

# **CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'**

## **Central California Birding: Condors, Seabirds, and more!**

**September 10-17, 2018**

**A birding field tour organized by Seven Ponds Nature Center**

Based in Monterey, California, this Seven Ponds Nature Center birding field tour of central California will feature incredible scenery, diverse habitats, and some of the best birding on the continent! The tour will include Big Sur State Park, Pinnacles National Park, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Preserve, Big Basin Redwoods State Park, and a pelagic trip into the avian rich Monterey Bay with Debi Shearwater and her world-famous *Shearwater Journeys*!



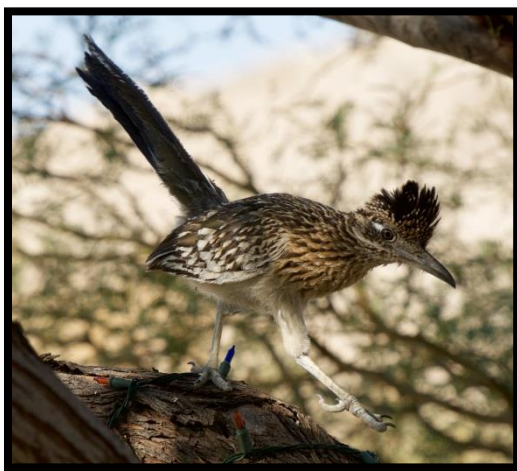
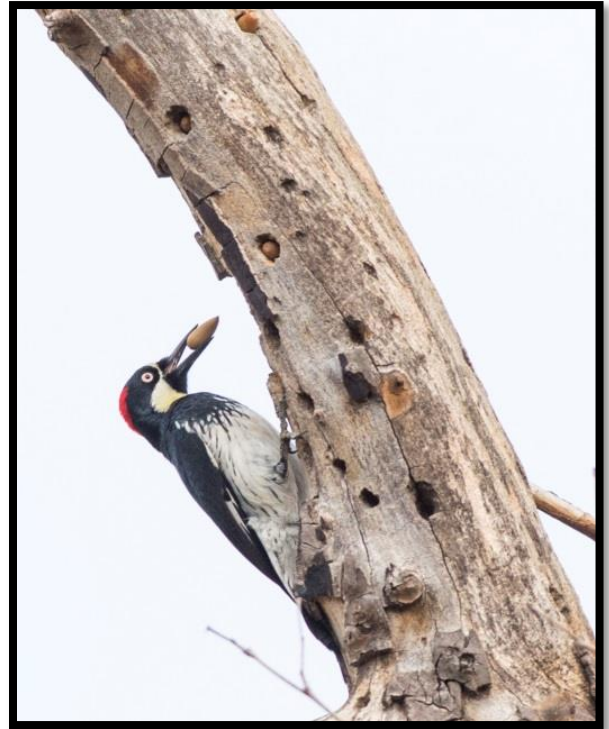
The central California coastal area from Big Sur up to Monterey Bay boasts an immense diversity of birds, with over 500 species recorded. Our tour will be based in Monterey, which will provide us with convenient access to a wide range of habitats: deep sea pelagic birding, marine estuaries, coastal scrub, riparian foothills, chaparral shrub land, redwood forests, and mountain terrain. Our lodging will be at the Arbor Inn Hotel, located in Monterey just a few minutes from the bay. This tour will be led by professional birding guide Mary Gustafson and Seven Ponds Nature Center Executive Director Daryl Bernard.

### **TOUR ITINERARY**

Our daily activities will be flexible based on species we've seen to date and recent bird reports, but the following outline provides a preliminary plan of how we will spend our days. Our plans are subject to change based on rare bird sightings, weather conditions, and area closures. Note: the birds listed are not intended to be an exhaustive list – just a sampling of what may be found at each location.

**DAY 1 – Monday, September 10 – Arrival in Monterey; shuttle to hotel; afternoon birding locally** Plan your arrival in Monterey by 1:00 p.m., and check-in at the hotel by 2:00 p.m. We'll bird the first afternoon/evening at nearby hotspots, picking up plenty of good birds along the way. Stops may include the Laguna Grande Park, Frog Pond Wetland Preserve, Monterey Harbor, and others depending on what is being seen.

**DAY 2 – Tuesday, September 11 – Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Preserve, Moss Landing State Wildlife Area, Moonglow Dairy** Elkhorn Slough is a 1,700 acre reserve that includes five miles of trails through oak woodlands, calm tidal creeks, freshwater and tidal salt marshes. Over 340 species of birds have been observed here, making it a popular location for birders, and it has been designated as a Globally Important Bird Area. Along with a wide diversity of birds, Elkhorn Slough is the home to more than 125 Southern Sea Otters, along with hundreds of Harbor Seals and large groups of California Sea Lions. Some of the birds we hope to spot here include Acorn Woodpecker, Wrentit, Tricolored Blackbird, White-tailed Kite, Oak Titmouse, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and many more. Nearby Moss Landing and Moonglow Dairy offer us additional areas to explore.



**DAY 3 – Wednesday, September 12 – Pinnacles National Park** This morning we'll head inland to Pinnacles National Park in search of California Condors as well as other inland birds. Some of the birds we hope to encounter include California Quail, Greater Roadrunner, Prairie Falcon, Black Phoebe, California Scrub-Jay, Yellow-billed Magpie, Nuttall's Woodpecker, and Bushtit – just to name a few.

**DAY 4 – Thursday, September 13 – Big Sur State Park** We'll venture down the coast today to the incredibly scenic Big Sur – where over 390 birds have been reported. This will give us another shot at California Condors - in case we miss them at Pinnacles - as well as many other bird species which inhabit the rocky coastline and chaparral foothills in this park. Such species include Mountain Quail, Western Bluebird, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, California Towhee, and so many more.



**DAY 5 – Friday, September 14 – Shearwater Pelagic trip** Monterey Bay – with its deep water canyons close to shore – is one of the world’s premier seabirding hotspots. Species we are likely to see include Black-footed Albatross, Pink-footed, Buller’s, and Sooty Shearwaters, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, Common Murre, Cassin’s and Rhinoceros Auklets, Sabine’s Gull, and Red Phalarope, with many additional species possible. Other sea life we may encounter includes sea otters and numerous species of seals and whales. Debi Shearwater of *Shearwater Journeys*, is based in Monterey, where she guides pelagic trips to Monterey Bay, Half-Moon Bay, and the Farallon Islands. Debi was featured in the book *The Big Year* (mostly true, according to her) and the movie by the same name (character name Annie Auklet - mostly fictional). Learn more about pelagic birding with Debi at [shearwaterjourneys.com](http://shearwaterjourneys.com).



**DAY 6 – Saturday, September 15 – Big Basin Redwoods State Park**

We'll travel north to explore the redwood forests of Big Basin, California’s oldest state park and home of the largest continuous stand of coast redwoods south of San Francisco. Some of these trees are more than 50 feet around and over 300 feet tall. Birds we may encounter here include Steller’s Jay, Anna’s Hummingbird, American Dipper, Townsend’s Warbler, Williamson’s Sapsucker, and others. On the way back we'll make stops at other hotspots such as Quail Hollow Ranch, Loch Lomond, and others depending on recent sightings and our remaining target birds.



**DAY 7 Sunday, September 16 – Monterey area** Today we will bird close to home, hitting several of the Monterey area hotspots in search of target birds we have not yet found. We'll visit coastal areas in search of shorebirds, waterfowl, gulls, and terns we still need. Area parks and reserves will give us a chance to see birds that have eluded us. Hotspots we may explore include Point Lobos State Reserve, Carmel River State Beach, and Point Pinos, among others.

**DAY 8 – Monday, September 17 – Departure from Monterey** Plan your departure for any time today; we will shuttle you from the hotel to the airport at your convenience.



## **TOUR LEADERS & GUIDES**

**Mary Gustafson** is a self-employed, full-time birding guide in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Mary also guides pelagic trips in Monterey, California for *Shearwater Journeys* and has birded the Monterey area for many years – she knows the birding hotspots and the birds, and is excited to have the chance to share them with our group. She currently serves on the American Birding Association Checklist Committee, and has formerly served on the Maryland/DC and Texas bird record committees. Mary is an eBird editor for several south Texas counties, works as one of the eBird state portal editors for Texas ([www.ebird.org/tx](http://www.ebird.org/tx)), runs the Lower Rio Grande Valley Rare Bird Alert ([rgvbirds.blogspot.com](http://rgvbirds.blogspot.com)), and formerly volunteered for the RGV Birding Festival, organizing leaders and field trips. Mary previously guided a Seven Ponds birding field tour in the Texas Lower Rio Grande Valley.



**Daryl Bernard** is a long-time birder and amateur naturalist who loves being outdoors and embraces every opportunity to share nature with others. He enjoys organizing trips and tours, and strives to ensure that every participant has a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Previous birding tours organized by Daryl include trips to Colorado and the Texas Lower Rio Grande Valley, in addition to many local birding trips in Michigan. Daryl is the Executive Director at Seven Ponds Nature Center in Lapeer County, Michigan.

**Carl Bendorf** is a lifelong birder, resident of Colorado, and experienced birding guide who founded COLORADO BIRDING ADVENTURES in 2016. Carl is past-president of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founder of Iowa Young Birders, and current member of the American Birding Association Board of Directors. Carl guided a Seven Ponds birding field tour of Colorado, and will be along with us on this trip as a driver – and will certainly lend his expertise to the group.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS and LOCAL TRANSPORTATION**

Lodging for the tour will be in a single location (Arbor Inn Hotel) in Monterey, located near the Monterey Regional Airport. Staying in one location will provide us the luxury of establishing a “home base” and eliminate the need to pack and unpack each day, which will increase our birding time! We will be venturing out from our Monterey lodging for each day’s birding in two mini-vans. Our central location puts us within easy reach of numerous birding hotspots – all of our destinations are less than 75 miles from our lodging, with many much closer.

## **FEE and REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

- Tour Fee: \$2350 per person in double occupancy from Monterey, California
- Single Supplement: \$525 (subject to availability)
- Deposit: \$350 – due upon receipt of registration materials
- Final Payment: \$2000 – due August 1, 2018
- Group size is limited to **11 individuals** and early registration is encouraged

## WHAT THE TOUR FEE INCLUDES:

- professional guide service – Mary will be with us for all of our birding
- hotel accommodations for seven nights at the Arbor Inn Hotel (Monterey)
- all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8
- van transportation in two mini-vans
- pick-up from the airport on Day 1 and transport to the airport on Day 7
- boat fee for our pelagic trip with *Shearwater Journeys* (\$140)
- all park entrance fees, parking fees, tolls, etc.
- pre-trip information and a post-trip mailing with a list of all species observed by the group
- eBird checklist sharing (for those using eBird)

## WHAT THE TOUR FEE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- your airfare to/from Monterey, California
- snacks, additional drinks, and alcoholic beverages
- laundry services
- other items of a personal nature
- gratuity for local birding guide services (optional)

## TELEPHONE/ON-SITE REGISTRATION WILL OPEN AS FOLLOWS:

**SEVEN PONDS MEMBERS – TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.**

**NON-MEMBERS – WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.**

Registered participants will be mailed a registration form to return with their tour deposit.

To register for this tour, please call SEVEN PONDS NATURE CENTER at 810-796-3200 on or after the dates listed above. Please be aware that spaces is limited, these tours often fill quickly, and registration is on a *first-call, first-registered* basis.



For more information, contact Daryl Bernard  
at 810-796-3200 or 989-513-5195 (cell)  
or via e-mail at [dbernard@sevenponds.org](mailto:dbernard@sevenponds.org)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF:

Debi Shearwater: *Shearwater Journeys*

Rick Nirschl: *Mary Gustafson*

Kurt St. Amont: *Greater Roadrunner*

Sandrine Biziaux: *California Condors, Acorn Woodpecker*

Christopher Collins: *Black Oystercatcher*

Juan Chavez: *Yellow-billed Magpie*

Tom Moeller: *Townsend's Warbler*

Seven Ponds Nature Center archives: *American Dipper*