48th Annual WFO Conference – Half-Day and Full-Day Field Trips

Full Day field trips are on Thursday October 10, 2024 & Sunday October 13, 2024 except for Salt Works only on October 13.

- **Thursday, October 10 and Sunday, October 13**
  1. **Jacumba, Lake Morena and Pine Valley County Park**
     Seventy miles southeast of San Diego is the small community of Jacumba, which was famous in the 1940's for its health spa and hot springs. There are several key birding spots here including a pond, riparian area, scrub and fields. Likely species found here include Virginia Rail, Red-naped Sapsucker, a variety of sparrows, a colony of Tricolored Blackbirds. And, if lucky, perhaps Harris’s Hawk. Restrooms are available. Lake Morena is a county park and recreation area with a lake and oak woodlands. Parking is $3 and restrooms are available. Species include California Quail, California Thrasher, and Bald Eagle may be possible. On our way back to San Diego, we will plan for a quick stop at Pine Valley County Park where species in October include Band-tailed Pigeon, Lawrence’s Goldfinch, and maybe a Pine Siskin or two.

     **Departure Time:** 6:00 AM  
     **Departure Location:** The Dana  
     **Return Time:** Afternoon  
     **Miles:** 160  
     **Difficulty:** Easy

  2. **Anza Borrego State Park**
     Located 90 miles northeast of San Diego, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is the largest park in California’s state park system. This trip will likely include sites such as Tamarisk Grove Campground, Agua Caliente County Park, as well as several stops in the Borrego Springs area. Desert species that can be found here are Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Costa’s
Hummingbird, Black-throated Sparrow, Cactus Wren, Prairie Falcon, Greater Roadrunner, California Quail, and hybrids of the California and Gambel’s Quail. Also, there is the potential for Sage and LeConte’s Thrasher. Easy walking. Restrooms available.

**Departure Time:** **6:00 AM**  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** Late Afternoon  
**Miles:** 240  
**Difficulty:** Moderate

---

3. **Palomar Mountain State Park and Lake Henshaw**  
Palomar Mountain State Park has 1,862 acres of mixed conifer forest and open meadows. Doane Pond and the trails leading from it offer diverse woodpeckers and Band-tailed Pigeon. The Pacific Wren is rare but regular here. Day use fee is $10.00 per vehicle cash or check only. Senior discount is $9.00 per vehicle per day if a senior 62+ is present in vehicle. Picnic tables and restrooms are available.  
Lake Henshaw is a beautiful lake resting at the foot of the Palomar Mountains. It is situated in one of the largest remaining natural grasslands in southern California where you can still get a feel for what the surrounding area looked like hundreds of years ago. The lake will host grebes, ducks, geese, and American White Pelicans.

**Departure Time:** **6:15 AM**  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** Late Afternoon  
**Miles:** 150  
**Difficulty:** Easy

---

4. **Tijuana River Valley and Estuary – A**  
Much of the Tijuana River Valley is within an 1,800 acre regional park. More than 340 bird species have been recorded here—that is two-thirds of all bird species recorded in the entire county! The ponds and surrounding riparian wetlands provide habitat for songbirds, sparrows, rails, waterfowl, and shorebirds. The riparian woodland supports the southernmost populations of the Downy Woodpecker and American Goldfinch.
We would visit several key locations where Common Ground Doves and the exotic Black-throated Magpie-Jay can usually be found.

Designated as a national estuarine research reserve in 1982, the estuary is home to several endangered species, including the Least Tern, Snowy Plover, and Ridgway’s Rail. The Tijuana River estuary is the second-largest tidal wetland remaining in southern California. On this trip we will look for Ridgway’s Rail, Belding’s Savannah Sparrow and resident Yellow-crowned Night-Herons as well as a good diversity of migratory waterbirds. Scope helpful. Restrooms are available at the estuary visitors center.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** Afternoon  
**Miles:** 70  
**Difficulty:** Easy

### 4. Tijuana River Valley and Estuary – B

Much of the Tijuana River Valley is within an 1,800 acre regional park. More than 340 bird species have been recorded here—that is two-thirds of all bird species recorded in the entire county! The ponds and surrounding riparian wetlands provide habitat for songbirds, sparrows, rails, waterfowl, and shorebirds. The riparian woodland supports the southernmost populations of the Downy Woodpecker and American Goldfinch. We would visit several key locations where Common Ground Doves and the exotic Black-throated Magpie-Jay can usually be found.

Designated as a national estuarine research reserve in 1982, the estuary is home to several endangered species, including the Least Tern, Snowy Plover, and Ridgway’s Rail. The Tijuana River estuary is the second-largest tidal wetland remaining in southern California. On this trip we will look for Ridgway’s Rail, Belding’s Savannah Sparrow and resident Yellow-crowned Night-Herons as well as diverse migratory waterbirds. Scope helpful. Restrooms are available at the estuary visitors center.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** Afternoon
5. **Cuyamaca State Park and Laguna Mountains**

These two ranges make an ideal trip to loop the mountains of San Diego County. Not the highest peaks in the county, but exceeding 6,000 ft. The Cedar Fire of 2003 burned almost all of the Cuyamaca Mountains, leading to profound succession of birds as well as plants. The Laguna Mountains border on a steep drop-off to the neighboring Anza-Borrego Desert with views of the Salton Sea. Plenty of stops are planned at the well-known birding spots. Birds of pine and oak woodlands are expected, as well as some waterfowl on Lake Cuyamaca. Some possibilities in October include: Band-tailed Pigeon, Pygmy Nuthatch, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Purple Finch, and maybe Townsend Solitaire, Williamson’s, Red-naped and Red-breasted Sapsucker. Day use fee is $10.00 per vehicle cash or check only. Senior discount is $9.00 per vehicle per day if a senior 62+ is present in vehicle. Picnic tables and restrooms are available.

**Departure Time:** 6:15 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** Late Afternoon  
**Miles:** 130  
**Difficulty:** Moderate

6. **Coastal Lagoons** – Batiquitos Lagoon and San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center and Adjoining Trails

The Batiquitos Lagoon and Ecological Reserve is a 610 acre coastal wetland habitat in north San Diego County situated between Carlsbad and Encinitas. Established as an ecological reserve in 1983, Batiquitos Lagoon boasts of several habitats including intertidal mudflats, coastal salt marshes, nesting areas, open water, and sub-tidal zones. A 2.5-mile out and back walking trail along the lagoon’s northern edge is an easy way to explore the natural diversions of this protected reserve. San Elijo Lagoon is one of San Diego’s largest wetlands, this 979 acre reserve is primarily a shallow-water estuary, formed where the Escondido and La Orilla Creeks meet the Pacific Ocean. Trails connect wetland habitats of coastal strand, salt marsh, freshwater/brackish marsh, riparian
scrub, coastal sage scrub, and mixed chaparral. Easy to moderate trails. There are
restrooms and a picnic area at the Nature Center. Key species on this field trip include
Sora, Ridgway’s Rail, California Gnatcatcher and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** Afternoon  
**Miles:** 56  
**Difficulty:** Easy

### 7. Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary & Guajome Regional Park

Whelan Lake Bird Sanctuary was originally a private dairy farm owned by the Whelan
Family. The lake and surrounding property were donated to preserve it as a private bird
sanctuary, and a foundation was set up to manage it. Its location near to the coast and
just south of Camp Pendleton, one of the largest military bases in the US, make it an
attractive home and migration stop-off. This favorite birding hot-spot features 78 acres
of lake and surrounding hills, and has a bird list of 232 species that include Sora, Least
Bittern, Virginia Rail, Green Heron, Vermillion Flycatcher and possibly Willow Flycatcher.
There is a restroom available.

Guajome Regional Park is located in the coastal community of Oceanside. There are 4.5
miles of multi-use, non-motorized trails that meander through habitats such as
woodlands, chaparral, wetlands and mixed grasslands. There are two ponds that attract
migratory birds. Restrooms and picnic tables are available and parking is $3.00.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** Afternoon  
**Miles:** 90  
**Difficulty:** Moderate
8. **Ramona Valley**

We'll head up to Ramona and check out some frequently visited birding hotspots that include the Ramona Grasslands and a regional park. This trip usually gives us great looks at many kinds of raptors including Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawks and Prairie Falcon. There are also chances for Tricolored Blackbird and Burrowing Owls. We also plan to stop at a regional park where potential species include Oak Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, California Thrasher, and California Quail. There may be an opportunity to stop at a known location for Bell’s Sparrow.

- **Departure Time:** 6:30 AM
- **Departure Location:** The Dana
- **Return Time:** Afternoon
- **Miles:** 78
- **Difficulty:** Easy

9. **100 Species or More**

Join us for a whirlwind run across San Diego County in search of 100 species of birds (or more). This is a fast-paced trip with excellent guides and a competitive spirit.

- **Departure Time:** 6:15 AM
- **Departure Location:** The Dana
- **Return Time:** Afternoon
- **Miles:** TBD
- **Difficulty:** Easy

10. **Offshore San Diego-Pelagics – Thursday & Sunday**

The 10-hour San Diego pelagic trips will take place on the “Legacy“ and venture out to the Nine-Mile and 30-Mile Banks. Expected species include Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, and Cassins Auklet. There is also a decent possibility for Craveri’s Murrelet. Good numbers of Least and Black Storm-Petrels are expected as are Black-vented
Shearwaters. There is also a good possibility of seeing a Brown Booby and even a chance for a Masked/Nazca Booby.

The Legacy is a modern, stable, well-equipped 80 ft. fiberglass boat with two decks and ample seating. With windows throughout both decks, the Legacy has great views with the convenience of covered indoor for large groups. The boat has outside seating on the bow and elevated upper deck seating. The Legacy only serves snacks, so bring your lunch. Small ice chests are welcome. Scopes are NOT ALLOWED. The trip is limited to 55 people plus leaders.

Departure Time: **7:00 AM** but be at the dock by 6:00AM  
Departure Location: The Dana  
Return Time: Approximately 5:00 PM  
Cost: $180  
Miles: It is a 8 minute walk (0.3 Mi.) from The Dana to Seaforth Marina  
Difficulty: Moderate

### 11. **Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve**

Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve is an important component of the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) in southwestern San Diego County. It has large areas of coastal sage scrub, annual grasslands and riparian habitat. Potential species include Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, Golden Eagle, and Burrowing Owl. Other possibilities are American Pipit and a variety of sparrows.

Departure Time: **6:15 AM**  
Departure Location: The Dana  
Return Time: Afternoon  
Miles: 56  
Difficulty: Easy

**The following field trip is Sunday only**

### 12. **South San Diego Bay Refuge and Salt Works (Restricted Access)** – Justyn Stahl & Matt Sadowski
The South Bay Salt Works has a number of salt ponds used to extract salt from seawater by evaporation. This area is normally closed to the public. We have an opportunity to visit this area only on Sunday. Birds expected include a good variety of gulls and terns, as well as shorebirds (including perhaps even the returning Little Stint for the 8th winter in a row) - as well as Belding’s Savannah Sparrow. This trip would cover about 4 miles and last approximately 3 hours. No restrooms. Capped at 20 participants.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** Afternoon  
**Miles:** 34  
**Difficulty:** Easy

---

**The following field trip is Thursday, October 10th only**

**13. ReWild Mission Bay Kayak with Ocean Connectors and San Diego Audubon Society**

Kayaking is a restorative and invigorating activity that can bring you closer to wildlife. Join Ocean Connectors and San Diego Audubon Society leaders for a paddle into Mission Bay, for birding and discussion about the ReWild Mission Bay Project. The group will meet at Action Water Sports at Mission Bay Resort (an easy drive from the Dana) to receive instruction on kayaking and to embark. Learn about this ongoing grassroots effort to rally support for wetlands preservation and restoration.

Field trip includes kayak, paddle, and life vest rental, as well as a donation to support education programs of Ocean Connectors and San Diego Audubon Society. Transportation to and from Action Water Sports is not included.

**Departure Time:** 8:00 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** approximately 11:30 – 12:00 PM  
**Cost:** $80  
**Miles:** 7  
**Difficulty:** Moderate
Half Day Field trips Friday October 11 and Saturday October 12 return by 11AM

1. **Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve - East**

Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve is beautiful year-round with a rich ecosystem supporting a diverse collection of flora and fauna including over 500 plant species, more than 175 recorded species of birds, and a great variety of reptiles, amphibians and mammals. Red-tailed Hawks, White-tailed Kites, and Northern Harriers soar overhead, and there is the potential for migrating warblers along the trails shaded by western sycamores and coast live oaks. Trails are easy and parking is free.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** 11:00am  
**Miles:** 40  
**Difficulty:** Easy

2. **Tijuana Estuary**

Designated as a national estuarine research reserve in 1982, the estuary is home to several endangered species, including the Least Tern, Snowy Plover, and Ridgway’s Rail. The Tijuana River estuary is the second-largest tidal wetland remaining in southern California. On this trip we will look for Ridgway’s Rail, Belding’s Savannah Sparrow and resident Yellow-crowned Night-Herons as well as diverse migratory waterbirds. Scope helpful. Restrooms are available at the estuary visitors center.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** 11:00am  
**Miles:** 42  
**Difficulty:** Easy

3. **Tijuana River Valley  Dairymart and B&B Garden**

Much of the Tijuana River Valley is within an 1,800 acre regional park. More than 340 bird species have been recorded here—that is two-thirds of all bird species recorded in the entire county! The ponds and surrounding riparian wetlands provide habitat for
songbirds, sparrows, rails, waterfowl, and shorebirds. The riparian woodland supports the southernmost populations of the Downy Woodpecker and American Goldfinch. We would visit several key locations where Common Ground Doves and the exotic Black-throated Magpie-Jay can usually be found.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** 11:00am  
**Miles:** 44  
**Difficulty:** Easy

**4. San Diego Flood Control Channel, Robb Field, Famosa Slough, Mission Bay**

The San Diego River Estuary adjacent to Robb Field is one of the most productive and rewarding birding sites in our region. The salt marsh mudflats, sand islands, and wetlands, always changing with the fluctuating tides, provide rest spots and foraging areas for a wealth of bird species. The ebb and flow of the ocean tides allow for considerable birding and wildlife viewing opportunities. As you walk along the estuary, keep your eyes peeled for long-legged waders like Great, Snowy and Reddish Egrets, Little Blue and Great Blue Herons, and both Night-Herons. During low tides, shallow mudflats emerge allowing large numbers of shorebirds of all shapes and sizes – from Long-billed Curlews to Least Sandpipers. Free Parking, restrooms at Robb Field. Scope very helpful.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** 11:00am  
**Miles:** 10  
**Difficulty:** Easy
5. **La Jolla Cove Seawatch and Rocky Shore**
The seaside resort of La Jolla features some rocky shoreline, scarce in southern California, and a good place for the Black Turnstone, Wandering Tattler, Surfbird, and Brandt’s and Pelagic Cormorants. Marine mammals easily seen here are the California Sea Lion and Harbor Seal. The productivity of the nearby submarine canyon makes the adjacent ocean good for seabirds. Our visit to La Jolla will include a seawatch. If the winds are favorable, tubenoses and alcids can be seen from shore, ranging from the often abundant Black-vented Shearwater to occasional rarities. Scope very helpful. Nearby restroom is available.

**Departure Time:** 6:00 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** 11:00am  
**Miles:** 22  
**Difficulty:** Easy

6. **Tecolote Canyon Natural Park**
Centuries ago, the Kumeyaay Indians found food and shelter in Tecolote Canyon, a place that today is rich with history. It has been designated as a cartographic feature on area maps for nearly two centuries. Expected species include California Gnatcatcher, California Thrasher, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Easy trail walking.

**Departure Time:** 6:45AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** 11:00am  
**Miles:** 14  
**Difficulty:** Easy

7. **Mission Trails Regional Park**
Mission Trails Regional Park encompasses more than 8,000 acres of both natural and developed recreational areas. Its rugged hills, valleys and open areas represent a San Diego prior to the landing of Cabrillo in San Diego Bay in 1542. Centrally located Mission Trails Regional Park provides a quick, natural escape from the urban hustle and bustle.
There are several areas with prime birding habitat. Sora and Least Bittern are frequently seen in October as are White-breasted Nuthatch and several woodpeckers. Easy trail walking. Restrooms are available.

**Departure Time:** 6:45 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** 11:00 am  
**Miles:** 26  
**Difficulty:** Easy

---

**8. San Dieguito River Park**

The San Dieguito River Park was established in 1989 as a result of grassroots efforts. It is a regional greenway that stretches 55 miles from the ocean in Del Mar to Volcan Mountain near Julian, providing striking example of San Diego County’s natural beauty along the corridor of the San Dieguito River. 269 species have been recorded during the monthly bird counts including Ridgway’s Rail, Sora, California Thrasher, and California Gnatcatcher, and California Quail.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM  
**Departure Location:** The Dana  
**Return Time:** 11:00 am  
**Miles:** 36  
**Difficulty:** Easy

---

**10. Santee Lakes**

In the town of Santee, on the northeastern flank of metropolitan San Diego, recycled water has been used to generate a series of ponds managed as a public park. The area’s resident birds range from the Least Bittern and Green Heron to the Wood Ducks. The spacing of the trees surrounding the ponds and the birds’ habituation to people makes Santee Lakes one of those places where birds are particularly easy to spot and observe. Parking is $7 per vehicle. Easy walking and restrooms are available.

**Departure Time:** 6:30 AM
The following field trip is Friday, October 11th only

11. South Bay Birding by Kayak with Ocean Connectors and San Diego Audubon Society

Join Ocean Connectors and San Diego Audubon Society leaders for a paddle into South Bay, for birding and wildlife viewing, and to learn about the results of the habitat restoration projects that have taken place in San Diego’s South Bay. The group will carpool to the J. Street Marina located at 975 Marina Way, Chula Vista, CA 91910. There you receive instruction on kayaking and to embark.

Field trip includes kayak, paddle, and life vest rental, as well as a donation to support education programs of Ocean Connectors and San Diego Audubon Society.

Departure Time: 6:45 AM
Departure Location: The Dana
Return Time: 11:00 AM
Cost: $80
Miles: 32
Difficulty: Moderate