

Baja California & Sea of Cortez

Naturetrek Tour Report

23 February – 8 March 2015



Humpback Whale breaching in the sunset



Friendly Gray Whales in San Ignacio Lagoon



Bottlenose Dolphin at Punta Colorado



Sei Whale

Report & cover images compiled by Peter Dunn



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour Leader:	Scot Anderson	Local Guide & Naturalist
	Peter Dunn	Naturetrek Naturalist
M/V Spirit of Adventure	Captain Brian, Scotty, JP, Evan and Steve. Dan and Cory in the Galley	
Participants:	Sarah Brown	Julie Machan
	Ray Brown	Geoff Machan
	Fiona Fyfe	Ben Humberstone
	Kathryn Barry	Emma Humberstone
	Anthony Flay	Kate Tanner
	Andrew Merrick	Steve Tanner
	Steve Guy	Derek Campbell
	Paula Lonsdale	Carole Sear
	Lisa Barrett	Mikael Henriksson
	Will James	Pernilla Henriksson
	Linda James	Mike Silverman
	Fiona Brown	Sue Woods
	Mike Brown	

Day 1

Monday 23rd February

A group of twenty wildlife watchers met up at the departure gate in terminal 5 London Heathrow Airport, bound for San Diego to start a magical trip along the Baja Californian coast into the Sea of Cortez, with great hopes of seeing whales, dolphins and birds. The flight left virtually on time and we were soon completing the curved trajectory which took us over Iceland, Greenland, Canada and finally the United States, eventually landing slightly ahead of schedule in sunny San Diego. Immigration, customs and taxis were smoothly completed and soon we were all in our allotted rooms at the Vagabond Inn. The 'Spirit', our cruise vessel, was already docked on the pier as a few headed for seafood refreshment at Mitch's before we retired for some much needed sleep.

Day 2

Tuesday 24th February

San Diego

The morning came all too soon for some of the group but by 8am all were finishing breakfast and eager to leave the bags at the boat, and get the birding tour underway. We met our hosts David, Peter and Steve from the local Audubon Society and our first walk was along the harbour, past some imposing waterfront properties where singing House Finches and a nice yellow Cassin's Kingbird competed for our attention, and Spotted Sandpiper, Long-billed Curlew and Willet hunted small crabs on the shoreline. Here we had our first hummingbirds with some spectacularly coloured male Anna's Hummingbirds sitting on prominent song perches. We also spotted the Audubon race of Yellow-rumped Warbler. On the water, Western Grebes outnumbered Black-necked (Eared)

Grebes, and we found one Clark's Grebe, closely related to the former and identified by its bright yellow/orange bill and clear white around the eye.

Walking back to the hotel, we joined a coach that took us to the suburban Lindo Lake. It was teaming with American Coot and Ring-billed Gulls, and we found a single Mew Gull amongst them. In amongst the Shoveler and Mallard we saw Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal and a few American White Pelicans. The mistletoe tree was attracting good numbers of Cedar Waxwing and the strangely named Phainopepla, a member of the Silky Flycatcher family. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were feeding alongside Western Bluebirds and we saw our first California Ground Squirrels.

It was a packed itinerary so we had to leave for the short drive into the low hills to the Audubon reserve at Silverwood – dry chaparral country and a new set of birds. Today it appeared quiet as we ate our packed lunch but still managed to see Lesser Goldfinch, Spotted Towhee and the locally named Oregon (Dark-eyed) Junco. We decided to cut short this visit and spend more time at the San Diego river estuary.

On the journey to the estuary we passed a number of Red-tailed Hawks and arrived at the parking lot just as the tide was falling. American Wigeon were the predominant duck, but careful checking revealed the dainty Bufflehead, colourful Red-breasted Merganser, dapper Ruddy Duck and grey backed Lesser Scaup. In amongst the flocks of waders we saw Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, American Whimbrel, Black-bellied (Grey) Plover and some distant American Avocets. We stayed as long as we dare before making the returning journey to the Vagabond hotel where we said goodbye to our guides from the Audubon Society and our safe driver.

After depositing our extraneous gear in the local fishing store, we were free to wonder the harbour and/or partake in some local refreshment at Mitch's Inn. We were joined by the rest of our group who had travelled independently, and eventually we were invited to board the 'Spirit'. We were shown to our allocated cabins and introduced to Scot Anderson, a local naturalist and guide, who was to accompany us throughout the trip. The next few hours were filled with a splendid buffet, checklist and introductions to the boat, its running procedure and the crew, culminating in a welcome and 'health & safety' briefing by skipper Brian.

We cast off just before 10pm and headed out to the bait holding pens in the harbour. Here the fishing fraternity store live bait (Anchovy and White Sea Bass) for used by the numerous game fishing boats that trade from San Diego. These raft-like structures with slatted timber decks hold tens of thousands of fish and are permanently attended by California Sea Lions, hundreds of Brandt's Cormorants, Great Blue Herons and Black-crowned Night Herons, which mop up any fish that dare escape the cages.

This had been a long first day, especially as our body clocks told us it was 6am back home, so we retired to our cabins, rocked to sleep by the calm waters of the Pacific Ocean and the ever present drone of the engines.

Day 3

Wednesday 25th February

Todos Santos

We sailed south through the night and at 5am the engines stopped as we arrived in Ensenada where the custom formalities with the Mexican authorities were quickly completed on our behalf.

We left the port as dawn was breaking and soon saw our first dolphins. These were Long-beaked Common Dolphin but they didn't stay too long. A few Black-vented Shearwaters pattered across the water as we sailed up to the reserve islands of Todos Santos. We heard the familiar calls of Black Oystercatcher, restricted to the west coast of the Americas, and hundreds of Brown Pelicans, Brandt's Cormorants and Western Gulls were nesting. A few Harbour Seals were loafing on the beaches or rolling in the water, and two large dark shapes lying motionless on the beach were our first Northern Elephant Seals. Before leaving and heading south we saw a Peregrine sat on the highest point surveying its territory and two immature Brown Boobies were resting on the outer rocks.

We spent the rest of the day heading south, our journey broken by numerous Grey Whales and a good pod (200) of Short-beaked Common Dolphins. Cassin's Auklets and Guadalupe Murrelets also started to appear and we had single sightings of Pomarine Skua and Bonaparte's Gull.

Just before dinner 'JP' saw some unusual 'blows' which we had to investigate and we came across three dark whales with quite upright dorsal fins and showing some white spots on the back. One animal appeared to have a pale lower jaw but this did not seem white enough for Fin Whale. After much deliberation and checking of photos we came to the conclusion that these were three Sei Whales, the third largest cetacean in the world.

After an excellent 'light' soup and salad lunch we continued south with occasional sightings of Humpback Whales and more shearwaters including a Sooty. Two Pacific White-sided Dolphins came into the bow for a couple of minutes adding to our tally of cetaceans and as the evening light faded more Short-beaked Common Dolphins joined us.

We ended the day with a delicious salmon dinner after which Scott and Peter recapped the day's sightings and advised on our adventure tomorrow on San Benitos.

Day 4

Thursday 26th February

San Benitos

Sailing south right through the night again, we approached the islands of San Benitos at dawn. After breakfast we donned our life jackets and went through the drill of getting in and out of the skiffs.

The remote volcanic islands of San Benitos, west of the 'barb' half way down the Baja Peninsula, are home to a small seasonal outpost of Mexican Abalone fisherman - and a wealth of marine wildlife including colonies of

Elephant Seals, Guadalupe Fur Seals, and large numbers of burrow-nesting auklets, murrelets and storm-petrels. We visited the Elephant Seal colony on the south side where we also saw our first Guadalupe Fur Seal at a distance, and American Oystercatchers.

Songbirds are not usually abundant on these rocky outcrops but this year there were Savannah Sparrows of the San Benitos race everywhere we went. Last year there was an aviary full of these birds because they were trying to eradicate rats on the island and rodenticide was dropped by helicopter. However the aviary had now gone which probably accounted for the increase in 'wild' birds.

We all had to be careful where we stepped as the ground was riddled with seabird burrows, many of which looked to be active, and pairs of Ospreys were seen on a number of big nests along our walk.

Scott took some of the group around the north over the top and Peter took the others along the south side along the coast. More Guadalupe Fur Seals were found on the southern walk at a spot where the southern group ate their lunch and these were later seen by the other group who were successful in finding Horned Lark on the higher ground. Add to these sightings Peregrine, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, White-crowned Sparrow and many species of flowering plants and cacti, and we had had an eventful morning. Eventually we had to return to the ship at 1.30pm in order to set sail to be at San Ignacio Lagoon the following morning.

We resumed steaming south and cruised through a moderate swell which produced many sightings of Black-vented Shearwaters and Cassin's Auklets and we also saw a pair of Craveri's Murrelets, their dark underwings showing well in photos. Surf Scoter appeared in small numbers probably attracted by the Pelagic Red Crabs floating by the boat.

As the sun went down the cloud that had been with us during the day began to dissipate promising warmer weather for our visit to San Ignacio Lagoon. The day was rounded off with Dan's delicious chicken dinner and after we had completed the checklist, people drifted off to bed in the expectation of an exciting day in the lagoon tomorrow.

Day 5

Friday 27th February

San Ignacio

As we approached the entrance to San Ignacio Lagoon activity over the sea increased. Grey Whale sightings became frequent and good numbers of Surf Scoter were on the sea. We had timed our approach to cross the submerged sand-bar that lies just a few fathoms deep across the mouth of the lagoon, and made our way to our anchorage for the night. The lagoon is a Parque Natural of global importance as the top site for breeding Grey Whales and a wintering site for a wealth of shorebirds and wildfowl.

One of the highlights of this tour is the ride on the Mexican pangas where we can get close to some of the Grey Whale cow/calf pairs in the lagoon. This tour was no exception as we had three sorties into the lagoon and everyone had the experience of touching or rubbing the nose of a friendly mother/calf that stayed with the

pangas for over half an hour. There were many sightings of spy-hopping, fluking and some breaching and in the morning we witnessed some mating as a pair (or three) were rolling over each other. The afternoon session was amazing as a friendly adult came round the pangas and its party trick was to spray water at everyone. We all got wet but felt honoured to be chosen!

Bird life within the lagoon was very impressive, in particular the numbers of Brandt's Cormorants which flew into the lagoon in an endless stream to join the rafts of Surf Scoter, Brown Pelican and Pacific Divers (Loons) feeding on the abundant fish.

As the sun began to set we were still surrounded by Grey Whales and there were hundreds of Royal Terns and a few Forster's Terns, many harassed by Pomarine Skuas. That evening we enjoyed another great meal prepared by Dan and Cory culminating with a birthday carrot cake for Jeanette.

Day 6

Saturday 28th February

San Ignacio

With the promise of a nice morning we breakfasted early and by 7.30am we were ready for our trip to the mangroves. Approaching the entrance were large numbers of Brant Geese and Pacific Divers and as we sailed up the channels we saw numerous species of herons and egrets. Both Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned Night Herons were nice to compare, as was Tricoloured and Little Blue Herons. Small groups of waders fed amongst the roots including Long-billed Dowitcher, Willet and Marbled Godwit, and we had some nice sightings of Belted Kingfisher. All the boats managed to see the brightly coloured Mangrove Warbler and amongst the low scrub were Savannah (Belding's) Sparrows. We had to leave as the tide turned for fear of being grounded and heading back to the boat we saw a Reddish Egret feeding in its frenzied fish chasing manner on the shore.

After a small break for drinks and homemade muffins we went back out in the pangas for another two whale experiences, each as good as the next with friendly whales coming to each boat to be caressed and tickled! Heading back to the 'Spirit' it was just a hum of appreciation with huge beaming smiles!

Following a fabulous shrimp salad lunch, the group had two options; a 'boat-load' went with Scott for a walk on the beach and into the mangroves whilst the other two boats had their final Grey Whale tickling fix. The beach walkers saw more of the birds that had been seen on the morning mangrove trip and also bones of whales, dolphins and a turtle. One lucky observer had a fleeting glimpse of a Coyote retreating into the mangrove.

At around 4pm we weighed anchor and started to make our way out of the lagoon. The tide, current and wind gave for an interesting ride through the channel between the sand bars but it was skilfully done by Brian and we were soon settling in for the night, sailing south towards 'the cape'.

Day 7

Sunday 1st March

Magdalena Bay

After a peaceful night's sailing south we woke to a bright dawn with light cloud building. A few Black Storm-petrels sailed past the front of the ship and before breakfast a shout went up for the first Blue Whale of the trip. People raced from their beds to get this first view and it emerged that there were possibly three animals in the area; certainly we had two together. We stayed with these huge cetaceans, their towering blows, blotched pale grey back and small dorsal fin helping with the identification. All of them were busy feeding and would go missing for up to 15 minutes, however they did not fluke for us during the hour and a half we stayed with them. Eventually we had to drag ourselves away to continue south but by the time breakfast was over we came to a frenzy of feeding Short-beaked Common Dolphins and Black-vented Shearwaters (Examination of photos later revealed what looked like a Manx Shearwater with the Black-vented). Brian turned the boat around and around, encouraging the dolphins to ride the bow wave and in amongst the seabirds we found the bigger Pink-footed Shearwater. We continued south pausing briefly for Humpbacked Whales and a number of Loggerhead Turtles, and just after lunch a Brown Booby flew past the ship.

The afternoon was overcast and the south-east wind was quite cool. We encountered more Humpback Whales as we moved south towards an area called the 'potato bank' and a party of three were photographed 'fluking-up'. A lone shearwater flew past with darker brown upperparts, whiter underparts and an extension of white up the flanks towards the rump. This proved to be a Townsend Shearwater. Further flocks of gulls revealed a flush of Pelagic Red Crabs, some of which were caught and placed in a tank to examine. In amongst the gulls were four Sabine's Gulls in summer plumage and there were in excess of 60 Grey (Red) Phalaropes spinning or flying over the water.

As the sun set we settled back, heading south towards 'the cape' and after enjoying another chef's masterpiece of swordfish and completing our daily log, we headed off to our cabins with the knowledge that dawn would come as we headed into the entrance of the Sea of Cortez.

Day 8

Monday 2nd March

Cabo San Lucas & Los Frailes

A very quiet overnight run found us off Cabo San Lucas at the Gorda Banks at dawn. After yesterday's overcast conditions it was pleasing to wake to clear blue skies and warmth. The wind was initially light but increased slightly from the SE during the morning. The sea was relatively calm and the Humpback Whales did a lot of 'fluking' and 'blowing', initially with the occasional 'pec-slap'. As the wind increased and the swell rose we started to see more surface activity, mainly from calves travelling with females. We spent the morning watching and attempting to photograph all this activity. One pair decided to stay around the boat and we could see the white pectoral fin, shimmering blue as it would occasionally lay motionless beneath us. Other wildlife included Bottlenose Dolphins, Bonaparte's Gulls and a few Forster's Terns.

After this successful morning we headed towards the small settlement of Los Frailes on the east coast of the cape where we dropped anchor. After a light salad lunch we then split into two groups. Most went snorkelling either from the beach or the skiffs whilst Peter led an advanced birding group to try and locate last year's Great Horned Owl. The snorkelers recorded many species of fish including Damselfish, Rainbow Wrasse, Hogfish, King Angelfish, Moorish Idol, and Panamic Sergeant Major. The owl was not there as the nest site had collapsed but we had a fruitful couple of hours recording many new species such as Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Gilded Flicker, the endemic Grey Thrasher, and bright Hooded and Scott's Orioles.

The advanced party returned to the park and met up with the snorkelers who had come to join the birding party. We saw most of what we had seen on the earlier foray but also added Costa's and Xantus's Hummingbirds, and Red Cardinal. Large Cactus Wrens sang from their high perches and White-tailed Antelope Squirrels (that looked like Chipmunks) scurried beneath the bushes.

Soon it was time to return to the 'Spirit' after an amazing day ashore, and then to enjoy another of Dan and Cory's creations. The plan now was for the 'Spirit' to run all night to try and get as far north as possible into the Sea of Cortez by the morning, and there were expectations of more wildlife and scenery to come.

Day 9

Tuesday 3rd March

Punta Colorado and San Jose Channel

The overnight sailing was smooth and as we heard the anchor drop we awoke alongside the amazing pink cliffs of Punta Colorado. As the first rays of the sun broke the horizon the cliffs suddenly were ablaze in warm radiant pink light, however this only lasted a few minutes as building cloud heralded the onset of light rain, a rarity in itself at this time of year. We decided to wait on a weather forecast and have a leisurely breakfast, but eventually most of the group left in the skiffs for a walk amongst the desert scenery.

First we walked along the headland to see shells and whale and turtle remains within the sandy strata, and then we walked up a dry river bed into the interior of the island. The recent rain of a week ago had caused many of the plants to flower so there were many colours to photograph. The rain stopped and the sun appeared as did much of the wildlife. Ash-throated Flycatcher, Verdin, and California and Blue-grey Flycatchers appeared. A bright red Northern Cardinal 'ticked' on top of a bush for all to see and a Chuckwaller (large lizard) was found squashed in its usual crack. We made our way back to be picked up and taken back to the boat. Those who did not come for the walk had had a short skiff ride around the island and had seen Blue-footed Boobies sitting on a headland.

A quick change and most of the group went snorkelling from the beach or from skiffs whilst a few went for another skiff ride. By 11.15am everyone was back on the boat and we prepared ourselves for lunch and an afternoon of whale hunting. Leaving the area we had some fun with a pod of Bottlenose Dolphin as Brian increased speed, making them jump and somersault in the wake, then slow down so they would bow ride.

During lunch we were distracted by a huge pod (1,000) of Long-beaked Common Dolphin which jumped and bow rode with the boat. After lunch we turned into the San Jose Channel and tried to keep ahead of the rain. Soon we started seeing many storm-petrels, most of them being Black Storm-petrel. However with keen eyes and constant scanning we picked out some of the smaller Least Storm-petrels, firstly by their smaller size and also by the way they jinked and changed course regularly. A little later a blow in the distance was tracked and eventually we managed to get as good a view of a Bryde's Whale, identified by the three ridges down the upper jaw. One or two even managed a photo to show this. Further down the channel, with the cloud breaking we came across a mixed pod of Short-finned Pilot Whales and Bottlenosed Dolphins and we stayed with them until dusk as they cruised around us, joined by a nosey Sooty Shearwater looking for food.

We sailed to Catalina Island to anchor for the night and had a delicious barbecue rib dinner with a whole corn on the cob which was followed by tiramisu. The briefing and log were completed and most were heading for their cabins by 8.30pm.

Day 10

Wednesday 4th March

Santa Catalina

The dawn was bright and clear as the rain front had moved away overnight. It was set for a good hot day with a little northerly wind. The Cardón and Barrel Cactus were lit by the sun as we landed on the stony beach of Santa Catalina in search of the endemic Rattleless Santa Catalina Rattlesnake (*Crotalus catalinensis*). We walked up through the dry river and looked under every bush and stone. Santa Catalina Side-blotched Lizards (*Uta stansburiana*) with their green tails scurried about and one or two Spiny Lizards were seen. Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Black-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal and Ash-throated Flycatcher were seen for the bird list and as we walked back Steve found a retreating rattlesnake which a few managed to see. We carried on searching as we returned to the beach and almost in the last area of rocks Peter found a rattlesnake asleep in the base of a Cardón Cactus. All those still on the island were summoned back to see it before returning to the boat to change and head out for some snorkelling. Three remained on the island looking for Desert Iguana and everyone returned to the boat for lunch after a brilliant morning.

After lunch we crossed the channel towards Monserrat Island passing Bonaparte's Gulls on the way. Close to the peninsula we found a cow and calf Blue Whale. We stayed and watched them feeding for an hour or more before we started to move south. Our progress was stopped by huge shoals of 'flying' Smooth-tailed Mobula and some lucky observers managed to see a Red-billed Tropicbird and two young Masked Boobies.

With a stunning sunset we headed to our anchorage for the night and enjoyed a typical American meatball dinner accompanied by sprouts!

Day 11

Thursday 5th March

Los Islottes area and Baja Cape

Anchor was raised around 4am and we set sail in the dark to continue south into the San Jose Channel to look for whales at dawn. Unfortunately nobody had told the whales and we could not find any. However we did find a second Red-billed Tropicbird which everyone saw, and a small pod of Long-beaked Common Dolphins. On the south side of San Jose we travelled slowly along the huge cliffs adorned with Brown Pelicans, Blue-footed and Brown Boobies, Yellow-footed Gulls and California Sea Lions. In the lee of the cliffs was a large group of about 300 Black-necked Grebes all diving and surfacing together.

Continuing south towards Los Islottes we still couldn't find any whales but there were large rafts of Least Storm-petrels with a few Black Storm-petrels, and a few lucky observers at the front saw a small Hammerhead Shark at the surface for a few seconds.

We arrived at Los Islottes and had an early lunch of tuna, cheese and onion sandwiches followed by a skiff ride around the rocks to view the sea-lions and birds. In amongst the rocks were two Wandering Tattlers and a Black Turnstone, and overhead were Blue-footed Boobies, Magnificent Frigatebirds and Yellow-footed Gulls.

After the skiff rides those who wanted to snorkel had a great time swimming with the sea-lions, these inquisitive creatures performing their underwater acrobatics or trying to pull the fins from the snorkelers feet! The 'non-snorkelers' had another skiff ride under the cliffs and added a Belted Kingfisher to the day list.

We continued south with a stiff northerly wind and a bit of a lumpy sea. Whales were noticeably absent but we had some good bird sightings with Royal and Forster's Terns, Blue-footed and Brown Boobies, and two nice adult Sabine's Gull passing the boat. Dinner tonight was an excellent haddock dish with fried rice following by the briefing and log. Everyone was looking forward to our last full day with the whales and wildlife of Baja.

Day 12

Friday 6 March

Los Frailes and waters off the Cape

We arrived at Los Frailes early in the morning and anchored in the quiet water. After an early breakfast, at 6.30am twelve of the party headed for the beach to search for birds. The group headed up the dry arroyo looking for Greater Roadrunner, passing Cactus Wrens, Scott's Orioles and California Quail. At 8am the second group also headed out for the arroyo looking for the same thing. The first group only managed views of one under bushes as it called but the second group had better views of one walking across the trail and even managed a photo or two! Those who stayed on land added a few new species including a huge, Spiny-tailed Iguana sitting on the top of a cactus, and Baja California Striped Whip Snake. A few also took the opportunity for a final session of snorkelling before we all met back on the boat at 11am and weighed anchor heading for the open sea and more whale watching.

This final whale watching session could not have been better. We came across eight male Humpback Whales all pushing and shoving and generally trying to see who was best! We stayed with this group all afternoon and had some fantastic experiences of trumpet blows, almost bow-riding, and close, close views of the animals under the water. They took no interest in the boat as they rolled and fluked alongside us. Hundreds of megabytes of digital data was used this afternoon and just before dusk the grand finale was two full breaches by one whale with the sun setting over the Baja peninsula. Two comments overheard from the group: "This holiday has spoiled whale watching anywhere else" and "I kept thinking that each day could not be bettered but it was!"

In the evening we celebrated the end of a fantastic holiday with a slap-up steak dinner followed by the last briefing and log call.

Day 13

Saturday 7 March

Cabo San Lucas and in flight

Dawn saw us sailing towards Carbo San Lucas harbour, not before seeing our last few Humpbacks. After saying our goodbye's and thanks to the crew and Scott, four or the group stayed in Cabo for a few days and Peter took the rest of the group to a Ramsar site at the Esturo at San Jose del Cabo for some final wildlife watching and relaxing before the start of the flights home.

This site is protected as one of the few breeding sites for the rare Belding's Yellowthroat, a Baja endemic however it was a shock to see the damage caused to the walkway and Palm plantations by last winter's hurricane. However this did not deter the group and soon we had found the yellowthroat and White-Collared Seed-eater. We found many Green Iguanas asleep in the rushes and at the far end of the walk were Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teals, egrets, Long-billed Dowitcher and Belted Kingfisher. Four new additions to the list were Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Brown-headed Cowbird, White-faced Ibis and Andrew photographed an Orchard Oriole. This was a pleasing end to a productive morning. All too soon it was time to head to the airport to catch our efficient Alaskan Airways flight to San Diego and then on to London.

Day 14

Sunday 8 March

The flight back to the UK was smooth and fast with a slight delay at Heathrow as we watched fire tenders hosing down some spilt hydraulic fuel. We met up for the last time in the baggage reclaim with promises to keep in touch and to share some of the thousands of images we had taken.

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Species List

Mammals (✓ = recorded but not counted)

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March											
			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	White-tailed Antelope Squirrel	<i>Ammospermophilus leucurus</i>							5				✓	
2	California Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>	✓											
3	Black-tailed Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>											2	
4	Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>					1							
5	Guadalupe Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus townsendi</i>			8									
6	California Sea Lion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	✓	10	✓			✓	✓		1	120		
7	Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>		5										
8	Northern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>		2	✓									
9	Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>		3										
10	Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>								1				
11	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>						3			2			
12	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>		2				25	25	2			12	7
13	Grey Whale	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>		25		60	✓							
14	Long-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus capensis</i>		12						1000		50		
15	Short-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>		200	20			500						
16	Short-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>								20				
17	Pacific White-sided Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus obliquidens</i>		2										
18	Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>						2	6	120				
19	Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus gillii</i>			2	1	1							
Birds														
1	Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	1											7
2	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓											
3	Brant Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	6		18	✓	✓	✓						
4	Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	5											
5	American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	✓											

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March											
			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓											
7	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	8											✓
8	Cinnamon Teal	<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>												2
9	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	✓											
10	Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas carolinensis</i>	8											
11	Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	6											
12	Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>		3	25	✓	✓	✓						
13	Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	3											
14	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	5				✓							
15	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	✓											6
16	California Quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>							✓				5	
17	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	3											
18	Pacific Diver	<i>Gavia pacifica</i>				100	✓							
19	Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>	1	1		15	3							
20	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>		1						1	1			
21	Pink-footed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus creatopus</i>						6		1				
22	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>						1						
23	Black-vented Shearwater	<i>Puffinus opisthomelas</i>		✓	✓			600	10	5		✓	2	
24	Townsend's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus auricularis</i>			1			1						
25	Least Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma microsoma</i>								5		120		
26	Black Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma melania</i>						8	2	✓	6	20	3	
27	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	2											8
28	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	✓							20	2	300	1	
29	Western Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	50	2			2							
30	Clark's Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>	1											
31	Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>									1	1		
32	American White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>					8							
33	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>												6
34	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	2				6							
35	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>			1		4					1		

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			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>					2							2
37	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>												6
38	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	✓			1	✓			1	1	4	1	2
39	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	1	1		1	✓							2
40	Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>					4							
41	Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>					10							1
42	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	1				4							1
43	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	✓			1	✓					1	2	4
44	American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	✓				1							
45	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	30	✓	✓	✓
46	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>				1		2	6	4	2	20	4	✓
47	Blue-footed Booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>								✓	10	✓		
48	Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>									2			
49	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>		2				1		6	6	10		
50	Brandt's Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax penicillatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	2000	✓			30		✓	2	✓
51	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	✓		1	✓	✓					2		2
52	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	2			3	2		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
53	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	3		6	1				1	1		1	3
54	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	2							2				
55	Clapper Rail	<i>Rallus crepitans</i>					1							
56	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	5											✓
57	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	✓											✓
58	Black Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus bachmani</i>		8										
59	American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>			3		2				2			
60	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	1											
61	American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	40											
62	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	✓											
63	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	1											
64	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	✓				20							✓
65	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>	✓			✓	✓							

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			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
66	Whimbrel (American)	<i>Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus/rufiventris</i>	4	4		3								
67	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	✓			✓	✓							
68	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	2			2								
69	Wandering Tattler	<i>Tringa incana</i>										2		
70	Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	✓			5	✓							
71	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	4	1							1		1	1
72	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	3											
73	Black Turnstone	<i>Arenaria melanocephala</i>			4							1		
74	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	✓											
75	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>	3											
76	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	✓			3	✓							1
77	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	✓			✓								
78	Red (Grey) Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>		20				60				10		
79	Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>						4				2		
80	Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus philadelphia</i>		1					6		2		4	1
81	Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	1		3	6	6		
82	Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	2											
83	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	✓				✓							
84	California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8	✓	✓	✓
85	Glaucous-winged Gull	<i>Larus glaucescens</i>							1				1	
86	Western Gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
87	Yellow-footed Gull	<i>Larus livens</i>								30	✓	✓		
88	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	2			✓	10							
89	Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	7	6	4	✓	✓					2		
90	Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>				3	✓	2	5			1	1	
91	Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>		1		8								
92	Parasitic Jaeger (Skua)	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>					2							
93	Long-tailed Jaeger (Skua)	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>								1				
94	Common Murre (Guillemot)	<i>Uria aalge</i>		1										
95	Guadalupe Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus hypoleucus</i>		✓										

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			24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
96	Craveri's Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus craveri</i>			2									
97	Cassin's Auklet	<i>Ptychoramphus aleuticus</i>		✓	✓			✓		1		1		
98	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>	✓											
99	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	1											
100	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	7											
101	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>							✓		✓		✓	✓
102	Common Ground Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>							6				8	5
103	Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>											2	
104	White-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>	6											
105	Xantus's Hummingbird	<i>Basilinna xantusii</i>							1					
106	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	4											
107	Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>							1	1	1		1	
108	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megasceryle alcyon</i>					3							1
109	Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>							8		2		✓	✓
110	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>							4		2		2	
111	Gilded Flicker	<i>Colaptes chrysoides</i>							4				2	3
112	Northern Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara cheriway</i>							1					
113	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1	3	3					1	1			
114	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	6											
115	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis</i>							1					
116	Cassin's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	4											
117	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>							3	4	6		✓	1
118	Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>							1		2		1	
119	California Scrub Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>	3						2				1	
120	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	✓											
121	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓		✓				3	2	10	2	✓	
122	Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	24											
123	Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>	1											
124	Oak Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	1											
125	Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>							6	2	6		✓	

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126	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>			5									
127	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	4											1
128	American Bushtit	<i>Psaltiriparus minimus</i>	2											
129	Wrentit	<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>	2											
130	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	1											
131	Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>							4				5	✓
132	Rock Wren	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>												
133	Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>								2				
134	California Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila californica</i>							1	2				
135	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	1		4						2		✓	✓
136	Tropical Mockingbird	<i>Mimus gilvus</i>							✓					
137	Grey Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma cinereum</i>							4				3	
138	Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	8											
139	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>			3				2					
140	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	✓						✓		2		✓	✓
141	Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	8											
142	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis celata</i>	1						5				3	
143	Belding's Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis beldingi</i>												8
144	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	1											1
145	American Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga aestiva</i>							1					
146	Mangrove Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>					5							
147	Audubon's Warbler	<i>Setophaga auduboni</i>	5											
148	Scott's Oriole	<i>Icterus parisorum</i>							4				10	
149	Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>							✓	1			✓	✓
150	Orchard Oriole	<i>Icterus spurius</i>												1
151	Tricolored Blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>	2											
152	Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>												✓
153	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	✓											
154	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	1											
155	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>			2									

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156	Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)	<i>Junco hyemalis oreganus</i>	2											
157	Savannah Sparrow (Belding's)	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis guttatus</i>	2				3							
	Savannah Sparrow (San Benito)	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis sanctorum</i>			✓									
158	Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>							2	3	✓			
159	Black-chested Sparrow	<i>Peucaea humeralis</i>									✓			
160	Green-tailed Towhee	<i>Pipilo chlorurus</i>							1					
161	Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	2											
162	California Towhee	<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>											1	
163	White-collared Seedeater	<i>Sporophila torqueola</i>												6
164	Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>							2					
165	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>							1	1	10		2	
Reptiles & Amphibians														
1	Loggerhead Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>						15					1	
2	Olive Ridley Turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>						1						
3	Black Spiny-tailed Iguana	<i>Ctenosaura similis</i>											1	
4	Common Green Iguana	<i>Iguana iguana</i>												5
5	Northern Chuckwalla	<i>Sauromalus ater</i>									1			
6	Zebra-tailed Lizard	<i>Callisaurus draconoides</i>								✓			✓	
7	Santa Catalina Spiny Lizard	<i>Sceloporus lineatulus</i>									3			
8	Side-blotched Lizard	<i>Uta stansburiana</i>			✓						✓			
9	Peninsular Leaf-toed Gecko	<i>Phyllodactylus xanti</i>								1				
10	Baja California Striped Whip Snake	<i>Coluber aurigulus</i>											1	
11	Santa Catalina Is Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus catalinensis</i>									2			

Butterflies

Cloudless Sulphur, *Phoebastria sennae*

Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*

Funereal Duskywing, *Erynnis funeralis*

American Lady, *Vanessa virginiensis*

Soldier, *Danaus eresimus*

Common Buckeye, *Junonia coenia*

Brown Longtail, *Urbanus procne*

Fish

Ballonfish, <i>Diodon holocanthus</i>	Barber Fish, <i>Johnrandallia nigriristris</i>	Beaubrummel, <i>Eupomacentrus flavilatus</i>
Brown Damselfish	Blue and Gold Snapper, <i>Lutjanus viridus</i>	Blue Parrotfish, <i>Scarus coeruleus</i>
Bumphead Damselfish, <i>Microspathodon bairdi</i>	Bumphead Parrotfish, <i>Bolbometopon muricatum</i>	California Flying Fish, <i>Cypselurus californicus</i>
Coral Hawkfish, <i>Cypselurus californicus</i>	Cortez Angelfish, <i>Pomocanthus zonipectus</i>	Cortez Chub, <i>Kyphosuselegans</i>
Cortez Damselfish, <i>Eupomacentrus rectifraenum</i>	Cortez Rainbow Wrasse, <i>Thalassoma lucasanum</i>	Giant Dameslfish, <i>Microspathodon dorsalis</i>
Giant Hawkfish, <i>Cirrhitidae cirrhitus</i>	Gold-rimmed Surgeonfish, <i>Acanthurus nigricans</i>	Hammerhead Shark, <i>Sphyrna mokarren</i>
Jack sp., <i>Euthynnus sp.</i>	King Angelfish, <i>Holocanthus passer</i>	Brown Chromis
Mexican Goatfish, <i>Mulloidichthys dentatus</i>	Moorish Idol, <i>Zanclus canescens</i>	Manta Ray (Mobula), <i>Manta birostris</i>
Needlefish, <i>Strongylura exilis</i>	Wounded Wrasse, <i>Halichoeres chierchiae</i>	Panamic Sergeant Major, <i>Abuldefduf troschelii</i>
Remora (Suckerfish), <i>Remora remora</i>	Reef Cornetfish, <i>Fistularia commersonii</i>	Scissortail Damselfish, <i>Chromis atrilobata</i>
Striped Marlin, <i>Tetrapturus audax</i>	Spotted Sharp-nosed Puffer, <i>Canthigaster solandri</i>	Yellowtail Surgeonfish, <i>Prionurus punctatus</i>
Smelt, <i>Osmeridae sp.</i>	Pilot Fish, <i>Naucrates doctor</i>	Bicolor Parrotfish, <i>Cetoscarus bicolor</i>
New Guinea fowl Puffer, <i>Arothron meleagris</i>	Orange-sided Triggerfish, <i>Sufflamen verres</i>	Leopard Grouper, <i>Mycteroperca rosacea</i>
Grey-barred Grunt, <i>Conodon nobilis</i>	Panamic Fanged Blenny, <i>Ophioblennius steindachneri</i>	Bumphead Parrotfish, <i>Bolbometopon muricatum</i>
Hogfish, <i>Bodianus diplotaenia</i>	Spinster Wrasse, <i>Halichoeres nicholsi</i>	Sabre-toothed Blenny, <i>Aspidontus taeniatus</i>
Pacific Boxfish, <i>Ostracion meleagris</i>	Pacific Dog Snapper, <i>Lutjanus novemfasciatus</i>	Panamic Green Moray
Smooth-tailed Mobula	Spiny-tailed Mobula	Whale Shark

Other Taxa

American Honey Bee

Tarantula Wasp.

Pelagic Red Crab.

Various grasshoppers and locust

Sally Lightfoot Crab

Octopus sp.

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Spirit of Adventure in San Ignacio Lagoon