David...what happens at Los Islotes stays at Los Islotes!). In the afternoon we continued our journey south where, just when everyone was beginning to think that the trip was over, we encountered a Blue Whale that investigated us at such breathtakingly close quarters we were left in little doubt! Days do not get better than Baja days!

## Day 13

## Thursday 20th March

We watched the first glimmer of sunrise off the end of the Cape as the Searcher finally pulled into the harbour in Cabo. We all enjoyed a leisurely continental breakfast as the boat was busily refuelled for its journey back to San Diego. We disembarked and said our final and farewell to the crew that would be taking the Searcher back to San Diego. We then jumped into some pre-arranged taxis to the estuary in San Jose del Cabo. En route, a few people managed one last glimpse of a tail-lobbing Humpback as we travelled along the coast road.

Once at the estuary we walked in the sunshine and took a last minute opportunity for some bird watching (which certainly beat the prospect of sitting in a busy airport for hours on end) and we even managed to find several new species for our bird list including Solitary Sandpiper, Common Yellowthroat, White-faced Ibis and Cactus Wren. Having had a little time to relax with some cold drinks and have a look around for some last minute souvenirs in San Jose del Cabo we all boarded our taxis once again and set off to hustle and bustle of the airport for our return flight home. Another great way to round off a wonderful trip!

### Summary:

The weather wasn't always kind at times, but some truly spectacular cetacean watching dominated this trip. With wonderful encounters with rarely seen species, amazing behaviours observed, and some unusually close encounters with so many of the oceans real giants.... left us all speechless and with memories none of us will ever forget.

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## Species Lists

Mammals (✓ = recorded not counted; h = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	March												
			8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	Gray Whale	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>			12+		82	50							
2	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>				3						✓		✓	
3	Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>			6+	✓						✓			
4	Brydes Whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>							2			✓			
5	Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>			1										
6	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>			1				12	50+		✓		✓	
7	Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>											✓		
8	False Killer Whale	<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>			50+										
9	Short-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>							20+						
10	Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>					50	40		100+	6			✓	
11	Long-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus capensis</i>			1000+	✓			2000+			✓	✓		
12	Short-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>			500+										
13	California Sea Lion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	1	6	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Guadalupe Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus townsendi</i>				✓									
15	Northern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>				✓									
16	Black-tailed Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>								✓	✓				
17	California Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>	✓												
18	Antelope Ground Squirrel	<i>Ammospermophilus leucurus</i>								✓					

## Birds

1	Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>					✓	✓							
2	Red-throated loon	<i>Gavia stellata</i>		✓				✓							
3	Pacific Diver	<i>Gavia pacifica</i>					✓	✓							
4	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		
5	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>		✓											
6	Western Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓										
7	Clark's Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>		✓											

	Common name	Scientific name	March													
			8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
8	Slavonian Grebe (horned)	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>							✓							
9	Laysan Albatross	<i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i>			✓	✓	✓									
10	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		✓✓	✓					✓						
11	Pink-footed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus creatopus</i>		✓✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓			
12	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>		✓✓						✓						
13	Black-vented Shearwater	<i>Puffinus opisthomelas</i>		✓✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓					
14	Black Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma melania</i>								✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
15	Least Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma microsoma</i>								✓			✓		✓	
16	White-necked Petrel	<i>Pterodroma cervicalis</i>									3					
17	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
18	Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>		✓					✓			✓		✓		
19	White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>		✓												
20	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
21	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>				✓			✓		✓		✓			
22	Blue-footed Booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>									✓		✓			
23	Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>							✓							
24	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
25	Pelagic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i>		✓												
26	Brandt's Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax penicillatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
27	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>		✓			✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		
28	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		✓												
29	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>		✓				✓		✓	✓					
30	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>		✓							✓					
31	Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>						✓								
32	Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>						✓			✓					
33	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓	✓												
34	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax violacea</i>									✓					
35	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>														
36	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>														
37	White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>					✓	✓			✓					
38	Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	✓	✓												

	Common name	Scientific name	March													
			8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
39	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓	✓												
40	Black Brant	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
41	Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	✓	✓												
42	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓												
43	Cinnamon Teal	<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>		✓												
44	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	✓	✓												
45	Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	✓	✓												
46	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>		✓												
47	American Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓												
48	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	✓	✓												
49	Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	✓	✓								✓				
50	Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>							✓							
51	Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	✓	✓												
52	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	✓	✓					✓							
53	American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	✓	✓												
54	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	✓													
55	Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓							
56	California Quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>	✓									✓				
57	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
58	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	✓									✓				
59	Coopers Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	✓													
60	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓			✓	
61	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>										✓				
62	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>					✓					✓				
63	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>		✓												
64	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓	✓												
65	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	✓	✓												
66	American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>					✓					✓				
67	American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	✓	✓												
68	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	✓	✓												
69	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	✓	✓					✓							

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			8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
70	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>							✓							
71	Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>						✓								
72	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	✓	✓												
73	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>														
74	Willet	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>		✓								✓				
75	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	✓	✓								✓				
76	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus</i>	✓	✓								✓				
77	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>		✓				✓	✓							
78	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>		✓				✓	✓							
79	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		✓												
80	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>		✓				✓	✓							
81	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>							✓							
82	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>		✓					✓			✓				
83	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	✓	✓				✓				✓				
84	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>		✓				✓	✓							
85	Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalopus fulicarius</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	
86	Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>			✓					✓						
87	Glaucus-winged Gull	<i>Larus glaucescens</i>				✓										
88	Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>		✓	✓	✓										
89	Sabines Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>								6			✓	✓		
90	Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
91	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>		✓	✓	✓										
92	California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
93	Yellow-footed Gull	<i>Larus livens</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	
94	Western Gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
95	American Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>														
96	Royal Tern	<i>Sterna maxima</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
97	Elegant Tern	<i>Sterna elegans</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
98	scrips' Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus hypoleucus</i>		✓	✓	✓										
99	Craveri's Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus craveri</i>													✓	
100	Cassins' Auklet	<i>Ptychoramphus aleuticus</i>		✓	✓	✓										

	Common name	Scientific name	March													
			8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
101	Rhinoceros Auklet	<i>Cyclorhynchus psittacula</i>				✓										
102	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>									✓	✓		✓		
103	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>		✓												
104	Common Ground Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>									✓					
105	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓												
106	Lilac-headed Parrot	<i>Amazona finschi</i>		✓												
107	Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>									✓					
108	White-throated Swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>												✓		
109	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>		✓												
110	Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>									✓				✓	
111	Xantus' Hummingbird	<i>Hylocharis xantusii</i>									✓					
112	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>										✓		✓		
113	Gilded Flicker	<i>Colaptes chrysoides</i>														
114	Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>									✓			✓		
115	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>									✓			✓	✓	
116	Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerptes formicivorus</i>		✓												
117	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>									✓			✓		
118	Grey Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax wrightii</i>									✓					
119	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>		✓												
120	Cassin's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>		✓												
121	Shore Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>				✓										
122	Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>												✓		
123	Northern Rough-wing Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>														
124	Western Scrub Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>									✓					
125	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓		✓						✓		✓		
126	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓												
127	Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>									✓			✓	✓	
128	Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>														
129	Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>									✓					
130	California Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila californica</i>									✓	✓				
131	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>		✓							✓			✓	✓	

	Common name	Scientific name	March													
			8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
132	Grey Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma cinereum</i>									✓					
133	European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓												
134	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>		✓							✓					
135	Yellow-rumped (Audubon's)Warbler	<i>Dendroica auduboni</i>		✓												
136	Townsend's Warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>		✓												
137	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>														
138	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cuadinalis cardinalis</i>									✓			✓		
139	California Towhee	<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>		✓												
140	Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>		✓												
141	Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>												✓	✓	
142	Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>		✓		✓										
143	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>		✓												
144	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>		✓												
145	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓		✓					✓					
146	dark eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>		✓												
147	Tricolored Blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>		✓												
148	Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>		✓												
149	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>		✓												
150	Scott's Oriole	<i>Icterus parisorum</i>									✓					
151	Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>		✓							✓			✓		
152	House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	✓	✓							✓			✓		
153	Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>		✓												

## Fish

1	Balloonfish	<i>Diodon holocanthus</i>								✓	✓			✓		
2	Banded Eel	<i>Myrichthys colubrinus</i>								✓						
3	Barber Fish	<i>Johnrandallia nigriristris</i>								✓						
4	Beaubrummel	<i>Eupomacentrus flavilatus</i>								✓						
5	Bluechin Parrotfish	<i>Scarus ghobban</i>								✓				✓		
6	Bumphead Damsel	<i>Microspathodon bairdi</i>								✓				✓		

	Common name	Scientific name	March														
			8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
7	California Flying Fish	<i>Cypselurus californicus</i>							✓								
8	California Needlefish	<i>Strongylura exilis</i>								✓	✓	✓					
9	Cortez Angelfish	<i>Pomocanthus zonipectus</i>								✓				✓			
10	Cortez Chub	<i>Kyphosus elegans</i>								✓							
11	Cortez Damselfish	<i>Eupomacentrus rectifraenum</i>								✓				✓			
12	Cortez Rainbow Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lucasanum</i>								✓				✓			
13	Creole Fish	<i>Paranthias furcifer</i>												✓			
14	Dorado	<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>								✓							
15	Fine-spotted Jawfish	<i>Opistognathus punctatus</i>												✓			
16	Giant Damselfish	<i>Microspathadon dorsalis</i>								✓				✓			
17	Hogfish	<i>Bodianus diplotaenia</i>								✓				✓			
18	King Angelfish	<i>Holocanthus passer</i>								✓							
19	Manta Ray	<i>Manta birostris</i>										✓					
20	Mexican Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys dentatus</i>								✓				✓			
21	Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus canescens</i>								✓							
22	Ocean Sunfish	<i>Mola mola</i>					✓										
23	Panamic Sergeant Major	<i>Abuldefduf troschelli</i>												✓			
24	Reef Cornetfish	<i>Fistularia commersonii</i>									✓						
25	Remora	<i>Remora remora</i>					✓	✓									
26	Scalloped Hammerhead Shark	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>						✓									
27	Scissortail Damselfish	<i>Chromis atrilobata</i>								✓				✓			
28	Scorpionfish	<i>Scorpaena guttata</i>								✓							
29	Spotted Boxfish	<i>Ostracion meleagris</i>								✓				✓			
30	Stoplight Parrotfish	<i>Sparisoma viride</i>								✓				✓			
31	Yellowtail Surgeonfish	<i>Prionurus punctatus</i>								✓				✓			
32	grey smelt						✓										
33	mullet						✓										
34	flying fish								14th								
35	sting ray										✓						
36	smooth tail mobula											✓					

	Common name	Scientific name	March												
			8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

Reptiles

1	Zebra tailed lizard	<i>Callisaurus draconoides</i>							✓	✓						
2	Desert Iguana	<i>Dipsosorus dorsalis</i>									✓					
3	Common Side-blotched Lizard	<i>Uta stansburiana</i>				✓							✓			
4	Orange Throated Whiptail	<i>Cnemidophorus hyperythrus</i>				✓				✓						
5	Baja California 'rattleless' Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus enyo</i>									✓					
6	Loggerhead Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>					16+									
7	Emerald-tailed Lizard											✓				

Butterflies

Mexican Fritillary , *Euptoieta hegesia*

Soldier , *Danaus eresinus*

Cabbage White , *Pieris rapae*

West Coast Lady , *Vanessa annabella*

Monarch , *Danaus plexippus*



Greater Roadrunner