

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc.

MORRO BAY INTRODUCTORY TOUR

November 5-9, 2004

Leader: Brad Schram

ITINERARY

November 5: Meet at the hotel in Morro Bay, get-acquainted dinner.

November 6: Bird Morro Bay, Montana de Oro State Park, Turri Rd.—Los Osos Valley

November 7: Chorro Valley, Cuesta Grade, Santa Margarita, Pozo Rd. to Santa Margarita Lake, Cuesta Ridge—strangely few birds here this year!

November 8: Bird the Elfin Forest, Laguna Lake (SLO), Shell Beach, Pismo Creek, Oceano cpgrd., Oceano Stables, Edna Valley

November 9: Departure for home.

BIRDS

Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) a couple birds off Shell Beach

Common Loon (*G. immer*) good looks at Morro Bay

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) Widespread; both Morro Bay and freshwater.

Eared Grebe (*P. nigricollis*) both salt water and fresh, daily

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) small numbers daily.

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchus*) Morro Bay and Laguna Lake

Brown Pelican (*P. occidentalis*) Common near shore.

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) Seen coastally and on ponds and lakes.

Brandt's Cormorant (*P. penicillatus*) Seen on off-shore rocks.

Pelagic Cormorant (*P. pelagicus*) On off-shore rocks, especially at Montana de Oro SP.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) Regular in coastal marsh and wetlands.

Great Egret (*A. albus*) Seen daily near water and in open fields

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) a few at Morro Bay

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) ubiquitous over rangeland

Canada Goose (*Anser canadensis*) A few at Laguna Lake

Cackling (Canada) Goose (*A. hutchinsii*) fine looks of one at the mouth of Pismo Creek

Brant (*Branta bernicla*) a large, if distant, flock at Morro Bay

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) Santa Margarita Lake

American Wigeon (*A. americana*) off the Elfin Forest overlook, Morro Bay.

Mallard (*A. platyrhynchos*) daily wherever there's water

Northern Shoveler (*A. clypeata*) Morro Bay from Elfin Forest overlook

Northern Pintail (*A. acuta*) Elfin Forest overlook

Lesser Scaup (*A. affinis*) a large flock off the Elfin Forest, Morro Bay

Surf Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) a flock at Morro Bay

Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) Santa Margarita and Oceano Park

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) a male at Oceano Lagoon
 Red-breasted Merganser (*M. serrator*) a few at Morro Bay
 Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) Ubiquitous on bays, lakes, and ponds.
 Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) fabulous 'scope look at perched bird in Morro Bay!
 White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) a few in grassland east of Morro Bay
 Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) hunting birds seen daily
 Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) a single bird
 Cooper's Hawk (*A. cooperii*) two seen briefly
 Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) Seen daily, this beautiful hawk is common locally
 Red-tailed Hawk (*B. jamaicensis*) Our commonest large hawk in the west, seen
 commonly each day.
 Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) An adult overhead on the Pozo Rd.; excellent!
 American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) This beautiful small falcon was seen commonly in
 open country.
 Peregrine Falcon (*F. peregrinus*) a bird at Morro Rock overhead the first morning
 Wild Turkey (*Melagris gallopavo*) Introduced into SLO county; we saw a large flock of
 these impressive birds just west of SLO the second morning
 California Quail (*C. californica*) abundant in SLO county, several excellent views
 American Coot (*Fulica americana*) Ubiquitous on standing water.
 Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) seen at shoreline around Morro Bay
 Killdeer (*C. vociferus*) In open fields and along lake shorelines
 American Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*) On the rocky shore at
 Shell Beach and by Morro Rock—one of the group favorites
 American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) A large flock seen from the Morro Bay Elfin
 Forest overlook.
 Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*) close looks near MB marina
 Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) Common at the ocean shore.
 Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) A tail bobber, seen along Morro Bay shoreline.
 Long-billed Curlew (*N. americanus*) Subtly beautiful, seen in good numbers in and
 around Morro Bay.
 Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) Another large, beautiful shorebird; common along the
 ocean shore.
 Black Turnstone (*A. melanocephala*) Small numbers of this boldly patterned bird at Shell
 Beach
 Surfbird (*Aphriza virgata*) fine looks at Shell Beach
 Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) Common at Morro Bay and sandy shorelines.
 Least Sandpiper (*C. minutilla*) Common around Morro Bay
 Dunlin (*C. alpina*) Seen in large flocks at Morro Bay from the overlook
 Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) Birds seen at Morro Bay were silent, but
 likely this species
 Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) a single bird close to shore at Morro Bay
 Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*) a few birds in damp fields near Laguna Lake
 Heerman's Gull (*L. heermanni*) good looks up-close of this beautiful gull
 Ring-billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*) a few with loafing Westerns and Californias
 California Gull (*L. californicus*) daily in small numbers along coast and Laguna Lake
 Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*) a single bird at Oceano Lagoon
 Western Gull (*L. occidentalis*) the common large, dark-backed, gull of the CA coast
 Glaucous-winged Gull (*L. glaucescens*) a couple at Oceano Lagoon
 +Western x Glaucous-winged Gull hybrid—a couple birds seen on south coast
 Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) a few at Morro Bay the 1st morning
 Elegant Tern (*S. elegans*) modest numbers still lingering around Morro Bay
 Forster's Tern (*S. forsteri*) a few birds always about, fishing MB

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) an introduced species, only seen in town
 Mourning Dove (*Z. macroura*) seen commonly in or over a variety of habitats
 Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) introduced and burgeoning population
 Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) THE common, resident, hummer of the CA coast,
 seen daily
 Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) around MB and at Montana de Oro
 Acorn Woodpecker (*M. formicivorus*) clans of these birds in their territories are
 characteristic of the California oak forests, seen along Pozo Rd.
 Nuttall's Woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*) virtually a California endemic, seen by all
 Hairy Woodpecker (*P. villosus*) Seen at Oceano
 Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) along Pozo Rd on surprisingly quiet morning.
 Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) commonly seen, a classic flycatcher silhouette
 Say's Phoebe (*S. saya*) in and around fields and habitat edges, a wintering species
 Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) seen along Turri Rd. in open country
 Hutton's Vireo (*Vireo huttoni*) one came in to tape in oaks by Santa Margarita Lake
 Western Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) an aggressive generalist, seen daily
 Yellow-billed Magpie (*Pica nuttallii*) this lovely true CA endemic gave us fine multiple
 looks in the oak savanna near Santa Margarita
 American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) a generalist, seen in most habitats
 Common Raven (*C. corax*) a few seen along Pozo Rd.
 Chestnut-backed Chickadee (*P. rufescens*) a few birds at Oceano
 Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*) common in oaks, seen at Sta. Marg. Lake
 Bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*) winter flocks in a few locations
 White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) Seen along Pozo Rd.
 Canyon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus*) heard only, Morro Rock
 Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) common in many habitats, and commonly heard
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) common, occasionally seen with crest up!
 Western Bluebird (*Sialis mexicana*) seen in small groups in oak savanna in interior
 Hermit Thrush (*C. guttatus*) often heard, a few seen at close range
 Wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*) the voice of the chaparral, well seen on Cuesta Ridge
 Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) a few in Morro Bay neighborhoods
 California Thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*) teed up for 'scope looks in elfin forest
 chaparral, what a bill!
 European Starling (*Sternus vulgaris*) no lack of sky-rats in towns
 Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) a bird of many field marks, the butter-
 yellow rump almost defines "field mark"!
 Townsend's Warbler (*D. townsendi*) at Oceano at close range
 Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) a striking bird, in chaparral at elfin forest
 California Towhee (*P. crissalis*) common brown bird; a large ground sparrow
 Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) a few seen at MB first morning
 White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) common wintering sparrow, striking—
 outstanding field marks
 Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Z. atricapilla*) usually associated with chaparral, a winter
 visitor from the north
 Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) seen at Santa Margarita Lake
 Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) commonly seen throughout
 Western Meadowlark (*Sternella neglecta*) in grassland east of MB, Turri Rd.
 Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) common in moist habitats
 Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) at Oceano Lagoon, undergoing range-
 expansion
 Brown-headed Cowbird (*M. ater*) seen among other "blackbirds"

House Finch (*C. mexicanus*) commonly seen throughout, the answer to 50% of bird questions in CA: “I have a bird in my backyard with red on the forehead and breast....”

Lesser Goldfinch (*C. psaltria*) common in winter flocks where thistles are seeding

American Goldfinch (*C. tristis*) a few near the Morro Bay Marina

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) in MB proper, around the motel

113 Species

MAMMALS

Sea Otter

Mule Deer

Harbor Seal

California Ground Squirrel