

# Baja California & the Sea of Cortez

Naturetrek Tour Report

7 - 20 March 2016



Humpback Whale



Grey Whales



Laysan Albatross



Mobula Ray

Report & images compiled by Lee Morgan



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](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)



Tour participants: Lee Morgan and Debbie Tobin (leaders) together with 25 Naturetrek clients

M/V Searcher Captain Aaron Remy

Crew Kenny, Joe, Ryan, Charley & Rick

## Day 1

Monday 7th March

### London (Heathrow) - San Diego

After a long flight, the group landed in an overcast San Diego about 5.10pm and transferred to the nearby Ramada Airport hotel. While some opted for an early night, others used the remaining hours of daylight to explore the harbour and have some food in one of the nearby restaurants, before eventually drawing an end to their long day.

## Day 2

Tuesday 8th March

### San Diego – Board M/V Searcher

After three days of much needed heavy rain, we were fortunate to wake to a beautiful sunny morning in San Diego's Point Loma harbour. Some were up early and ventured out for a pre-breakfast look around the harbour, while others took time for a leisurely breakfast and prepared for the day of birding ahead.

After breakfast, most of the group joined our guided tour of some of San Diego's nature reserves and birding hotspots, with Steve 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, a few nice looking House Finches, and a roost of Great Blue Herons perched in a pine tree.

A short bus journey took us across the city to Lindo Lake where we watched American White Pelicans, Great Egrets and Black-crowned Night Herons (being hand-fed by locals!). Solitary Sandpiper, Killdeer and lots of Black-necked Stilts were feeding around the margins of one of the lakes. We had a nice introduction to a variety of ducks and geese, including Wood Duck, Canvasback, Redhead, and Green-winged and Cinnamon Teals, to name but a few. We also had some great views Anna's hummingbird at the nest, four species of swallow, Western Bluebird and Lilac-crowned Parrot too.

After another short bus ride 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 which gave everyone time for some very relaxed birding and the chance to spot California Towhee, White-crowned Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco, together with California Ground Squirrels, as they visited the feeders. We also had some great views of a Great Horned Owl at its nest.

After lunch, we headed back across town to the San Diego River estuary where, amidst a great show of terns and gulls, we also spotted Blue-winged Teal, Marbled Godwit, Willet, Little Blue Heron and Great Egret. We also saw Ridgeway's Rail, a rare and difficult-to-see species of rail (recently split from Clapper Rail).

We arrived back at the hotel by mid-afternoon and transferred our luggage to M/V Searcher. Most then took the chance to settle in, explore the harbour some more, and to have a bite to eat, before we all boarded M/V Searcher in the late afternoon, ready for our safety briefing and introductions to the boat and crew.

Later we cast off and headed out into the twinkling lights of San Diego Harbour. Our usual detour via the bait pens at the entrance to the harbour provided those that were still awake with some lamp-lit views and smells of California Sea Lions, and we saw a few Black-crowned Night Herons and Great Blue Herons, before eventually heading out of the harbour on to eight feet high swells and a night cruising south on the Pacific Ocean.

## Day 3

## Wednesday 9th March

### Ensenada – Todos Santo

After a night on the ocean, most people were bleary-eyed as we came in to dock in Ensenada Harbour in the early hours of the morning. Our customs check was brief and we were soon setting out once more into the swells of the Pacific. The sea conditions made it a little more difficult to scan for wildlife but there were a few Pink-footed Shearwaters to be spotted skimming over the waves.

It was developing into a lovely day and the sun was starting to get really warm as we approached Isla Todos Santos. We cruised slowly by the island in the sunshine and catch a glimpse of a few Black Oystercatchers, a Peregrine, and a few Pelagic Cormorants amidst the Western Gulls and Brown Pelicans. The island's beaches held their usual collection of Harbour Seals, and some Northern Elephant Seal pups were hauled out on them too.

We continued our journey south, maintaining a constant vigil for wildlife as we travelled. There was plenty of life around but the sea state made it a little difficult. We spotted several travelling Gray Whales at a distance, and were treated to some nice views of several energetic groups of both Long and Short-beaked Common Dolphins throughout the course of the day that provided everyone with some fun photographic opportunities. Later in the afternoon we managed to get a glimpse of several Blue Whales, but they gave us the slip as we carefully manoeuvred in the big swells. However, we did manage to get fantastic views of both Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses as we waited for the whales and, for many, this was undoubtedly a significant highlight of the day.

## Day 4

## Thursday 10th March

### Isla San Benitos

It was another early start to the day. After a fairly gentle night's travel, it was good to see people slowly adjusting and starting to find their feet with the motion of the boat. Most were up ready to enjoy a good breakfast before our day ashore on Isla San Benito.

The sea was relatively calm as we arrived at our anchorage. Heermann's Gulls wheeled around the boat as we carefully boarded the skiffs for the first time. The sunny weather and cooling breeze provided perfect conditions for our walk, and there was plenty of wildlife to enjoy. The landing beach was relatively quiet apart from one exhausted Elephant Seal pup that lay snorting as we stopped to take a few photographs.

As we continued our walk, we found plenty more Elephant Seal pups together with a few adult females and sub adult males. We also found the odd California Sea Lion but, despite our best efforts, we failed to find any Guadeloupe Fur Seals (which was a little disappointing given that they had been relatively numerous just two weeks prior). Many people took the time to admire the flowers and, as always, the island's multiple pairs of Ospreys proved to be a very big hit with the birdwatchers and enthusiastic photographers! Our stop for lunch at a high point of the island even rewarded a few people with a distant view of a Blue Whale and a Humpback too.

The numbers of smaller birds present on the island were noticeably higher too. Big flocks of Horned Larks, White-crowned Sparrows and the endemic race of the Savannah Sparrow proved to be commonplace. Other bird highlights included good views of Peregrine Falcon and American Kestrel, while a few people also had some nice views of Costa's Hummingbird, Black Brant and Black Turnstone too. For the biologists, there was also the rather stinky discovery of a dead Sperm Whale on the beach to get excited about.

By about 2.30pm, we were all safely back onboard the boat and ready to set off once again. Fortunately for us, sea conditions remained good enough for us to spot three tall spouts offshore from Cedros and we were treated to some fabulous views of a particularly large Blue Whale surfacing on the crest of big Pacific swells. It was an impressive end to a great day of wildlife watching.

## Day 5

## Friday 11th March

### San Ignacio

After a peaceful night (comparatively) of travel, we approached San Ignacio lagoon soon after breakfast. We all watched numerous Gray Whales as our Captain and crew carefully motored us slowly over the shallow sandbar at the entrance to the lagoon. Bottlenose Dolphins rode the bow and Gray Whales surfaced and fluked close to the boat as we motored slowly to our anchorage. We set anchor in the lagoon a little before 8am.

After a quick briefing on the lagoon, we were quickly ushered into pangas for our first close-up introduction to the Gray Whales. The local panga drivers were excellent, and skilfully manoeuvred us into position so we could get the best look at some of the whales. During the course of our day we enjoyed four 90-minute panga trips (two before lunch and two after) and enjoyed some wonderful close encounters with friendly whales (mostly cow-calf pairs). By the end of the day everyone had had the opportunity to interact with the whales and the chance to observe some incredible behaviour, including whale's fluking, breaching and spy-hopping. Our time on the water also provided us with some nice views of a few Elegant Terns, Common Loon, Surf Scoter and White Ibis.

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 all braved the cool wind and spent the evening under a starry sky, enjoying the peace and quiet and

listening to the sounds of whale blows all around us. Some even spotted a little bioluminescence off the anchor line too.

## Day 6

**Saturday 12th March**

### San Ignacio and heading south

We started our day with another trip to see the Gray Whales, after which some of the group opted for a trip into the mangroves on the edge of the lagoon. The group managed to spot Green Turtle as well as lots of birds such as Great and Little Blue Herons, Reddish Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron and Great and Snowy Egrets. In addition, we enjoyed some lovely views of Marbled Godwit, Willet and Long-billed Curlew, and more White Ibis too.

Our third 90-minute session of the day took us out whale watching into the lagoon and, once more, we were all provided with incredible whale encounters. We were treated to lots more friendly encounters as the whales breached, spy-hopped and splashed around the boats, and there was some great bubble blowing by excitable whales too.

Our last session of the day provided us with the opportunity to visit the shore where we spent time admiring and photographing the wonderful array of bones and seashells that the pristine beaches around the lagoon margins had to offer.

As always, it was with great reluctance that we eventually said our farewells to our panga drivers and the beautiful San Ignacio lagoon, as the Searcher raised anchor and we motored out of the lagoon in the company of curious whales and bow-riding dolphins. We headed into the Pacific once more, and south towards the Tropics.

## Day 7

**Sunday 13th March**

### 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 we maintained a constant vigil for wildlife as we travelled. The cool breeze, the following swell, and the light cloud and warm sun made for a very pleasant day on the water.

The day started well and we observed a number of cetaceans at distance, but few provided us with the opportunity for close viewing. Some were just distant sightings and proved difficult to approach. However, one individual Humpback Whale maintained relatively short dive intervals and breached regularly, providing a splendid spectacle that we were all able to watch at very close range.

Amidst the other highlights of the day, we enjoyed some great views of Green Turtles, Masked and Brown Boobies, Striped Marlin, Mobula Rays, Grey and Red-necked Phalaropes, Cassin's Auklet, Black-vented and Pink-footed Shearwaters, and had lots of time to relax.

## Day 8

## Monday 14th March

### Gorda Banks

Rounding the southernmost tip of the peninsula in the early hours of the morning, we were met by calm seas, and the sea conditions remained good for whale watching as we moved toward the Gorda Banks. We stopped early to listen for Humpback Whale song on the ship's hydrophone. The sea was fairly quiet but we did get some nice sightings of very relaxed humpbacks in gin-clear water, fluking close to the bow. There were very few birds on the ocean, save the odd Black-vented Shearwater and a few Magnificent Frigatebirds

We eventually broke free from the whale watching and headed towards Los Frailes and the Cabo Pulmo National Park. We enjoyed lunch en route and, once at anchor, we put the skiffs in the water and headed ashore to explore the campground for birds. We wandered around the cactus scrub for a while, spotting numerous Turkey Vultures, the odd Northern Crested Caracara and lots of Northern Mockingbirds. Fortunately for us Ray and Audrey were still at the campground but they were in the process of packing up their camp ready for their long journey back north. Nonetheless, they dutifully put out some more food for the birds when they saw us arrive and we were able to enjoy watching Orange-crowned Warblers, numerous sparrows and doves, and Hooded Orioles enjoying their 4pm feed.

We eventually left the shore and returned to the Searcher where, after the heat of the desert, a lot of people opted to go for a snorkel. The visibility was excellent and the water was warm. We had some great views of lots of colourful reef fish, hard corals, and plenty of other exciting marine invertebrates too.

## Day 9

## Tuesday 15th March

### La Paz Bay and Los Islotes

Another rather fortunate set of circumstances and some more skilful planning once again resulted in us being able to make an impromptu change of itinerary, and we arrived at our new anchorage in La Paz bay early in the morning. There was considerable excitement as we waited for our local guides to arrive and take us out to see Whale Sharks, but even as we waited at anchor enjoying our morning coffee, we had three Whale Sharks swimming around the boat.

The morning was an amazing experience for everyone as we spent several hours in the company of one large shark, about nine metres in length, and the local panga drivers carefully took it in turns to position the boats so that the shark would swim right by. For the snorkelers, it was an exciting and intense experience. The great visibility and some very relaxed sharks meant it was fairly easy to swim alongside the sharks, and many did so for nearly an hour. It was a lifetime dream for some and the joy was evident on their faces when they eventually returned to the boat.

We then raised anchor and headed out; once again in search of more wildlife. We cruised close by a nearby bird colony where we found numerous roosting Blue-footed and Brown Boobies, and a few Magnificent Frigatebirds, before venturing northwards out of the bay.

We continued our journey towards Los Islotes, spotting a large group of leaping Smooth-tailed Mobulas which proved great fun for all the photographers on board. We also spotted the odd distant Humpback Whale as we travelled. Shortly after lunch we set anchor and went on a skiff ride around the island. This provided us with some lovely close views of California Sea Lions, and the chance to watch Blue-footed Booby display high up on their rocky perches. We also managed to spot a single Guadeloupe Fur Seal amidst the quarrelsome hoards of California Sea Lions (an unusual sighting in the gulf), and had some nice views of a Wandering Tattler too.

After our skiff ride we had another opportunity to snorkel. The conditions were perfect. There was no-one else around, and we enjoyed nearly an hour in the water in the company of playful sealion pups that chased us around and generally entertained us with their antics. The reef also provided us with nice views of lots of colourful reef fish including a nice Green Moray and some very pretty Nudibranchs such as the Red-tipped Dorid.

As the sun began to set, we raised anchor and headed northwards. We spotted a few scattered Common Dolphins as we travelled, and enjoyed another delicious dinner and a fantastic sunset over the peninsula before eventually setting anchor at Punta Colorado.

## Day 10

Wednesday 16th March

### Punta Colorado

Everyone (well nearly everyone) was up at sunrise to watch the sun creep over the eastern horizon and illuminate the beautiful sandstone cliffs adjacent to our anchorage at Punta Colorado on Isla San Jose. It was a wonderful start to our day and we enjoyed morning coffee in the warming sunshine as we slowly woke ourselves up. After breakfast we set ashore to explore the beach and the arroyo where we took the opportunity to take a closer look at the fossils in the rocks, watch Giant Tarantula Hawk Wasps feeding on clumps of Milkweed, and look for desert birds like Verdin and Black-throated Sparrow amidst the cactus scrub.

After our walk, many of us cooled off with a snorkel along the rocky reef at the foot of the sandstone cliffs. We enjoyed some great views of lots more colourful rocky reef fishes and a few of us managed to get some nice views of a Giant Electric Ray too.

The sea conditions were good as we raised anchor and continued to head north towards Isla Santa Catalina, spotting numerous marine mammals during the course of the afternoon. We started with some feeding Pilot Whales and we could smell the squid in the air as they surfaced. Then we travelled north and found a few scattered Bottlenose Dolphins, a few of which jumped in the wake and rode on the bow. Then we encountered a bigger group of 40-50 Short-finned Pilot Whales spread out over a wide area and we enjoyed watching some fun behaviour such as peck-slapping, tail-slapping and the occasional breach. There were a few Bottlenose Dolphins amongst the Pilot Whales but they seemed more intent on feeding and exhibited little playful or exuberant behaviour. Nonetheless, it was fun spending the afternoon amidst the Pilot Whales and we enjoyed many close encounters before we eventually continued northwards to Isla Santa Catalina.

We arrived at Catalina in the sunset and enjoyed dinner at anchor as darkness fell. Some stayed up late to enjoy the numerous fishes that were attracted to the boats deck lights before getting a restful night's sleep at anchor.



## Day 11

Thursday 17th March

### Isla Santa Catalina

It was a beautiful morning as we lay at anchor off Isla Santa Catalina; perfect for our morning hike in the arroyo on the west side of the island. Initially we failed to find any of the endemic Baja 'Rattleless' Rattlesnakes, but a few people persevered and were rewarded when they found a very brightly marked, young rattlesnake coiled up under a bush. We spotted a few lizards and marvelled at the wonderful giant Elephant Cardon Cacti and the Giant Wavy Barrel Cactus as we continued our walk. Some opted to explore the shoreline and marvel at the colourful seashells, the dolphin bones, and the piping American Oystercatchers that wandered up and down the stony beach. There were a few birds active in the arroyo too and we had some great views of Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Cardinal, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Verdin, and Ladder-backed and Gila Woodpeckers as we searched the beautiful cactus-filled valley.

On returning to the Searcher, people readied themselves for snorkelling, but a dense swarm of Thread Jellies had amassed in the bay so, given the splendid sea conditions, we opted to raise anchor early and head out to find whales instead.

It was a good job that we did as, shortly before lunch, having already encountered a few groups of scattered dolphins and the odd Dwarf Sperm Whale, we were treated to one of the most spectacular Blue Whale encounters any of us had ever seen. Crystal clear waters and a smaller (about 20-metres long) and very curious Blue Whale resulted in a three hour close encounter that none of us will ever forget! Just to top things off, we ended the day in the company of an energetic group of Short-beaked Common Dolphins that breached acrobatically, tail-walked and generally did all the things dolphins do as we travelled with then as they headed south.

It had been a magical day and we anchored on the west side of Isla San Jose for our back deck barbeque and, with the help of some very tasty Margaritas, we all relaxed and enjoyed the warmth of another evening in the Sea of Cortez.

## Day 12

Friday 18th March

### Cerralvo Channel

After an unexpectedly rough night of travel, we woke at dawn and the Searcher was heading south in the more sheltered waters between Cerralvo and La Paz. The sea was fairly quiet but we spotted a few Green Turtles and Mobula Rays, and a Red-billed Tropicbird as we travelled and maintained a constant vigil for cetaceans. It wasn't too long before we spotted a few sparse groups of Bottlenose Dolphins, but it was a distant group of energetic Common Dolphins that distracted us from our course. However, as we approached the herd of dolphins we were distracted by a Humpback Whale that suddenly decided to breach repeatedly behind us. The look on people's faces said it all - we had to turn around to see the Humpback!

Unfortunately, our Humpback Whales were a little less energetic when we eventually got closer to them, but we enjoyed watching them surface and fluke in the calm seas; their huge white pectoral flippers glowing underneath

them in the clear water. It seemed like a quiet afternoon of whale watching after that, although it was almost guaranteed that after the previous day, any normal day of whale watching was going to seem fairly quiet. We were going to head into our anchorage early but rain had set in over the peninsula, so we headed more off shore where the sun was still shining and there was still a chance of finding more whales.

After a long, hot day of whale watching, we dropped anchor once again off of Los Frailes. The rain had passed over the peninsula leaving the air clean and the desert looking considerably greener than we remembered. We sat on deck and relaxed in the early evening sunshine and watched the Turkey Vultures and Magnificent Frigatebirds, and enjoyed the sunset over the peninsula for the last time.

As always, our final meal together on the boat provided us with the perfect opportunity to share photographs, recount stories and describe our highlights from the tour. Despite all the inherent difficulties of boat life and the sometimes rough seas, everyone agreed that this had been an incredible trip and an entirely unique wildlife experience.

## Day 13

## Saturday 19th March

We watched as the Searcher finally pulled into the early morning bustle of Cabo San Lucas' busy harbour. We watched the boats and pelicans, and enjoyed a leisurely continental breakfast, as the Searcher crew set to work refuelling the boat for their long journey back to San Diego.

We said our final farewells to the crew before they set off for their own intrepid journey back up the peninsula and back to San Diego. Our taxis then transported us to the picturesque colonial town square of San Jose del Cabo. While a few took the chance for some last minute shopping in town, others followed Lee, Debbie and Aaron down to the estuary for some gentle last-minute birding where, amidst numerous other things, we had some great views of White-faced Ibis, Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teals, Cassin's Kingbird, Green Heron, Osprey, and lots of American Coots and Ruddy Ducks. Both options were certainly preferable to sitting in an airport for hours on end, and gave everyone a last chance to enjoy the warmth of the Mexican sunshine.

By late morning we boarded our taxis once again and set off to the airport for our return flights back to San Diego and our connecting flights back to the UK.

## Day 14

## Sunday 20th March

Our flight landed back in the UK and another Naturetrek adventure came to an end. We then completed our journeys home after our exceptional time around Baja.

## Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) to sign up.

## Species Lists

Mammals (✓ recorded not counted)

	Common name	Scientific name	Mar-16												
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1	Gray Whale	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>			✓		✓	✓							
2	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>			✓	✓							✓		
3	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>			✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	
4	Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>				dead									
5	Dwarf Sperm Whale	<i>Kogia simus</i>											✓		
6	Pygmy Killer Whale	<i>Feresa attenuata</i>										✓			
7	Short-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>										✓	✓		
8	Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9	Long-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus capensis</i>			✓	✓			✓						
10	Short-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>			✓								✓	✓	
11	Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>			✓										
12	California Sea Lion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Northern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>			✓	✓									
14	Guadalupe Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus townsendi</i>									✓		✓		
15	California Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>		✓											
16	White-tailed Antelope Ground Squirrel	<i>Ammospermophilus leucurus</i>									✓				
17	Botta's Pocket Gopher	<i>Thomomys bottae</i>		✓											
18	Black-tailed Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>									✓				

Birds (h = heard only)

1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓												
2	Brant Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	✓	✓			✓								
3	Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	✓												
4	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	✓												

	Common name	Scientific name	Mar-16														
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
5	American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	✓														
6	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓														✓
7	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	✓														✓
8	Cinnamon Teal	<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>	✓														✓
9	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	✓														
10	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	✓														
11	Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas carolinensis</i>	✓														✓
12	Redhead	<i>Aythya americana</i>	✓														
13	Canvasback	<i>Aythya valisneria</i>	✓														
14	Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	✓														
15	Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	✓														
16	Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓										
17	Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta americana</i>								✓							
18	Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	✓														
19	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	✓														
20	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	✓														✓
21	Pacific Loon	<i>Gavia pacifica</i>						✓									
22	Great Northern Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>			✓	✓	✓										
23	Laysan Albatross	<i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i>		✓													
24	Black-footed Albatross	<i>Phoebastria nigripes</i>		✓												✓	
25	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		✓					✓								
26	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>		✓					✓								
27	Pink-footed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus creatopus</i>		✓					✓			✓		✓			
28	Black-vented Shearwater	<i>Puffinus opisthomelas</i>		✓	✓				✓		✓		✓	✓			
29	Black Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma melania</i>							✓			✓	✓	✓			
30	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	✓														✓
31	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
32	Western Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓													

	Common name	Scientific name	Mar-16														
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
33	Clark's Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>	✓		✓												
34	Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>											✓				
35	American White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>			✓												
36	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>														✓	
37	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓														
38	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>														✓	
39	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>														✓	
40	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	✓	✓								✓				✓	
41	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓													✓	
42	Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>			✓							✓					
43	Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>														✓	
44	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	✓														
45	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	✓														
46	American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	✓														
47	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
48	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
49	Blue-footed Booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>										✓					
50	Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>							✓								
51	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>		✓						✓	✓	✓					
52	Brandt's Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax penicillatus</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓				✓	
53	Pelagic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i>		✓													
54	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓					✓	
55	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	✓							✓	✓	✓				✓	
56	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	✓										✓			✓	
57	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	✓														
58	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	✓													✓	
59	Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	✓														
60	Northern Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara cheriway</i>									✓						

	Common name	Scientific name	Mar-16													
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
61	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>			✓								✓		✓	
62	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		✓	✓								✓			
63	Ridgeway's Rail	<i>Rallus obsoletus</i>	✓													
64	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	✓													✓
65	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	✓													✓
66	Black Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus bachmani</i>		✓												
67	American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>			✓								✓			
68	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	✓													✓
69	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	✓													
70	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>	✓	✓												
71	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	✓		✓											
72	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	✓		✓				✓							
73	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	✓													
74	Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	✓													✓
75	Wandering Tattler	<i>Tringa incana</i>										✓				
76	Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	✓													
77	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	✓							✓						✓
78	Black Turnstone	<i>Arenaria melanocephala</i>		✓												
79	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>			✓	✓	✓									
80	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>			✓	✓										
81	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓									
82	Red Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓		
83	Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>		✓				✓	✓						✓	
84	Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus philadelphia</i>		✓	✓						✓	✓	✓			
85	Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
86	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓						
87	California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
88	Western Gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓						✓	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	Mar-16													
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
89	Yellow-footed Gull	<i>Larus livens</i>								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
90	Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			
91	Elegant Tern	<i>Thalasseus elegans</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
92	Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>	✓													
93	South Polar Skua	<i>Stercorarius maccormicki</i>		✓												
94	Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>		✓										✓		
95	Parasitic Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>							✓							
96	Guadalupe Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus hypoleucus</i>		✓												
97	Cassin's Auklet	<i>Ptychoramphus aleuticus</i>		✓	✓		✓									
98	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓													✓
99	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	✓													✓
100	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>								✓			✓			✓
101	Common Ground Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>								✓						✓
102	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaoto</i>		✓	✓											
103	Ruddy Ground Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>								✓						✓
104	Lilac-crowned Amazon	<i>Amazona finschi</i>	✓													
105	Red-lored Amazon	<i>Amazona autumnalis</i>	✓													
106	White-throated Swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>										✓	✓			
107	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	✓													
108	Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>			✓					✓		✓				
109	Rufous Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>	✓													
110	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>														✓
111	Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>								✓			✓			✓
112	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>								✓			✓			
113	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	✓													
114	Cassin's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>														✓
115	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>			✓					✓		✓	✓			
116	Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>								✓		✓	✓			

	Common name	Scientific name	Mar-16													
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
117	California Scrub Jay	<i>Apelocoma californica</i>	✓													
118	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	✓													✓
119	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓		✓								✓			✓
120	Oak Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	h													
121	Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>								✓		✓				
122	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>			✓											
123	Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	✓													
124	Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	✓													
125	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	✓													✓
126	Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	✓													
127	American Bushtit	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>	✓													
128	Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>								✓						✓
129	Rock Wren	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>			✓											
130	Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliottila caerulea</i>								✓		✓	✓			
131	California Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliottila californica</i>								✓		✓	✓			
132	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>								✓		✓	✓			✓
133	Grey Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma cinereum</i>								✓						✓
134	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓													
135	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓							✓						✓
136	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	✓							✓						✓
137	Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	✓							✓						
138	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis celata</i>								✓						✓
139	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	✓													
140	American Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga aestiva</i>														✓
141	Audubon's Warbler	<i>Setophaga auduboni</i>	✓													✓
142	Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>	✓							✓						✓
143	Scott's Oriole	<i>Icterus parisorum</i>														✓
144	Tricolored Blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>														✓



	Common name	Scientific name	Mar-16														
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
145	Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	✓													✓	
146	Yellow-headed Blackbird	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>														✓	
147	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	✓														
148	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	✓														
149	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	✓		✓					✓							
150	Golden-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i>			✓												
151	Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	✓														
152	San Benito Sparrow	<i>Passerculus s. sanctorum</i>			✓												
153	Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>														✓	
154	Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>								✓						✓	
155	Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>														✓	
156	Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>								✓		✓	✓				
157	Green-tailed Towhee	<i>Pipilo chlorurus</i>								✓							
158	California Towhee	<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>	✓														
159	Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>														✓	
160	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>								✓			✓				

## Fish

1	Ballonfish	<i>Diodon holocanthus</i>								✓	✓	✓					
2	Barber Fish	<i>Johnrandallia nigriristris</i>									✓	✓					
3	Beaubrummel	<i>Eupomacentrus flavilatus</i>								✓	✓	✓					
4	Bicolor Parrotfish	<i>Cetoscarus bicolor</i>								✓	✓	✓					
5	Blue and Gold Snapper	<i>Lutjanus viridus</i>								✓	✓	✓					
6	Blue Parrotfish	<i>Scarus coeruleus</i>									✓	✓					
7	Blue Shark	<i>Prionace glauca</i>									✓						
8	Bluechin Parrotfish	<i>Scarus ghobban</i>								✓							
9	Blue-spotted Jawfish	<i>Opistognathus rosenblatti</i>								✓							
10	Bumphead Damselfish	<i>Microspathodon bairdi</i>								✓	✓						

	Common name	Scientific name	Mar-16														
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
11	Bumphead Parrotfish	<i>Bolbometopon muricatum</i>									✓	✓	✓				
12	California Flying Fish	<i>Cypselurus californicus</i>										✓					
13	Coral Hawkfish	<i>Cirrhitichthys oxycephalus</i>									✓	✓	✓				
14	Cortez Angelfish	<i>Pomocanthus zonipectus</i>									✓	✓	✓				
15	Cortez Chub	<i>Kyphosuselegans</i>									✓	✓	✓				
16	Cortez Damselfish	<i>Eupomacentrus rectifraenum</i>									✓		✓				
17	Cortez Rainbow Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lucasanum</i>									✓	✓	✓				
18	Creole Fish	<i>Paranthias furcifer</i>									✓	✓					
19	Finescaled Triggerfish	<i>Balistes polylepis</i>										✓					
20	Fine-spotted Jawfish	<i>Opistognathus sp.</i>									✓						
21	Giant Damselfish	<i>Microspathadon dorsalis</i>									✓	✓	✓				
22	Giant Hawkfish	<i>Cirrhitidae cirrhitus</i>									✓	✓	✓				
23	Grey-barred Grunt	<i>Conodon nobilis</i>									✓		✓				
24	Hogfish	<i>Bodianus diplotaenia</i>									✓	✓	✓				
25	King Angelfish	<i>Holocanthus passer</i>									✓	✓	✓				
26	Leopard Grouper	<i>Mycteroperca rosacea</i>									✓	✓					
27	Mexican Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys dentatus</i>										✓	✓				
28	Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus canescens</i>									✓	✓	✓				
29	Needlefish	<i>Strongylura exilis</i>										✓	✓	✓			
30	Guineafowl Puffer	<i>Arothron meleagris</i>									✓	✓	✓				
31	Ocean Sunfish	<i>Mola mola</i>		✓													
32	Orange-sided Triggerfish	<i>Sufflamen verres</i>									✓	✓	✓				
33	Panama Graysby	<i>Cephalopholis panamensis</i>									✓		✓				
34	Panamic Fanged Blenny	<i>Ophioblennius steindachneri</i>									✓		✓				
35	Panamic Green Moray	<i>Gymnothorax castaneus</i>										✓					
36	Panamic Sergeant Major	<i>Abuldefduf troschelii</i>									✓	✓	✓				
37	Pilot Fish	<i>Naucrates ductor</i>										✓					
38	Reef Cornetfish	<i>Fistularia commersonii</i>									✓	✓	✓				

	Common name	Scientific name	Mar-16														
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
39	Remora (Suckerfish)	<i>Remora remora</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓		
40	Scissortail Damselfish	<i>Chromis atrilobata</i>									✓	✓					
41	Smelt	<i>Osmeridae sp.</i>			✓												
42	Smooth-tailed Mobula	<i>Mobula thurstoni</i>									✓	✓	✓				
43	Spotted Sharp-nosed Puffer	<i>Canthigaster solandri</i>									✓	✓	✓				
44	Striped Marlin	<i>Tetrapturus audax</i>									✓						
45	Surgeon Fish sp.	<i>Acanthurus sp.</i>									✓		✓				
46	Three-banded Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon robustus</i>									✓	✓	✓				
47	Yellowtail Surgeonfish	<i>Prionurus punctatus</i>									✓	✓	✓				
48	Whale Shark	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>										✓					
49	Giant Electric Ray	<i>Narcine entemedor</i>											✓				

## Other Taxa

1	Baja California 'rattleless' Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus enyo</i>												✓			
2	Common Chuckwalla	<i>Sauromalus ater</i>									✓			✓			
3	Desert Iguana	<i>Dipsosaurus dorsalis</i>												✓			
4	Green Seaturtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>							✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
5	Loggerhead Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>							✓								
6	Common Side-blotched Lizard	<i>Uta palmeri</i>		✓													
7	Side-blotched Lizard	<i>Uta squamata</i>										✓	✓	✓			
8	Western Fence Lizard	<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>	✓														
9	Western Whip Tail	<i>Cnemidophorus sp.</i>											✓				
10	Zebra-tailed Lizard	<i>Callisaurus draconoides</i>									✓	✓	✓				

## Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!



Friendly Gray Whale



Snorkelling