

Final Trip Report – Fremont Peak just above San Juan Bautista

A morning of birds, wildflowers, wonderful view and lizards!

Quick Overview – This ½ day birding adventure was planned to bird just Fremont Peak and the surrounding habitat. Rising out of San Juan Bautista, Fremont Peak reaches an elevation of just over 3100 feet. The road dead ends at the top so birders don't find many people allowing for great opportunities to pull over and check for new species. The weather was in the mid 70's and the sky was blue! We started birding as soon as we turned off 156 onto San Juan Canyon Road. On one side of the road was a Brussels Sprout field while the other side was covered with trees. We found a nesting pair of Tree Swallows and lots of starlings. It was here we also found Eurasian Collared Doves. As we worked our way up the 11 miles to the top we pulled over often to check for new species. These stops added Pacific Slope Flycatchers to the list, three species of warblers including two Black Throated Gray and a pair of California Thrashers. Once at the top we took the Fremont Peak Trail around the back side of the peak. This trail offers fantastic views of San Benito Valley, Monterey Bay and the Santa Lucia Mountains back of Big Sur. The rocky outcroppings found along this trail are home to Rock Wren and we had the pleasure of observing several, in addition to many lizards and Turkey Vultures. After the hike we enjoyed a picnic lunch surrounded by Western Bluebirds, Acorn Woodpeckers and a "singing" Olive Side Flycatcher. Soon after the Bald Eagle flew over we decided to head home with our last bird being a male Lark Sparrow foraging along the road side. A thank you goes out to the group today for coming along on a most memorable trip.



Memorable Observations!

- California Quail sitting on the farmer's fence
- Oh look there – It's a Western Scrub Jay, again!
- Acorn Woodpeckers throughout the camp ground
- Flycatchers with each stop all day
- Rock Wrens checking us out
- Wonderful view of the Pacific Ocean
- Western Bluebirds quietly flycatching while we ate our lunch too

Nesting Tree Swallows observed on the side of the road just before we headed to the top of Fremont Peak. California poppies, one of the many different varieties of wildflowers found on Fremont Peak. Both images taken by trip participant Greta Muller. Bald Eagle image provided by Bill Schmoker and resembled what we observed near the 3100 peak.

Total Species Counted for the Day = 54 includes heard only (H)

California Quail	Acorn Woodpecker	Northern Rough Wing	Orange Crowned Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Olive Sided Flycatcher	Violet Green Swallow	Wilson's Warbler (H)
Bald Eagle	Western Wood Pe-wee	Cliff Swallow	Black Throated Gray Warbler
White-tail Kite	Pacific Slope Flycatcher	Oak Titmouse	Western Tanager (H)
Red Shouldered Hawk	Ash Throated Flycatcher	White Breasted Nuthatch	Black Headed Grosbeak (H)
Red-tail Hawk	Warbling Vireo	Bewick's Wren	Spotted Towhee
American Kestrel	Cassin's Vireo	House Wren (H)	California Towhee
Rock Pigeon	Western Scrub-Jay	Rock Wren	Lark Sparrow
Band Tailed Pigeon	Steller's Jay	Western Bluebird	Red-winged Blackbird
Mourning Dove	American Crow	American Robin	Brewer's Blackbird
Eurasian Collared Dove	Common Raven	Wrentit (H)	Brown-headed Cowbird (H)
Anna's Hummingbird	Tree Swallow	California Thrasher	House Finch
Nuttall's Woodpecker	Barn Swallow	European Starling	Purple Finch (H)
Northern Flicker (H)			Lesser Goldfinch