

# MONTEREY BAY BIRDING FESTIVAL SEPT. 24-27, 2009

## FULL-DAY FIELD TRIPS

**VENTANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY** - Condors, Bird banding demonstration and searching for rarities

**Date**                **Friday, Sept. 25, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**  
                              **Sunday, Sept. 27, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Description** Ventana Wildlife Society operates the famous Big Sur Ornithology Lab, one of the prime birding locations in the entire state of California. Located adjacent to Andrew Molera State Park, along the spectacular Big Sur Coast, this trip is actually three trips in one; vagrant chasing and riparian birding along the Big Sur River; a tour of the lab and a demonstration of mist netting and banding birds; and, special van trips to view California Condors. Lunch provided.

**Cost:** \$90

**Trip Leaders:** Ventana Wildlife Society

**Transportation:** Caravan 50 miles from Watsonville Civic Plaza.

**Activity:** Moderate

### **SAN FELIPE LAKE/LLAGAS CREEK**

**Date**                **Friday, Sept. 25, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Description** Explore the upper reaches of the Pajaro River watershed on this rare opportunity to bird the privately held wetlands surrounding San Felipe Lake in northernmost San Benito County. While it is still early for wintering waterfowl, we should encounter a good mix of raptors, rails, songbirds and waterfowl summering over, as well as a large resident population of American White Pelicans. This 2,300-acre ranch is the location of many first county records. Fall records have included Tropical and Eastern Kingbird. Loggerhead Shrikes spin away off fences, Prairie Falcon is regular and a resident healthy colony of Burrowing Owls may make an appearance. The property is home to a robust deer herd and coyotes are also frequently seen. Nearby, we will explore a tributary to the Pajaro, Llagas Creek. This creek, managed by the Santa Clara County Water District, is bounded by a restored native plant corridor. Paralleling the city of Gilroy's waste water treatment plant, it consistently offers surprises in any season. Again, access at this location is restricted. Participants should pack lunches and drinks for this nearly-all-day trip. We will need to carpool as parking is limited

**Cost:** \$25

**Trip Leader:** Mark Paxton

**Transportation:** Caravan/Carpool 50 miles from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Limited

## **PINNACLES NATIONAL MONUMENT**

**Date**                    **Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
**Sunday, Sept. 27, 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Description** Pinnacles provides the birder with a chance to look for specialties of the California interior landscape, including a chance at Yellow-billed Magpie, Canyon Wren, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Greater Roadrunner, Prairie Falcon, and Loggerhead Shrike. Next to Big Sur, Pinnacles offers the next best chance of seeing a California Condor. A full day trip. Make sure you have a full tank of gas.

**Cost:** \$25

**Trip Leaders:** Pinnacles National Monument

**Transportation:** Caravan/carpool 60 miles to San Benito County

**Activity:** Moderate

## **CONDOR RELEASE AT PINNACLES NATIONAL MONUMENT**

**Date**                    **Saturday, Sept. 26, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Description** Pinnacles National Monument's 6<sup>th</sup> Condor Release will include informative lectures and celebrations of the latest additions to the 22 California Condors flying free in the area. Join birders from around the state in this monumental release! The Condor release site is a 1.5 mile hike in the National Monument, so be prepared for a bit of a trek. We'll of course look at birds along the trail to the release site, and en route and on the way home from Pinnacles. Because a passive release method is used (they're not pushed out; instead, they fly out when they're ready), there is a chance the juvenile condors may not leave the holding pen. Even so, there will be a good chance to see already free-flying condors. If the condors fly early, we'll bird the surrounding areas, with a good chance for Lawrence's Goldfinch, Greater Roadrunner, Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, and Canyon Wren.

**Cost:** \$35

**Trip Leaders:** Pinnacles National Monument

**Transportation:** Caravan/carpool 60 miles to San Benito County

**Activity:** Moderate

## **CALIFORNIA SPECIALTIES**

**Date**                    **Thursday, Sept. 24, 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
**Sunday, Sept. 27, 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Description** This trip will focus on seeing birds unique to California and the Western United States, such as Yellow-billed Magpie, California Thrasher, Wrentit, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Snowy Plover, California Towhee, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Clark's Grebe, White-tailed Kite, etc. Ranging from Pacific beaches to the foothills to the Salinas Valley, this fast-paced trip will help maximize your list of western birds. Perfect for the out-of-state birder, but fun for anyone.

**Cost:** \$25

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Caravan; have a full tank of gas for extensive travel

**Activity:** Moderate

## **HALF-DAY FIELD TRIPS**

**KIRBY PARK & ELKHORN SLOUGH RESERVE** (Interior)

**Date**                    **Thursday., Sept. 24, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description** Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, in the heart of Elkhorn Slough, is one of the premier bird watching sites in the western United States. Birding from the Reserve offers an excellent sampling of some of the many habitats and over 340 species that visit or take refuge throughout this watershed. Elkhorn Slough's importance as part of the great fall and spring migrations has led the American Birding Conservancy to declare it a "globally important" area.

**Cost:** \$15

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Trips departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activitiy:** Moderate

### **ELKHORN SLOUGH/MOSS LANDING (Coastal)**

**Date**                    **Friday, Sept. 25, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description** This half-day trip will find us scouring locations such as the mudflats of Moss Landing, visiting the famous Moon Glow Dairy, or checking the fresh-water pond of Zmudowski State Beach for the many migrating and wintering shorebirds, gulls, and waterfowl of the region. Peregrine Falcons and Merlin are often attracted to the large flocks of shorebirds, and California Sea Otters are usually in the area. Come see why Elkhorn Slough has long been a target destination for birders from around the world. Exact itinerary will be determined based on local conditions.

**Cost :** \$15

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Trip departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Moderate

### **WATSONVILLE SLOUGHS**

**Date**                    **Friday, Sept. 25, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Sunday, Sept. 27, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description** Harkins, East & West Struve, Hanson, Gallighan and Watsonville Sloughs comprise the heart of the Watsonville Slough system. A variety of shorebirds, raptors, gulls, ducks, sparrows, and songbirds are present at the varied habitats of the sloughs and their associated uplands. Learn the local access sites for finding birds in Watsonville's front yard.

**Cost:** \$15

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Trip departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activitiy:** Moderate, Limited

### **PAJARO DUNES/SUNSET BEACH**

**Date**                    **Thursday, Sept. 24, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description** Shorebirds, songbirds, and waterfowl are all likely as we visit the varied habitats of Sunset Beach and Pajaro Dunes. Snowy Plovers nest on the dunes themselves, and the Pajaro River Mouth has long been one of the premier locations for rare shorebirds, gulls and terns. Stands of Monterey Cypress and willow patches provide habitat for a variety of passerines. This trip highlights some of the richest birding areas of the entire Pajaro Valley.

**Cost:** \$15

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Trip departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Moderate

### **PINTO LAKE AND LOCAL HOTSPOTS**

**Date**                    **Thursday, Sept. 24, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
                              **Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
                              **Sunday, Sept. 27, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description** Pinto Lake's many trails and wetlands harbor the Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Kite, California Thrasher, woodpeckers, ducks, and songbirds. We'll visit Pinto Lake City Park for a birder's quick-fix view of the lake, and then wander the trails of Pinto Lake County Park for a more intensive birding experience. Recommended for both beginners and experienced birders.

**Cost:** \$15

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Moderate

### **SALINAS RIVERMOUTH**

**Date**                    **Friday, Sept. 25, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
                              **Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
                              **Sunday, Sept. 27, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description** The Salinas Rivermouth offers an excellent opportunity to find a vagrant shorebird, observe several species of terns, study Snowy Plovers, catch a Northern Harrier or a Peregrine Falcon on the wing, or just enjoy a walk to the Pacific Ocean. Fall is the premier time of the year to visit this locale.

**Cost:** \$15

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Moderate

### **VAGRANT CHASING AT THE CARMEL RIVERMOUTH**

**Date**                    **Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**  
                              **Sunday, Sept. 27, 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

**Description** September and fall migration is the time birders head to hot spots such as the Carmel Rivermouth to search for vagrants and rarities not found in the area at any other time of the year. The Carmel Rivermouth's riparian corridor is a fine example of coastal Monterey Bay birding. In addition to the passerines along the river, the mouth of the river itself often provides excellent shorebird habitat. Rubber boots or hip waders are advised to enable stream crossings.

**Cost:** \$15

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza, caravan to Carmel

**Activity:** Moderate

### **NATURAL BRIDGES STATE BEACH**

**Date**                      **Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description** Natural Bridges is another locations that combines the appeal of vagrant warblers with easy access to the beach and ocean. Three species of cormorants are almost automatic; rocky shorebirds are expected, and a fine variety of warblers, sparrows, and other songbirds are likely along the riparian corridor trail.

**Cost:** \$15

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Trip departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Moderate, Limited

### **RANCHO DEL OSO**

**Date**                      **Saturday., Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**  
**Sunday, Sept. 27, 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

**Description** Birding at this beautiful and historic locale brings together birds of a variety of habitats in a limited area. Turning from the birds of the ocean, beach, creek mouth and marsh, one can search amid riparian, Monterey pine, mixed evergreen and coast redwood forests. Along with local favorites, such as Wrentit, Pygmy Nuthatch, Purple Finch, House Wren, Hermit Warbler, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Marbled Murrelet, and various woodpeckers, this is a good place to encounter raptors and a chance for rare migrants and vagrants. Plan for a few miles of walking on mostly gentle slopes.

**Cost:** \$15

**Trip Leader:** Jennifer Rycenga

**Transportation:** Departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Moderate

### **POINT PINOS & THE MONTEREY PENINSULA**

**Date**                      **Friday, Sept. 25, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Sunday, Sept. 27, 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description** Besides being one of the premier birding destinations of the area, Point Pinos has the added bonus of being one of the most scenic destinations of the region. The crashing waves and rocks are a great place for birds like Black Turnstones, Black Oystercatchers, and other rocky shorebirds, Coastal cypress trees are often excellent for migrant songbirds, and even true seabirds can sometimes be seen from some of the westernmost points of land adjacent to Monterey Bay.

**Cost:** \$15

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Moderate

### **OWLS OF ROBINSON CANYON**

**Date**                      **Friday, Sept. 25, 8:45 p.m. to 10:45 p.m.**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 8:45 p.m. to 10:45 p.m.**

**Description** Robinson Canyon is one of California's most productive owling sites and is sure to be one of our first trips to sell out. Western Screech, Great Horned, Barn and Northern Saw-White Owls are all likely, and Northern Pygmy and the endangered Spotted Owl are possible. This field trip, limited to 10, is a must if you're looking for owls. Bring a flashlight if possible.

**Cost:** \$25

**Trip Leader:** Steve Rovell

**Transportation:** Departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Limited

### **BEGINNERS BIRDING**

**Date**                      **Friday, Sept. 25, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Sunday, Sept. 27, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description** Unsure about how to find birds in your binoculars? Don't know a Great Blue Heron from a Mourning Dove? Or, just looking for some tips about how to improve your identification skills? Come join us for an introductory bird walk emphasizing the ABC's of identifying and observing birds in the wild.

**Cost:** \$5

**Trip Leaders:** To be announced

**Transportation:** Departs from Watsonville Civic Plaza

**Activity:** Moderate

## **WATER ADVENTURES**

### **SHEARWATER JOURNEYS PELAGIC TRIPS**

**Date**                    **Thursday, Sept. 24, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.**  
**Friday, Sept. 25, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.**  
**Sunday, Sept. 27, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Description** Monterey Bay's incredible submarine canyon hosts a variety of sealife and bird-life within just a few miles of shore. Debi Shearwater has been conducting these trips for more than 30 years, and her tours attract sea birders from all over the globe. We can expect to see whales and dolphins in addition to Sooty, Pink-footed, and Buller's Shearwaters, Rhinoceros Auklets, Pomarine & Parasitic Jaegers, and maybe a South Polar Skua. Black-footed Albatross, Black & Ashy Storm-Petrels, Sabine's Gull, and Arctic Tern are just a partial list of our possibilities.

**Cost:** \$130

**Trip Leaders:** Each trip will include a minimum of four leaders, including Debi Shearwater

**Transportation:** Go directly to the boat trips on Fisherman's Wharf Monterey. Do not meet at Watsonville Civic Plaza. Allow 1 hour travel time from Watsonville.

**Monterey Trips:** Meet Friday, Saturday or Sunday at Fisherman's Wharf Monterey. Parking is available in the large lot that connects Fisherman's Wharf and Commercial Wharf #2. Go to Chris's Fishing Shop at 7 a.m. on Fisherman's Wharf where they will direct you to the boat for board and pre-trip briefing. The boat will depart at 7:30 a.m. and will not wait for latecomers who will forfeit their fees. Allow for delays of several hours in returning to the dock if unusual wildlife may be encountered. Be sure to get a parking voucher at Chris's Fishing Shop. Parking is \$3 with Shearwater Journeys Pelagic Trip.

### **ELKHORN SLOUGH SAFARI**

**Date**                    **Friday, Sept. 25, 9 a.m. to Noon**  
**Saturday, Sept. 26, 9 a.m. to Noon**  
**Sunday, Sept. 27, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Description** Elkhorn Slough Safari is a birding adventure aboard an open 27-foot pontoon boat, allowing for exploration of the slough from a perspective usually experienced only by birds and sea otters. This tour will provide you with a unique opportunity to observe these species in their native habitats, close-up and personal. Shorebirds, raptors, grebes, and both harbor seals and sea otters are highlighted.

**Cost:** \$40

**Trip Leaders:** Captain Yohn Gideon and crew

**Transportation:** Go directly to Elkhorn Slough Safari in Moss Landing. Do not meet at Watsonville Civic Plaza. Allow 30 minutes travel time from Watsonville.

For directions, [www.elkhornslough.com](http://www.elkhornslough.com)

### **KAYAK CONNECTION - ELKHORN SLOUGH**

**Date**                    **Thursday, Sept. 24, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.**  
**Friday, Sept. 25, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Saturday, Sept. 26, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Sunday, Sept. 27, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Description:** Here's your chance to take a birding tour of Elkhorn Slough and enjoy kayaking adventure - courtesy of Kayak Connection in Moss Landing. Shorebirds, sea otters, grebes, pelicans and all the rarities of fall migration are possible on this trip. Some of the most intriguing spots of the slough are ONLY accessible by kayak. Beginning kayakers are welcome and encouraged to sign up.

**Cost:** \$55

**Trip Leaders:** Kayak Connection to provide map of Elkhorn Slough.

**Transportation:** Go directly to Kayak Connection in Moss Landing. Do not meet at Watsonville Civic Plaza. Allow 30 minutes travel time from Watsonville.

For directions, [www.kayakconnection.com](http://www.kayakconnection.com)