

Seven Ponds Nature Center

Monterey, California Birding Tour

September 10-17, 2018

LEADERS & GUIDES

- **Daryl Bernard** (Executive Director - Seven Ponds Nature Center)
- **Mary Gustafson** (Bird Guide Extraordinaire – Lower Rio Grande Valley)
- **Carl Bendorf** (Colorado Birding Adventures, driver par excellence)

PARTICIPANTS

- **Nancy Buck** – Almont, Michigan
- **Karen Flanagan** – Clawson, Michigan
- **Jan Giesken** – Lapeer, Michigan
- **Randy Kursinsky** – Midland, Michigan
- **David Lancaster** – Center Line, Michigan
- **Jackie Lancaster** – Center Line, Michigan
- **Yvonne Lentner** – Lake Orion, Michigan
- **Candy Petrick** – Beulah, Michigan
- **Anita Spencer** – Lapeer, Michigan
- **Marci Stewart** – Metamora, Michigan
- **Colleen Vogler** – Ann Arbor, Michigan

LODGING

Arbor Inn – Monterey, California

DINNERS

Monday, September 10 – **Cooper's Pub & Restaurant**

Tuesday, September 11 – **Cannery Row Brewing Company**

Wednesday, September 12 – **Alvarado Street Brewery & Grill**

Thursday, September 13 – **Hula's Island Grill**

Friday, September 14 – **Gianni's Pizza**

Saturday, September 15 – **Duffy's Tavern & Family Restaurant**

Sunday, September 16 – **The Beach House at Lover's Point**

BIRDING LOCATIONS

Monday, September 10

- **El Carmelo Cemetery** – Pacific Grove
- **Pt. Pinos** – Pacific Grove
- **Otter Point** – Pacific Grove

Tuesday, September 11

- **Andrew Molera State Park**
- **Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park**
- **Various pull-offs along Highway 1** – Big Sur
- **El Estero Lake**

Wednesday, September 12

- **West Cliff Drive / Woodrow Avenue** — Santa Cruz
- **Natural Bridges State Beach**, including Moore Creek Trail, Monarch Boardwalk, and overlook
- **Big Basin Redwoods State Park**
- **Moss Landing Harbor** – Jetty Road

Thursday, September 13

- **Santa Ana Valley Road at John Smith Road** (Golden Eagle stakeout)
- **Airline Highway** – San Benito County (Yellow-billed Magpies)
- **Pinnacles National Park** – Visitor Center and Bear Gulch
- **La Gloria Road** – San Benito County (California Thrasher & Bell's Sparrow)

Friday, September 14

- **Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip** – Monterey Bay

Saturday, September 15

- **Moonglow Dairy**
- **Moss Landing** – Old Salt Ponds and Jetty Road
- **Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve**
- **Laguna Grande Park**
- **Perkins Park** – Pacific Grove
- **Pt. Pinos** – Pacific Grove

Sunday, September 16

- **Robinson Canyon**
- **Jacks Peak County Park**
- **Frog Pond Wetlands Preserve**
- **17 Mile Drive** – Pebble Beach, including Pt. Joe, Bird Rock, Cypress Point

BIRDS

Canada Goose – not overly prevalent, but seen at El Carmelo Cemetery, El Estero Lake, and Laguna Grande Park

Northern Shoveler – at least one individual was seen at Moonglow Dairy

Mallard – noted at several locations, including El Estero Lake, Moss Landing Harbor, Moonglow Dairy, Elkhorn Slough, and Laguna Grande Park

California Quail – we had great looks at a nice-sized covey at Andrew Molera State Park, with additional birds seen at Pinnacles National Park

Wild Turkey – we had a flock of 13 birds mostly inside the pool fencing at Pinnacles National Park near the Visitor Center

Pied-billed Grebe – we saw these grebes at El Estero Lake and Moss Landing Harbor, but our best view of very close individuals was at Laguna Grande Park while looking for the Western Grebe

Western Grebe – with a report of a lone individual at Laguna Grande Park, we headed there in pursuit, and found the grebe out on the lake; the view was distant but definitive through the scopes

Rock Pigeon – Moonglow Dairy (hundreds) and elsewhere

Band-tailed Pigeon – we observed this forest pigeon at several locations, including Andrew Molera State Park, Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, Big Basin Redwoods State Park, and Robinson Canyon

Eurasian Collared-Dove – not overly common, we did find this bird at Santa Ana Valley Road while looking for the Golden Eagle, and again at the Pinnacles National Park Visitor Center

Mourning Dove – we were Mourning Doveless until the day we went searching for the Golden Eagles along Santa Ana Road, where they were very abundant

Greater Roadrunner – the kind of look that Mary does not like! Some passengers in the lead van had a brief look at this speedster as it bolted across La Gloria Road on our way out after seeing California Thrasher and Bell's Sparrow

Vaux's Swift – observed in good numbers at Andrew Molera State Park, Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, and at one of the pull-offs along Highway 1 in Big Sur

White-throated Swift – we had a small number of these swifts overhead at Pinnacles National Park while we watched the pair of condors circling above

Anna's Hummingbird – seemingly omnipresent, these little hummers were seen at several locations and in good numbers throughout our tour

American Coot – a lone individual was observed at close range at El Estero Lake

Black-necked Stilt – these long-legged birds were ever-present on the pond across the road from Moss Landing Harbor, but unfortunately there was no safe place to pull over; so we had to be content with slow drive-by looks

Black Oystercatcher – we had good looks at these unique and distinctive birds on the rocky outcrops at Pt. Pinos, Natural Bridges State Beach, Perkins Park in Pacific Grove, and at Bird Rock on the 17 Mile Drive

Black-bellied Plover – seen in sizeable numbers at Pt. Pinos (on two separate days) and Moss Landing Harbor

Semipalmated Plover – we saw these little plovers a few times at Moss Landing, but had our biggest numbers at Moonglow Dairy

Killdeer – a couple individuals were seen at Moonglow Dairy near the steaming compost heaps

Whimbrel – never seen in large numbers, we nonetheless had this bird three times: Pt. Pinos (2), Natural Bridges State Beach overlook (1), and Moss Landing Harbor (1)

Long-billed Curlew – a few individuals were seen at Elkhorn Slough, but our biggest numbers were at Moss Landing Harbor, where we had great looks at two dozen (or more) of these unique, aptly-named shorebirds

Marbled Godwit – we had two birds on the beach at our Spanish Bay stop on the 17 Mile Road, but saw incredible numbers (~250) at Moss Landing Harbor

Black Turnstone – present at nearly every rocky spot along the beach, we saw these little birds at West Cliff Drive/Woodrow Avenue, Natural Bridges State Beach overlook, Moss Landing Harbor, Pt. Pinos, and Spanish Bay (17 Mile Drive)

Surfbird – perhaps the most challenging bird we found, this one took some serious scoping effort along Pt. Pinos on a chilly, windy day; we eventually got a lone bird in the scope, providing a decent look for everybody; definitely a BVD bird!

Sanderling – these small, active shorebirds were seen in very large numbers at Moss Landing Harbor, and again at Spanish Bay on the 17 Mile Drive

Least Sandpiper – big numbers of these tiny shorebirds were seen at Moss Landing Harbor, and we also had them at Moonglow Dairy and Elkhorn Slough

Pectoral Sandpiper – at least one individual was scoped on the flats at Moonglow Dairy

Red-necked Phalarope – these interesting shorebirds were seen at Moss Landing Harbor and Moonglow Dairy, as well as over the open ocean on our Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip

Red Phalarope – appearing lighter gray overall and lacking streaking on their backs, we observed these phalaropes on the open seas during our Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip

Spotted Sandpiper – this familiar shorebird was observed at Otter Point, Moonglow Dairy, Moss Landing Harbor, and Cypress Point (17 Mile Drive)

Wandering Tattler – lone individuals were seen at Pt. Pinos (where we had extensive looks at a very close bird feeding on kelp flies) and at Bird Rock (17 Mile Drive)

Greater Yellowlegs – seen on the same day in two different locations: Moss Landing (old salt ponds) and Elkhorn Slough

Willet – perhaps the most prevalent shorebird on our tour, we saw these large, gray birds at Pt. Pinos, Moss Landing Harbor, Moonglow Dairy, Elkhorn Slough, and Spanish Bay (17 Mile Drive)

Pomarine Jaeger – observed from the boat on our Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip

Parasitic Jaeger – observed from the boat on our Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip as well as from shore at Otter Point

Common Murre – common near the boat during our Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip, we also had these alcids from shore at West Cliff Drive/Woodrow Avenue (jackhammer site) in Santa Cruz, albeit very distant looks

Marbled Murrelet – a pair were observed through our scopes from shore in Santa Cruz at West Cliff Drive/Woodrow Avenue, and proved to be Carl's only Lifer of the tour

Rhinoceros Auklet – decent numbers were seen from the boat during our Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip

Pigeon Guillemot – seen from the boat shortly after heading offshore during our Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip; Life Bird #500 for Daryl!

Bonaparte's Gull – two of these dainty gulls were spotted at a distance on a small duck pond from the overlook at Elkhorn Slough

Heerman's Gull – seen regularly along the rocky coastline, as well as on the open sea during our pelagic trip

Ring-billed Gull – Mary found a lone individual among the horde of Western, California, and Heerman's gulls at Moss Landing Harbor; apparently not quite as common on the California coast as they are at Michigan McDonald's...

Western Gull – the ever-present gull of our tour, and our early morning “rooster” wake-up call at the Arbor Inn; these birds were noted on 20 eBird checklists during our tour

California Gull – the smaller cousin of the Western Gull (and the state bird of Utah), we saw these gulls at a number of locations, including El Estero Lake, Moss Landing Harbor, and Laguna Grande Park

Elegant Tern – most notable when seen (and heard) in large flocks flying overhead at Moss Landing Harbor; we also had several individuals on our pelagic trip; Life Bird #700 for Nancy!

Common Loon – we saw lone individuals at West Cliff Drive/Woodrow Avenue in Santa Cruz and early on during our pelagic trip

Black-footed Albatross – a single bird gave good looks during our Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip

Northern Fulmar – one of the more common offshore birds seen during our pelagic trip

Sooty Shearwater – seen throughout the day during our Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip

Pink-footed Shearwater – small numbers of these larger shearwaters were seen on our pelagic trip

Ashy Storm-Petrel – a lone individual gave a quick look from the left side of the boat during our pelagic trip, but we never encountered more of these small open-sea birds

Brandt's Cormorant – the most commonly seen cormorant along the rocky shoreline, seen by the dozens and hundreds

Pelagic Cormorant – the smaller cousin of the Brandt's Cormorant, we had these birds in small numbers at several locations, including Pt. Pinos, Perkins Park, and Pt. Joe and Cypress Point (both along the 17 Mile Drive)

Double-crested Cormorant – the inland, freshwater cormorant of the Monterey area, seen by our group at El Estero Lake, Moss Landing Harbor, and Laguna Grande Park, along with ocean views at Pt. Pinos and Pt. Joe (17 Mile Drive)

American White Pelican – much less common along the coastline than their brown cousins, we had these pelicans in the scope at Moonglow Dairy

Brown Pelican – ever-present along the coastline, seen in squadrons numbering in the tens and twenties, and on the rocks in the hundreds

Great Blue Heron – seemingly less common in the Monterey area than Great Egrets, we saw a bird here or there at a few locations, including El Estero Lake, Moss Landing Harbor, Moonglow Dairy, and Elkhorn Slough

Great Egret – seen in several places, it was perhaps most interesting to watch these waders balancing on the floating kelp beds, especially in large numbers at West Cliff Drive/Woodrow Avenue in Santa Cruz; we also had several in the marsh along the Butterfly Boardwalk at Natural Bridges State Beach

Snowy Egret – we had these smaller egrets at both Natural Bridges State Beach and Laguna Grande Park

Black-crowned Night-Heron – several were seen on the island at El Estero Lake

White-faced Ibis – a lone individual gave a brief fly-over view at Moonglow Dairy – probably not seen by everybody

California Condor – the bird of the tour? Six different individuals were observed: first we had distant views of a lone bird at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, then a pair were seen above the distant cliffs a short while later at a pull-off along Highway 1 at Big Sur; the following day we had fantastic looks at two birds as they floated overhead in large, lazy circles at Pinnacles National Park just outside the Visitor Center (including black #69 – Phoebe the Forager), and then a short while later we had a lone bird overhead near the Bear Gulch Visitor Center at Pinnacles National Park

Turkey Vulture – seen every day except the day of our pelagic trip

Osprey – a lone individual was observed at Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park along Highway 1

White-tailed Kite – we had wonderful looks at a bird kiting in the ocean breeze at Pt. Pinos on our first day, had another bird at Andrew Molera State Park, then enjoyed at least four birds during much of our time along the Moore Creek Trail at Natural Bridges State Beach

Golden Eagle – following a hot tip from Debi Shearwater, we found a lone Golden Eagle perched on a utility pole at Santa Ana Road/John Smith Road in San Benito County on our way to Pinnacles National Park

Cooper's Hawk – seen at Andrew Molera State Park and at one of the Highway 1 pull-offs at Big Sur

Red-shouldered Hawk – several individuals seen throughout the tour, including great looks at a perched bird at Cypress Point (17 Mile Road)

Red-tailed Hawk – regularly seen throughout our tour, often from the vans – especially on the day we ventured inland to Pinnacles National Park

Great Horned Owl – Carl spotted a very cooperative, very sleepy owl perched just off the trail at Jacks Peak County Park – our only owl of the tour

Belted Kingfisher – seen and heard along the Monarch Boardwalk at Natural Bridges State Beach and again at Elkhorn Slough

Acorn Woodpecker – this very distinctive woodpecker was seen and heard at several locations throughout our tour, usually in extended family groups; we did get a good look at a cache tree at one of our stops

Downy Woodpecker – this familiar woodpecker was seen at a few places during our tour, including Natural Bridges State Beach and Elkhorn Slough

Hairy Woodpecker – more often heard than seen, this woodpecker was noted at several places, but often we didn't take the time to track it down as we were on the hunt for birds less familiar to us

Pileated Woodpecker – we had one of these regal woodpeckers while enjoying our picnic lunch at Big Basin Redwoods State Park

Northern Flicker – heard a few times, we got looks at the red-shafted version of this bird at La Gloria Road while searching for Bell's Sparrow

American Kestrel – recorded at three separate locations: Highway 1 pull-off at Big Sur, Santa Ana Road/John Smith Road (Golden Eagle stakeout), and Moonglow Dairy; we also saw numerous individuals on power lines, especially in the open grassland of the Golden Eagle area

Peregrine Falcon – we spotted a lone individual high in the sky at Andrew Molera State Park while watching a distant White-tailed Kite

Pacific-slope Flycatcher – recorded often throughout our tour at numerous locations; the default Empid flycatcher of coastal California

Black Phoebe – seen often and just about everywhere we went!

Loggerhead Shrike – several were seen on power lines in the Golden Eagle stakeout area, mostly from the vans

Hutton's Vireo – we saw this vireo (which appeared at first to be easily confused with Ruby-crowned Kinglet) at numerous locations throughout the tour

Warbling Vireo – especially present at Frog Pond Wetlands Preserve, and also seen at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park and Robinson Canyon

Steller's Jay – these fun picnic birds were seen at several locations, including El Carmelo Cemetery, Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, Natural Bridges State Beach, Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Pinnacles National Park, and Jacks Peak County Park

California Scrub-Jay – everywhere, all the time, and recorded nearly every day

Yellow-billed Magpie – we happened upon this California endemic on the way to Pinnacles National Park, then found a few more on the way home; great bird!

American Crow – we saw crows nearly every place we went; it seemed odd to see them perched on utility wires, a behavior we rarely see in Michigan

Common Raven – these large corvids were observed along Highway 1 at Big Sur, at the Golden Eagle stakeout, soaring high overhead at Pinnacles National Park, and (heard only) at Robinson Canyon

Violet-green Swallow – recorded at a handful of locations, probably best seen at Andrew Molera State Park

Barn Swallow – this familiar swallow was most notably seen at El Estero Lake

Chestnut-backed Chickadee – typical of chickadees, these active birds were seen foraging in small bands at numerous locations, often accompanied by Bushtits, Townsend's Warblers, and nuthatches, among others

Oak Titmouse – first seen at Pinnacles National Park near the Visitor Center, we also had good looks at Bear Gulch (Pinnacles NP) and La Gloria Road, plus a brief glimpse at Frog Pond Wetlands Preserve

Bushtit – although plain, we enjoyed the active antics of these chickadee relatives at several locations; first seen at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park

White-breasted Nuthatch – the western subspecies of this bird sounds much different than our birds at home; we saw them at a few locations, including good looks at Pinnacles National Park near the Visitor Center

Pygmy Nuthatch – we had great looks at this more-easily-heard-than-seen bird in the eucalyptus trees near the parking lot at Natural Bridges State Beach; more good looks were had in the cypress trees at Cypress Point along the 17 Mile Drive

Brown Creeper – we often came upon these quiet little mouse-like birds as they worked their way up tree trunks and around thick branches at Andrew Molera State Park, Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Jacks Peak County Park, and Frog Pond Wetlands Preserve

Canyon Wren – we spotted this great bird working the rocks along the steep slope behind the Beach Gulch Visitor Center at Pinnacles National Park

Pacific Wren – this west coast relative of our Winter Wren was heard but never seen by our group along the road in Robinson Canyon

Bewick's Wren – we had good looks at this wren (pronounced like the car) at Pinnacles National Park, Elkhorn Slough, and Robinson Canyon

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – seen along the trail at Elkhorn Slough

Wrentit – this skulking bird was heard but not seen three days in a row before finally showing itself at Elkhorn Slough, then again the next day at Robinson Canyon

Western Bluebird – first seen on day 1 at El Carmelo Cemetery, we also had these birds at Andrew Molera State Park and Pinnacles National Park near the Visitor Center

Swainson's Thrush – we had a lone bird at Big Basin Redwoods State Park

American Robin – seemingly absent from much of the coast, we finally came upon a small gathering of these familiar thrushes at Jacks Peak County Park

California Thrasher – great looks at this hard-to-find bird along La Gloria Road, where we were primarily searching for Bell's Sparrow

European Starling – yes, we saw starlings

House Finch – seen in small numbers at several locations

Purple Finch – we saw scruffy versions of this finch along the Moore Creek Trail at Natural Bridges State Beach

Lesser Goldfinch – at least one bird was seen at Elkhorn Slough

Lawrence's Goldfinch – great looks at these beautiful little goldfinches as they came to the water feature at the Visitor Center at Pinnacles National Park

American Goldfinch – seen along La Gloria Road when searching for Bell's Sparrow

Chipping Sparrow – we saw a lone individual near the Visitor Center at Pinnacles National Park

Lark Sparrow – these birds were seen along the road by the second van on the way to Pinnacles National Park, shortly after the Yellow-billed Magpie location

Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) – the Oregon subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco was seen each day throughout our stay (excepting our pelagic day), at numerous locations; they were recorded on ten different eBird checklists

White-crowned Sparrow – seen along Jetty Road at Moss Landing Harbor as well as Elkhorn Slough

Bell's Sparrow – with some effort everybody was able to get on these sparrows along La Gloria Road on our return trip from Pinnacles National Park

Savannah Sparrow – a lone bird was seen by the front van as we were leaving Moonglow Dairy

Song Sparrow – the darker western version of this familiar sparrow was observed by the group at numerous locations throughout our tour

California Towhee – this large, plain sparrow with rufous undertail coverts was seen by our group along the Moore Creek Trail at Natural Bridges State Beach, Bear Gulch at Pinnacles National Park, and Robinson Canyon

Spotted Towhee – we “spotted” this western bird at Natural Bridges State Beach, Bear Gulch at Pinnacles National Park, and Robinson Canyon; (formerly lumped with our Eastern Towhee as the Rufous-sided Towhee)

Western Meadowlark – several birds were seen from the vans as we were en route to the Golden Eagle stakeout

Red-winged Blackbird – numerous at Moonglow Dairy

Red-winged Blackbird (California Bicolored ssp) – this unique subspecies was seen at El Estero Lake and the overlook at Natural Bridges State Beach

Tricolored Blackbird – through some careful scanning, we found several of these birds at Moonglow Dairy, including a few sporting fancy leg bands

Brown-headed Cowbird – observed among the cows at Moonglow Dairy

Brewer's Blackbird – this glossy blackbird, which is uncommon on the west side of our state, was seemingly everywhere, all the time on our tour

Orange-crowned Warbler – one bird was seen at Elkhorn Slough, although it's likely not everybody got on it

MacGillivray's Warbler – this reclusive, skulky bird is very challenging for entire groups to get on, and our bird on the Monarch Boardwalk at Natural Bridges State Beach was no different, as it was probably seen by only a handful of our group

Common Yellowthroat – seen at a couple locations on our tour, including along the Monarch Boardwalk at Natural Bridges State Beach and at Moonglow Dairy

Bay-breasted Warbler – a central California rarity, we had a hatch-year female-type in the eucalyptus trees at Moonglow Dairy that gave us decent looks; our sighting was subsequently accepted by the local eBird reviewer

Yellow Warbler – rather drab versions of this common warbler were seen at a few locations, including Andrew Molera State Park, El Estero Lake, and Moonglow Dairy

Black-throated Gray Warbler – we had good looks at this western warbler at Andrew Molera State Park and Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park

Townsend's Warbler – we never grew tired of seeing this energetic, colorful western warbler, which was observed at several locations, including Andrew Molera State Park, Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Moonglow Dairy, Robinson Canyon, Jacks Peak County Park, Frog Pond Wetlands Preserve, and Cypress Point (17 Mile Drive)

Hermit Warbler – searching, searching, searching...and finally found at Jacks Peak County Park

Wilson's Warbler – two birds were seen at Andrew Molera State Park

Western Tanager – good looks were had at Andrew Molera State Park, Natural Bridges State Beach, and Moonglow Dairy

Black-headed Grosbeak – a fly-away look was all we had of this bird along the Moore Creek Trail at Natural Bridges State Beach

House Sparrow – we FINALLY found a House Sparrow at the jackhammer spot in Santa Cruz (West Cliff Drive/Woodrow Avenue); thanks to Mary for pointing this bird out to our group!

**TOTAL BIRDS SEEN/HEARD BY OUR GROUP: 139 + 1 subspecies
(your individual total may differ)**

MAMMALS (12)

Harbor Seal - *Phoca vitulina*

California Sea Lion – *Zalophus californianus*

Sea Otter – *Enhydra lutris*

Columbian Black-tailed Deer (subspecies of Mule Deer) – *Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*

Rock Squirrel – *Otospermophilus variegatus*

Western Gray Squirrel - *Sciurus griseus*

Merriam's Chipmunk – *Neotamias merriami*

Western Brush Rabbit – *Sylvilagus bachmani*

Coyote – *Canis latrans*

Blue Whale – *Balaenoptera musculus*

Humpback Whale – *Megaptera novaeangliae*

Risso's Dolphin – *Grampus griseus*

REPTILES (1)

Western Fence Lizard – *Sceloporus occidentalis*

FISH (1)

Ocean Sunfish – *Mola mola*