

# California

25 July – 29 July 2010

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## Introduction

This was our final stop on our around the world ticket (New Zealand, Fiji, California). July is not the best time of the year for California, but this short stop was a great addition to our time in NZ and Fiji. We drove from Los Angeles to San Francisco along Highway 1 and made some birding stops in between. This trip report was finally written in May 2015, therefore details may be lacking.

## Itinerary

Day 1	25-07-2010	Los Angeles– Buelton
Day 2	26-07-2010	Buelton – Morro Bay
Day 3	27-07-2010	Morro Bay - Monterey
Day 4	28-07-2010	Monterey (Pinnacles, Elkhorn Slough)
Day 5	29-07-2010	Monterey (Pelagic) - San Francisco

### Weather:

Along the coast we had grey mornings and sunny afternoons. Inland (Pinnacles) was sunny from the start and hot.

### Literature:

ABA Birdfinding Guide – Southern California by Brad Schram

A Falcon Guide - Birding Northern California by John Kemper

Sibley Field Guide to the birds of Western North America

### Day 1: LA – Buelton

Arrived in LA at 13.00 and after a short interruption at immigration (you really should give an address, even if you don't know where you are going) we were on our way to the car rental. LA traffic was quite bad, and it took us quite a while to finally leave it behind. We drove until Buelton and found a Motel6 there. A nearby Supermarket provided some Birders Tapas (Coke, Chips, Cheese Crackers and Bagels) for the next few days and we visited one of the fastfood chains for diner.

### Day 2: Buelton - Morro Bay

We started birding near Buelton and continued our way north with several birding sites. In order: Alisal Road (near Solvang), Nojoqui Falls County Park, Los Alamos Country park, Shell Beach, Montana de Oro, Elfin Forest Overlook (boardwalk), Morro Bay State Park, Morro Bay – Rock, ate a pizza in Cayucos and slept in our car.

### Day 3: Morro Bay - Monterey

Continued our way north along Highway 1, but first we drove inland for a bit along some local road, then drove north again and visited: W.R. Hearst State Beach, Piedras Blancas, Limekiln Camp Ground, Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park and ended the day in Monterey. The drive along Big Sur was certainly the highlight of the day.

### Day 4: Pinnacles, Monterey Sea Aquarium, Elkhorn Slough

We started the day with a visit to Pinnacles NP along Highway 101. When it started to get hot we drove back to Monterey and visited the Monterey Sea Aquarium. The last few hours of the day were spent around Moss Landing and Elkhorn Slough.

### Day 5: Pelagic out of Monterey

After NZ we wanted another Albatross for our triplist and joined a Whale-watching pelagic out of Monterey: Black-footed Albatross, Elegant Tern, Cassin's Auklet and lots of Sooty Shearwaters. Also many Humpback whales and a Blue Whale made this a great trip. This was the end of the birding part. After the pelagic we drove to San Francisco and spent the last two days of our trip in the city.

## **ANNOTATED SPECIES LIST**

We have tried to accurately indicate the proper subspecies for all our observations, usually based on geographic locations based on the IOC World Bird List version 5.1. Not a complete checklist of all sightings, species mostly only written down on first day of sighting.

1 Canada Goose – *Branta canadensis moffitti*

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

2 Brant Goose – *Branta bernicla nigricans*

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

3 California Quail – *Callipepla californica plumbea*

26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

4 Wild Turkey – *Meleagris gallopavo merriami*

26/07: Nojoqui Falls County Park

5 Black-footed Albatross – *Phoebastria nigripes*

29/07: pelagic out of Monterey

6 Sooty Shearwater – *Puffinus griseus*

29/07: pelagic out of Monterey

7 Western Grebe – *Aechmophorus occidentalis*

30/7: San Francisco

31/7: San Francisco

8 Black-crowned Night Heron – *Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli*

26/07: Morro Bay State Park - Marina

9 Green Heron *Butorides virescens anthonyi*

26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)

- 10 Great Blue Heron – *Adea herodias wardi*  
26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 11 Great Egret – *Ardea alba egretta*  
27/07: W.R. Hearst State beach
- 12 Snowy Egret – *Egretta thula brewsteri*  
26/07: Elfin Forest Overlook (boardwalk)
- 13 Brown Pelican – *Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*  
Common along coast
- 14 Brandt's Cormorant – *Phalacrocorax penicillatus*  
26/07: Shell beach
- 15 Pelagic Cormorant – *Phalacrocorax pelagicus*  
26/07: Shell beach
- 16 Double-crested Cormorant – *Phalacrocorax auritus albociliatus*  
26/07: Shell beach
- 17 Turkey Vulture – *Cathartes aura aura*  
25/07: en route
- 18 Western Osprey – *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*  
26/07: Shell beach
- 19 Cooper's Hawk – *Accipter cooperii*  
26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 20 Red-shouldered Hawk – *Buteo lineatus elegans*  
28/07: Elkhorn Slough
- 21 Red-tailed Hawk – *Buteo jamaicensis calurus*  
26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)  
26/07: Montana de Oro
- 22 Black Oystercatcher – *Haematopus bachmani*  
26/07: Montana de Oro
- 23 Black-necked Stilt - *Himantopus mexicanus mexicanus*  
28/07: Elkhorn Slough - Kirkby Park
- 24 Killdeer – *Charadrius vociferus vociferus*  
26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 25 Marbled Godwit – *Limosa fedoa beringiae*  
26/07: Morro Bay rock
- 26 Whimbrel – *Numenius phaeopus rufiventris*  
26/07: Morro Bay rock
- 27 Long-billed Curlew – *Numenius americanus*  
26/07: Elfin Forest Overlook (boardwalk)

26/07: Morro Bay rock

28 Lesser Yellowlegs – *Tringa flavipes*

28/07: Elkhorn Slough - Kirkby Park

29 Willet – *Tringa semipalmata inornata*

26/07: Elfin Forest Overlook (boardwalk)

30 Ruddy Turnstone – *Arenaria interpres morinella*

26/07: Elfin Forest Overlook (boardwalk)

31 Dunlin – *Calidris alpina pacifica*

28/07: Elkhorn Slough - Kirkby Park

32 Heermann's Gull – *Larus heermanni*

26/07: Shell beach

26/07: Morro Bay rock

33 California Gull – *Larus californicus ?wintering ssp?*

26/07: Morro Bay rock

34 Western Gull – *Larus occidentalis occidentalis*

Very common along coast

35 Elegant Tern - *Thalasseus elegans*

29/07: pelagic out of Monterey

36 Common Murre – *Uria aalge californica*

29/07: pelagic out of Monterey

37 Pigeon Guillemot – *Cephus columba eureka*

26/07: Shell beach

38 Cassin's Auklet – *Ptychoramphus aleuticus aleuticus*

29/07: pelagic out of Monterey

39 Band-tailed Pigeon – *Patagioenas fasciata monilis*

26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)

40 Mourning Dove - *Zenaida macroura marginella*

26/07: Elfin Forest Overlook (boardwalk)

41 Great Horned Owl – *Bubo virginianus pacificus*

26/07: sideroad of highway 1, near San Simeon

42 Black-chinned Hummingbird – *Archilochus alexandri*

26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)

43 Anna's Hummingbird – *Calypte anna*

26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)

44 Acorn Woodpecker - *Melanerpes formicivorus bairdi*

26/07: Los Alamos Country park

- 45 Nuttall's Woodpecker – *Picoides nuttallii*  
26/07: Los Alamos Country park
- 46 Hairy Woodpecker – *Picoides villosus hyloscopus*  
26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 47 Northern Flicker - *Colaptes auratus collaris*  
26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)  
28/07: Pinnacles
- 48 American Kestrel – *Falco sparverius sparverius*  
26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 49 Peregrine Falcon – *Falco peregrinus anatum*  
27/07: Andrew Molera State Park
- 50 Black Phoebe – *Sayornis nigricans semiater*  
26/07: Nojoqui Falls County Park
- 51 Hammond's Flycatcher – *Empidonax hammondii*  
26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 52 Pacific-slope Flycatcher – *Empidonax difficilis difficilis*  
26/07: Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 53 Ash-throated Flycatcher – *Myiarchus cinerascens cinerascens*  
26/07: sideroad of highway 1, near San Simeon
- 54 Loggerhead Shrike – *Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides*  
26/07: sideroad of highway 1, near San Simeon.
- 55 Hutton's Vireo – *Vireo huttoni huttoni*  
26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 56 Steller's Jay – *Cyanocitta stelleri carbonacea*  
27/07: Limekiln State Campground
- 57 California Scrub Jay – *Aphelocoma californica californica*  
26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)  
26/07: Montana de Oro
- 58 Yellow-billed Magpie – *Pica nuttalli*  
26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 59 American Crow – *Corvus brachyrhynchos hesperis*  
25/07: en route
- 60 Phainopepla – *Phainopepla nitens lepida*  
26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)
- 61 Oak Titmouse – *Baeolophus inornatus inornatus*  
26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)  
28/07: Pinnacles

62 Chestnut-backed Chickadee – *Poecile rufescens barlowi*

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

63 Violet-green Swallow – *Tachycineta thalassina thalassina*

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

64 Purple Martin – *Progne subis hesperia*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

65 Barn Swallow – *Hirundo rustica erythrogaster*

26/07: Los Alamos Country park

66 American Cliff Swallow – *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota pyrrhonota*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

67 American Bushtit – *Psaltriparus minimus minimus*

26/07: Morro Bay State Park - Marina

68 Wrentit – *Chamaea fasciata fasciata*

26/07: Montana de Oro

69 Bewick's Wren – *Thryomanes bewickii spilurus*

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

70 Pacific Wren – *Troglodytes pacificus obscurior*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

71 House Wren – *Troglodytes aedon parkmanii*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

72 Blue-grey gnatcatcher – *Polioptila caerulea obscura*

28/07: Pinnacles

73 Pygmy Nuthatch – *Sitta pygmaea pygmaea*

28/07: Pinnacles

74 White-breasted Nuthatch – *Sitta carolinensis aculeata*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

75 Northern Mockingbird – *Mimus polyglottos polyglottos*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

76 California Thrasher – *Toxostoma redivivum redivivum*

26/07: Los Alamos Country park

77 Western Bluebird – *Sialia mexicana occidentalis*

26/07: Los Alamos Country park

78 Swainson's Thrush – *Catharus ustulatus oedicus*

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

79 American Robin – *Turdus migratorius propinquus*

26/07: Los Alamos Country park

80 American Goldfinch – *Spinus tristis salicamans*

28/07: Pinnacles

81 Lesser Goldfinch – *Spinus psaltria hesperophila*

28/07: Pinnacles

82 House Finch – *Haemorhous mexicanus frontalis*

25/07: en route

83 Orange-crowned Warbler – *Leiothlypis celata sordida*

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

84 American Yellow Warbler – *Setophaga aestiva brewsteri*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

85 Wilson's Warbler – *Cardellina pusilla chryseola*

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

86 Red-winged Blackbird – *Agelaius phoeniceus caurinus*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

87 Brewer's Blackbird – *Euphagus cyanocephalus*

25/07: en route;

27/07: Point Piedras Blancas

88 White-crowned Sparrow – *Zonotrichia leucophrys nuttalli*

26/07: Morro Bay rock

89 Dark-eyed Junco – *Junco hyemalis pinosus*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

26/07: Los Alamos Country park

90 Savannah Sparrow – *Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus*

26/07: Morro Bay State Park - Marina

91 Chipping Sparrow – *Spizella passerina arizonae*

27/07: Andrew Molera State Park

92 Spotted Towhee – *Pipilo maculatus megalonyx*

26/07: Los Alamos Country park

93 California Towhee – *Melospiza crissalis crissalis*

26/07: Buelton - Alisal road (near Solvang)

26/07: Montana de Oro