

Baja California & the Sea of Cortez

Naturetrek Tour Report

6 - 18 February 2015



Anna's Hummingbird



Friendly Grey Whale in San Ignacio Lagoon



Grey Whales



Coast Agave in Flower - Isla San Benito

Report & images compiled by Lee Morgan



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Day 1

Friday 6th February

London Heathrow - San Diego

The group arrived in a sunny San Diego at a very respectable 5.15pm and transferred to the nearby Ramada Airport hotel. Arriving in good time allowed everyone to spend a little time getting their bearings around the harbour and some time to eat in one of the nearby restaurants. However, after such a long day of travel it wasn't too long before most people opted for an early night.

Day 2

Saturday 7th February

San Diego – Board M/V Searcher

A foggy start which soon lifted to reveal a beautiful sunny morning in San Diego's Point Loma harbour. Some of the group naturally opted for a later start and the chance to catch up on some much needed rest, but many woke early and opted for a pre-breakfast wander around the harbour. This provided some time to watch the Night Herons and Egrets searching the bait wells on the back of the fishing boats and a chance to listen to the raucous Lilac-crowned Parrots jostling for position in the harbour-side trees.

After breakfast many of the group joined our guided tour of some of San Diego's nature reserves and birding hotspots with Susan and Rick from the local Audubon Society. At 9am we met in the hotel lobby before setting off on foot for some gentle birding around the picturesque harbour. The birdwatching started slowly but we quickly kick-started our day with some lovely views of lots of Western and Eared Grebes, Anna's Hummingbirds, Black Phoebe, and Belted Kingfisher to name but a few.

A short bus journey took us across the city to Lindo Lake where we watched Phainopepla, a large flock of Cedar Waxwings, Western Bluebirds, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Ruby-Crowned Kinglets, White Pelicans, and Great and Little Egrets. We also had a nice introduction to a variety of ducks and geese and the differences between Western, California and Ring-billed Gulls.

Another short bus ride and we arrived at Silverwoods, a small nature reserve set amidst the oak chaparral covered hills to the north of the city. Here we sat and enjoyed a picnic lunch around a feeding station in the heart of the reserve, giving everyone time for some very relaxed birding and the chance to watch California Ground Squirrels scuttling over the rocks. The feeders were a little quiet on our arrival but once things settled down it wasn't long before the bird feeders were buzzing with Spotted and California Towhees, Scrub Jays, House Finches, Lesser Goldfinches and White-crowned Sparrows. We even managed to catch a glimpse of some of the real specialist birds of the chaparral such as Acorn Woodpecker and Oak Titmouse.

After Lunch we headed back across town to the San Diego River estuary where the mudflats were teeming with hundreds of American Wigeon and Blue-winged Teal, and waders such as Marbled Godwit, Willet and Black-bellied Plovers. Amidst all this we also spotted Royal and Caspian Terns, Great and Little Blue Herons, Snowy and Great Egrets, and after little walk along the shore we also found Lesser Scaup and Bufflehead too.

We then had time to call in at Famosa Slough (another local nature reserve) where some nice views of American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Killdeer and a distant American Kestrel nicely rounded off the day's birding.

We arrived back at the hotel by mid-afternoon where we transferred our luggage to M/V Searcher. Most then took the chance to explore the harbour some more, purchase some last minute items and to have a bite to eat before we all boarded M/V Searcher in the late afternoon ready to set sail. After a quick welcome orientation and a chance to meet Captain Art and his crew we had lines away and were cruising out into the twinkling 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 California Sea Lions, and a few Black-crowned Night Herons and Great Blue Herons before eventually heading out of the harbour and south into Mexican waters.

Day 3

Sunday 8th February

Ensenada – Todos Santo

Most people awoke to the sound of the slowing engines and were out on deck enjoying their morning coffee when we arrived at Ensenada. Whilst Captain Art dealt with Mexican Customs and Immigration and organising our travel visas, many of us watched the Surf Scoters and Pacific Loons diving alongside the boat and enjoyed the warmth of the first rays of the morning sun as it slowly crept over the horizon. It wasn't long though before

we departed Ensenada and slowly motored out of the harbour where we spotted dozens of Red-throated Loons, more Sea Lions and even a few Pacific White-sided Dolphins too. It was a good start.

We drifted slowly past Isla Todos Santos where, amidst the numerous gulls and Brown Pelicans we managed to spot a few Black Oystercatchers and a solitary Brown Booby. The islands main beaches had a few Harbour Seals hauled out on them as well plenty of adult Northern Elephant Seals too.

As we drifted past the islands we soon spotted the blows of several Gray Whales. These were north-bound animals leaving the lagoons and they gave us a wonderful pass close by the boat before we both headed our separate ways. It was a great first look at these spectacular animals and gave us all a taste of things to come. However, these were quickly forgotten when several Humpback Whales showed up and treated us to a display of breaching, fluking and pec-slapping.

We continued our journey south on a rolling Pacific swell. It was a quiet afternoon for wildlife but we watched as a constant passage of Black-vented Shearwaters went wheeling by, and Cassin's Auklets and the occasional Craveri's Murrelet scuttled frenetically from the bow of the boat.

We continued onwards under a beautiful starry sky, winding the day down as darkness fell with the first of Robs wonderful slide shows on Pinniped biology.

Day 4

Monday 9th February

Isla San Benitos

It was another very early start to the day with many people emerging from their cabins as early as 4am and by 6am everyone was enjoying a fantastic breakfast and preparing themselves for our day ashore on Isla San Benito. The seas were a little choppy and Heermann's Gulls wheeled around the boat as we boarded the skiffs for the first time.

The fabulous sunny weather made for a very pleasurable walk as we circumnavigated the island's cliffs, pausing by beach after beach covered with angelic looking Elephant Seal pups with their mums, and some huge bull Elephant Seals. We were treated to some real shows too as males fought for positions on the beach. We were even privy to male Elephant Seals mating with females too....not a particularly elegant affair ...but interesting to watch nonetheless. As we continued our walk we spotted the odd California Sea Lion, had some distant but lovely views of the rare Guadeloupe Fur Seal, and watched numerous Ospreys as they circled overhead. The island had had some rain this year too and was in fine flourish. Many took the time to admire the island's unique flora. Nice examples of the Island's Coast Agave, San Benito Tarweed and the endemic Mallow were all in fine flower. Our stop at the old lighthouse for lunch provided everyone with a chance to photograph Ospreys and Ravens as they circled low overhead, and listen to Horned Larks singing from the scrub patches nearby. Birding around the island was good too with views of Peregrine, the endemic island race of the Savannah Sparrow, some Rufous Hummingbirds and a few Rock Wrens too.

By 2.38pm we were back onboard the boat and underway again; heading south on some impressive ocean swells. We spotted a few northbound Gray Whales as we travelled and enjoyed the last of the day's sunshine, watching shearwaters breezing past as we travelled.

Day 5

Tuesday 10th February

San Ignacio

Another early start and, having motored through the night, we approached the entrance to San Ignacio Lagoon. Good numbers of Royal Terns patrolled the skies and there were plenty of Pomerine Skuas around to rob them of their catches too. As we cruised into the entrance of the lagoon all eyes were fixed on the sea as whales surfaced all around us.

Once safely at anchor in the lagoon we were quickly ushered into pangas (boats) for our first close up introduction to the Gray Whale and it seemed that we had barely left the sides of the Searcher before the Gray Whales (mostly cows with calves) come in to take a closer look at us. We spent a wonderful 90 minutes interacting with whales on their own terms as they excitedly surfaced close to the boat allowing us to stroke their heads and rub their tummies. It was a truly extraordinary experience for all. We returned to the Searcher drenched from the blows of whales and glowing with excitement. The crew instantly knew that we had all had a fantastic time!

After a quick lunch we boarded the pangas again and spent a decidedly more relaxed afternoon out with the whales providing everyone with the chance to watch them fluking and breaching and spy hopping all around the lagoon.

But our day did not finish there. 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 the evening under a spectacular starry sky enjoying the peace of the lagoon and listening to the whales blowing around us.

Day 6

Wednesday 11th February

We whale-watched from the pangas from about 7.30am until noon and we were all provided with lots more lovely whale encounters; breaching, spy-hopping, splashing around the boats and some great friendly encounters too. Some even enjoyed the thrill of being pushed around in circles by a very friendly cow calf pair for most of one session. However, the Gray Whales were just part of the enjoyment of our stay in this beautiful lagoon; Bottlenose Dolphin, friendly California Sea Lions, Royal Terns being chased by Frigatebirds and Skuas, numerous Common and Pacific Loons, Brant Geese, and Surf Scoters are all part of the scenery down here.

After lunch some of the group opted to spend the afternoon out on the pangas with the whales just one last time but, having already enjoyed numerous wonderful whale encounters, the majority of the group opted to take a trip ashore and explore one of the lagoons wonderful pristine beaches. Here they spent over an hour looking at the numerous shells, whale bones and sand dollars that accumulate on the lagoon beaches.

We all returned to the Searcher late in the afternoon where we said our goodbyes as we motored out into a gently rolling pacific swell. It was a beautiful evening and as the sun dropped below the horizon those out on deck were treated to a nice view of the illusive 'green flash'. It was a wonderful way to end our day.

Day 7

Thursday 12th February

Magdalena Bay

It was another early start for many as we made our way south along the peninsula. For most of the day we were crossing the front of Magdalena Bay and the conditions were perfect; light winds and crystal clear water. It was essentially a travel day but in such good conditions we were all able to sit out on deck and scan the seas for large roquals and pelagic seabirds.

In the perfect conditions, we had a busy day. In the morning large groups of Short-beaked Dolphins entertained us with their antics as they rode the bow. We enjoyed some close encounters with some travelling Humpbacks and we were thrilled by the airborne antics from a huge herd of Long-beaked Common Dolphins too. In the afternoon we enjoyed a wonderfully close encounter with two very curious Humpbacks, found another group of Humpbacks that breached repeatedly, had huge flocks of Black-vented Shearwaters passing by almost continuously, and travelled through miles of water that had hundreds (if not thousands) of Green Turtles floating around in it. This was more than enough to keep us all occupied.

However, just when we thought the day was over, we spotted a large Whale Shark pass by the boat and we had to turn the boat around and stop to have a closer look. Fortunately this magnificent fish was frenetically feeding on pelagic red crab close to the surface and was largely indifferent to our presence. We had an incredible view of it as it swam towards the boat with its mouth open.....then actually bumped into the bow of the boat! All this was then topped off by another beautiful sunset too....who could ask for more?

Day 8

Friday 13th February

Gorda Banks

Rounding the southernmost tip of the peninsula in the early hours of the morning we were met by a brisk (and unexpected) south-easterly breeze. However, it hadn't been blowing long and the sea conditions remained good for a while.

As we spent the morning travelled along the end of the peninsula (and well within sight of Cabo) against the ominous back drop of a growing storm front moving south-east from the mainland, we enjoyed countless magnificent encounters with numerous Humpbacks and a constant stream of interesting seabirds fluttered around close to the boat. Forster's Terns and Frigatebirds landed in the rigging, Sabine's and Bonaparte's Gulls circled close to the boat, and both Brown and Masked Boobys flew past the boat numerous times.

As the passing storm delivered its seemingly inevitable rain the humpback activity decreased and we spent an hour or two looking for whales that seemed determined to give us the slip. Nonetheless we persevered and almost as soon as the storm had passed and the winds had started to raise a heavy swell, the Humpbacks kicked

into gear and started breaching. For the rest of the day we were treated to a wonderful display of multiple breaching animals (some within 20m of the bow), new born calves breaching, pec-slapping and tail-lobbing; sometimes all these activities at once! It was amazing.

Unfortunately the heavy swells meant we couldn't make our scheduled landing at Los Frailes. This was no great loss though. With all the amazing whale activity in the area we simply extended our day watching more of the spectacular Humpbacks before eventually breaking off and venturing north into the sea of Cortez as a beautiful sunset rose from the peninsula.

Day 9

Saturday 14th February

Punta Colorado

After a night motoring north we awoke to the sound of the slowing engines and clatter of the anchor chain as we set anchor off the beautiful sandstone cliffs at Punta Colorado, off the southern end of Isla San Jose.

The light cloud cover meant that we didn't see the sunrise fully illuminate the beautiful sandstone cliffs but we watched as the Brown Pelicans and Brandt's Cormorants flew by, and we enjoyed breakfast at anchor before setting ashore for a morning walk through the desert arroyo. In the cool of the morning we were able to spend time looking at some of the wonderful desert plants and there were plenty of butterflies and reptiles to see too. We also had a good time birding the desert scrub looking at Verdin, Northern Mockingbird and Costa's Hummingbirds before returning to the beach to search for fossils in the beautiful wind and water sculpted rock formations.

We returned to the Searcher to get ready for snorkelling, and a change in the prevailing swell meant that we had to relocate to a more sheltered reef to snorkel off. In the wonderful clear water we had nice views of Reef Stingrays, Rock Scorpionfish and a wide variety of other colourful reef fish and sea stars which made for a great first snorkel session.

We headed northwards in the afternoon in search of whales. Sightings commenced with a large herd of Long-beaked Common Dolphins that casually moved in to investigate the Searcher and lingered to ride in the wake and play on the bow. Then we spotted a big group of Pilot Whales that we watched until sunset - they were spread out and feeding over a very large area, perhaps several hundred animals, but small groups of individuals did move in very close to investigate our boat, affording us some wonderful views.

As darkness fell we headed northwards where the most breathtaking display of bioluminescent dolphins riding the bow ushered us to our sheltered anchorage just off Isla Santa Catalina.

Day 10

Sunday 15th February

Catalina

It was cool and overcast as we lay at anchor off Isla Santa Catalina, perfect for our morning hike along the island's wonderful cactus filled arroyos. Rob found a wonderfully perfect small example of the endemic Baja

Rattleless Rattlesnake and we marvelled at the wonderful giant elephant cacti and range of desert plants that were in full flourish because of the recent rains. The birds were active too and we had some great views of Loggerhead Shrike, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Verdin, Ladder-backed and Gila Woodpeckers, and White-throated Swifts as we searched the beautiful, cactus filled valley.

The group then split, some taking the opportunity for a coastal cruise, and others for snorkelling. The cruisers ended up with some lovely views of Wandering Tattler and Black-necked Grebe. Amazing snorkelling conditions with good visibility and lots of colourful reef fish meant that the snorkelling party had a great time as well.

After a quick bite of lunch at anchor we set out to search for whales once again and were quickly into a large herd of several hundred Common Dolphins that breached alongside the Searcher as we travelled towards Isla Monserrat. However, a large storm front brought rain and poor visibility for part of the afternoon, thus hampering our search for larger whales.

A break in the rain diminished as quickly as it had arrived and through the clearing conditions and rainbow filled skies a distant blow was spotted hanging in the air. The anticipation mounted as we investigated further. It was a Blue Whale (actually it was three) and we watched as the largest of the three enormous creatures spent several hours feeding at the surface in shallow water as huge Mobula Rays cruised all around us. We had found our hotspot and we were in no great rush to leave. As darkness eventually fell we opted to anchor for the night off the nearby Isla Carmen so that we could resume our search of the area in the morning.

Day 11

Monday 16th February

Carmen –Agua Verde

We woke to a beautiful Baja morning with exactly the conditions you hope for in the Sea of Cortez; crystal clear water with a greasy smooth surface and a clear, turquoise blue sky overhead. There was no wind in the forecast and even before raising the anchor we could see Mobula Rays and Mantas cruising past the boat. We were clearly still in our hotspot and within 10 minutes of weighing anchor we were surrounded by a group of several hundred Common Dolphins that travelled with the boat and leapt repeatedly at our bow and in our wake. From high up on the roof the ever watchful crew could see numerous tall spouts in the distance so we ventured in that direction to have a closer look. We soon found ourselves amidst a spread-out group of at least 15 feeding Blue Whales and were able to observe them surfacing close to our boat and even closer to another, smaller whale watching boat that gave us all a good sense of the scale of these enormous animals, head lunging and feeding on their backs with their huge throat pleats distended. Incredible.

As we eventually began to make our way southwards we also had an amazing encounter with a Blue Whale cow with possibly the tiniest calf any of us had ever seen. She surfaced close to the boat as we paused and allowed her to safely pass us by (it was important that such a young calf stay close to its mother and we didn't want to disturb them at all).

After lunch we arrived at Agua Verde. Before anchoring we took a slow cruise close by Solitaire Rock to look at the Blue-footed and Brown Boobys high on the rock and watch the Brown Pelicans and Brandt's Cormorants sunning themselves along the rocky shore. We even managed to spot a few American Oystercatchers and a Great Blue Heron too.

Having set anchor, we got ourselves ready for snorkelling and we set ashore in one of the sheltered bays and enjoyed an hour or so of snorkelling along the shallow rocky reef enjoying the myriad of colourful fish in the crystal clear conditions. A few people also enjoyed some amazing views of Cortez Stingray and a large California Butterfly Ray too.

Having cooled off in the water, we returned to the boat to get ourselves ready to go on a bird walk through the nearby desert scrub. There were plenty of stunning Phainopepla, Hooded Orioles and Cardinals, Blue-grey and California Gnatcatchers buzzed in the bushes, Cactus Wrens and California Quail called in the distance, and plenty of wonderful desert plants kept us busy for the couple of hours we were ashore.

We ended our day at anchor as the sun set over the peninsula, enjoying the warmth of the evening with margaritas and a barbecue on the back deck, and watching huge Mobula Rays cruise under the lights of the boat. It was a wonderful way to wind down after another amazing day.

Day 12

Tuesday 17th February

Isla San Jose mangroves – Los Islotes

Having travelled south through the night we awoke at anchor off the southern tip of Isla San Jose again. We started the day with pre-breakfast skiff rides through the mangroves where (despite the swarms of hungry midges) we enjoyed some lovely views of Reddish and Snowy Egrets, Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned Night Herons, White Ibis, Green and little Blue Herons, and Mangrove Warblers. There were also a few shorebirds around and we managed to spot Whimbrel, Western and Least Sandpipers, Marbled Godwit and Willet amidst the tangle of mangrove roots too. It was a truly beautiful morning too and the island's distinctive sandstone mountains were illuminated by the early morning sunshine, creating a wonderful backdrop to our morning tour.

We raised anchor and headed south towards Los Islotes. The sea was once again like glass and we were joined by a large herd of Common Dolphin as we travelled. We slowed on route to have a closer look at a large flock of Black and Least Storm-Petrels that were massed on the water. This provided us with a rare chance to compare the two species side by side. As we continued our journey we were once again joined by an active group of Common Dolphins.

As we neared Los Islotes, Art spotted a couple of Risso's Dolphins and a Humpback Whale and we paused to have a closer look before moving on to our destination. On our arrival, Los Islotes was bustling with its usual aggregation of day boats out of La Paz but the crowds soon cleared and we enjoyed a wonderful slow skiff ride around the islands. This provided us with some nice views of the Blue-footed and Brown Boobys nesting high on the cliffs, some intimate views of the Sea Lions nursing their young and playing in the water, and some rather nice views of a Wandering Tattler too!

Having returned briefly to the boat we readied ourselves for snorkelling and by the time we were ready to enter the water many of the day boaters had gone. We enjoyed a fabulous hour in the water diving with playful Sea Lions, swimming through shoals of tiny silver baitfish, and searching for colourful reef fish amidst the giant boulders. The warm weather and good sea conditions really made this a perfect snorkel and everyone's smiles said it all.

We continued our journey southwards, riding the high of all the marvellous things we had seen and experienced, but Baja still had a few good things to reveal. These included more Common Dolphins and a great look at a Bryde's Whale (actually, it was an exceptionally good look at these notoriously boat-shy species).

As always, our final meal together on the boat provided us with the perfect opportunity to share photos, recount our stories and describe our highlights from the tour. We all agreed that this had been an incredible trip.

Day 13

Wednesday 18th February

We watched the first glimmer of sunrise off the end of the Cape as the Searcher finally pulled into the harbour at Cabo San Lucas. We enjoyed a leisurely continental breakfast as the boat was busily refuelled for its journey back to San Diego. We disembarked and said our final farewells to the crew before they set off on their own intrepid journey back up along the peninsula and back to San Diego. We then got taxis to the estuary in San Jose del Cabo where a few people even managed one last glimpse of a Humpback Whale as we travelled along the coast road. We stopped in quiet town of San Jose del Cabo for a while, allowing everyone the chance for some last minute shopping or the opportunity of some gentle birding along parts of the estuary that had been made inaccessible by September's terrible hurricane. Both options were certainly preferable to sitting in an airport for hours on end.

It wasn't long before we boarded our taxis once again and set off to the airport for our return flights back to San Diego and then home. All in all it was a wonderful way to spend our last morning and a very fitting end to the ultimate Baja experience!

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Species Lists

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted; h = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	February													
			6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
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>			✓											
8	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>			✓											
9	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>			✓			✓								
10	Black-vented Shearwater	<i>Puffinus opisthomelas</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
11	Black Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma melania</i>							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
12	Least Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma microsoma</i>										✓	✓			
13	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
14	Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>					✓									
15	American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>		✓												
16	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
17	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
18	Blue-footed Booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
19	Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>							✓							
20	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	
21	Brandt's Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax penicillatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		
22	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	
23	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		✓			✓	✓						✓	✓	
24	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓	✓	
25	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>		✓				✓						✓	✓	
26	Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>												✓	✓	
27	Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>												✓	✓	

	Common name	Scientific name	February													
			6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
28	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓	✓										✓		✓
29	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax violacea</i>													✓	
30	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>													✓	
31	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>														✓
32	White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>						✓	✓						✓	
33	Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>														✓
34	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>		✓												
35	Black Brant	<i>Branta bernicla</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
36	Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>		✓												✓
37	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓												✓
38	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>		✓												
39	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>		✓												✓
40	Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>		✓												✓
41	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>		✓												✓
42	American Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓												
43	American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>		✓												
44	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>		✓												✓
45	Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>		✓		✓								✓		
46	Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>		✓												
47	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>		✓												
48	Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
49	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>								✓	✓	✓		✓		
50	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>		✓						✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
51	Coopers Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>		✓												
52	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		✓	✓			✓								✓
53	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			✓		✓			✓	✓			✓		
54	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>		✓												
55	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>														
56	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		✓												✓
57	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>		✓												✓
58	American Black Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus bachmani</i>			✓	✓										

	Common name	Scientific name	February													
			6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
59	American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>			✓		✓					✓	✓			
60	American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>		✓												
61	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>		✓												
62	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		✓		✓										
63	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>		✓												
64	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>		✓												
65	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>												✓		
66	Willet	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>	✓	✓												
67	Wandering Tattler	<i>Heteroscelus incanus</i>										✓		✓		
68	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	✓	✓										✓	✓	
69	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus</i>		✓	✓									✓		
70	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>		✓					✓							
71	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>		✓												
72	Black Turnstone	<i>Arenaria melanocephala</i>			✓				✓							
73	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>							✓							
74	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>							✓					✓		
75	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	✓	✓					✓					✓	✓	✓
76	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>		✓					✓							✓
77	Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalopus fulicarius</i>			✓	✓	✓									
78	Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorairius longicaudus</i>												✓		
79	Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>			✓		✓	✓			✓					
80	Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>			✓					✓	✓		✓	✓		
81	Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>									✓	✓				
82	Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓
83	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
84	California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
85	Yellow-footed Gull	<i>Larus livens</i>									✓	✓	✓	✓		
86	Western Gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
87	Royal Tern	<i>Sterna maxima</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓					
88	Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>		✓												
89	Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>									✓					

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90	Craveri's Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus craveri</i>			✓					✓		✓				
91	Cassins' Auklet	<i>Ptychoramphus aleuticus</i>			✓	✓				✓						
92	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	
93	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	✓	✓												✓
94	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓											✓
95	Lilac-crowned Parrot	<i>Amazona finschi</i>		✓												
96	White-throated Swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>										✓				
97	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	✓	✓												
98	Rufous Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>				✓										
99	Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>									✓		✓			
100	Xantus' Hummingbird	<i>Hylocharis xantusii</i>				✓										
101	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>		✓	✓								✓	✓	✓	✓
102	Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
103	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>										✓				
104	Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerptes formicivorus</i>		✓												
105	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>										✓	✓			
106	Pacific Slope Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficillis</i>											✓			
107	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>		✓												
108	Cassin's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>														✓
109	Shore Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>			✓											
110	Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>										✓	✓			
111	Oak Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>		✓												
112	Western Scrub Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>		✓										✓		
113	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓		✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	
114	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓									✓	✓	✓
115	Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>										✓	✓			
116	Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>												h		✓
117	Canyon Wren	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>		✓												
118	Rock Wren	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>			✓											
119	Ruby-Crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>		✓												
120	Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>										✓		✓		

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121	California Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliophtila californica</i>												✓		
122	Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>		✓												
123	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>				✓							✓	✓		✓
124	Grey Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma cinereum</i>										✓		✓		✓
125	European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓												✓
126	Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>		✓												
127	Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>		✓										✓		
128	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>		✓												✓
129	Mangrove Warbler	<i>Dendroica bryanti</i>												✓		
130	Audubon's Warbler	<i>Dendroica auduboni</i>		✓									✓			✓
131	Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>														✓
132	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>									✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
133	California Towhee	<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>		✓												
134	Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>		✓												
135	Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>										✓	✓			✓
136	Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>		✓	✓											
137	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>		✓												
138	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>		✓												
139	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓											✓
140	Oregon Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>		✓												
141	Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>		✓												
142	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>		✓												
143	Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>												✓		✓
144	House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>											✓	✓		✓
145	Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>		✓												

Mammals

1	Gray Whale	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓								
2	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>									✓	✓				
3	Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>									✓					

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			6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
4	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>			✓	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
5	Short-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>										✓				
6	Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>					✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
7	Long-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus capensis</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			
8	Pacific White-sided Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus obliquidens</i>			✓											
9	Short-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>							✓							
10	Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>													✓	
11	Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>		✓	✓											
12	California Sealion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	
13	Guadalupe Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus townsendi</i>			✓	✓										
14	Northern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>			✓	✓										

Reptiles

1	Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>								100's						
2	Loggerhead Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>								1						
6	Common Sideblotched Lizard	<i>Uta stansburiana</i>			✓						✓	✓				
8	Orange Throated Whiptail	<i>Cnemidophorus hyperythrus</i>										✓				
13	Baja California 'rattleless' Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus enyo</i>										✓				

Reef fish, rays and sharks

2	Dorado (Mahi mahi)	<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>							✓	✓						
9	Striped Marlin	<i>Tetrapturus audax</i>							✓	✓						
11	Yellowtail Surgeonfish	<i>Prionurus punctatus</i>								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
12	King Angelfish	<i>Holacanthus passer</i>								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
13	Three Banded Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon humeralis</i>										✓				
14	Barberfish	<i>Johnrandallia nigrirostris</i>								✓	✓	✓	✓			
15	Yellowfin Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus xanthopterus</i>									✓					
17	Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus canescens</i>									✓	✓			✓	
18	Green Jack	<i>Caranx caballus</i>								✓						
23	Cortez Sea Chub	<i>Kyphosus elegans</i>									✓	✓	✓	✓		

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			6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
24	Pacific Porgy	<i>Calamus brachysomus</i>										✓		✓			
25	Yellowfin Mojarra	<i>Gerres cinereus</i>										✓					
26	Striped Mullet	<i>Mugil cephalus</i>				✓	✓	✓						✓			
28	Needlefish	<i>Belonidae</i>										✓	✓				
29	Burrito Grunt	<i>Anisotremus interruptus</i>												✓		✓	
30	Graybar Grunt	<i>Haemulon sexfasciatum</i>											✓	✓	✓	✓	
32	Amarillo Snapper	<i>Lutjanus argentiventris</i>										✓	✓			✓	
33	Blue and Gold Snapper	<i>Lutjanus viridis</i>										✓		✓	✓	✓	
34	Giant Damselfish	<i>Micropathodon dorsalis</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
35	Bumphead Damselfish	<i>Micropathodon bairdii</i>										✓		✓		✓	
37	Beaubrummel	<i>Segastes flavilatus</i>												✓		✓	
38	Panamic Sergeant Major	<i>Abuldefduf troschelli</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
39	Blue and Yellow Chromis	<i>Chromis limbaughi</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
40	Scissortail Chromis	<i>Chromis atrilobata</i>										✓		✓	✓	✓	
41	Flag Cabrilla	<i>Epinephelus labriformis</i>										✓		✓	✓		
43	Leather Bass	<i>Dermatolepis dermatolepis</i>											✓			✓	
44	Spotted Sand Bass	<i>Paralabrax maculatofasciatus</i>														✓	
45	Pacific Creolefish	<i>Paranthias colonus</i>														✓	
46	Bluechin Parrotfish	<i>Scarus ghobban</i>														✓	
47	Azure Parrotfish	<i>Scarus compressus</i>														✓	
48	Chameleon Wrasse	<i>Halichoeres dispilus</i>										✓		✓		✓	
49	Cortez Rainbow Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lucasanum</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
50	Mexican Hogfish	<i>Bodianus diplotaenia</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
52	Tinsel Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron suborbitalis</i>												✓			
53	Redhead Goby	<i>Elacatinus punctulatus</i>										✓		✓			
55	Panamic Fanged Blenny	<i>Ophioblennius steindachneri</i>										✓		✓		✓	
56	Mexican Barnacle Blenny	<i>Acanthemblemaria macrospilus</i>												✓			
57	Giant Hawkfish	<i>Cirrhitus rivulatus</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
58	Coral Hawkfish	<i>Cirritichthys oxycephalus</i>										✓		✓	✓		
59	Stone Scorpionfish	<i>Scorpaena mystes</i>										✓		✓			
61	Orangeside Triggerfish	<i>Sufflamen verres</i>											✓	✓			

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65	Guineafowl Puffer	<i>Arothron meleagris</i>										✓	✓	✓		✓	
66	Spotted Sharpnosed Puffer	<i>Canthigaster punctatissima</i>										✓	✓	✓		✓	
68	Ballonfish	<i>Diodon holocanthus</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
69	Mexican Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys dentatus</i>										✓	✓		✓	✓	
70	Reef Cornetfish	<i>Fistularia commersonii</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓		
77	Whale Shark	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>										✓					
78	Thresher Shark	<i>Alopias macrourus</i>										✓					
80	Mako	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>				✓											
84	Cortez Stingray	<i>Urobatis maculatus</i>													✓		
85	Reef Stingray	<i>Urobatis concentricus</i>										✓	✓				
86	California Butterfly Ray	<i>Gymnura marmorata</i>													✓		
88	Smoothtail Mobula	<i>Mobula thurstoni</i>										✓	✓				

Butterflies

Mexican Fritillary , *Euptoieta hegesia*
 Anise Swallowtail , *Papilio zelicaon*
 Cloudless Sulphur , *Phoebis sennae*
 Great Southern White, *Ascia monuste*
 Monarch , *Danaus plexippus*
 Longtail Esmeralda , *Urbanus esmeraldus*

Soldier , *Danaus eresinus*
 Pipevine Swallowtail , *Battus philenor*
 Large Orange Sulphur , *Phoebis agarithe*
 West Coast Lady , *Vanessa annabella*
 Queen, *Danaus gilippus*

Gulf Fritillary , *Agraulis vanillae*
 American Snout, *Libytheana carinenta*
 Cabbage White , *Pieris rapae*
 Orange Skipperling, *Copaeodes aurantiaca*
 White Striped Longtail , *Chioides albofasciatus*