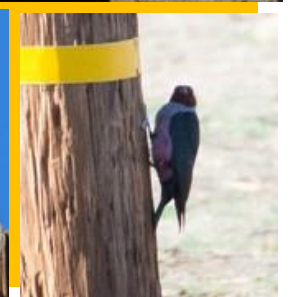


Quick Overview – Panoche Valley is a winter hot spot south/east of “Silicon Valley”. Birders travel these high-desert open spaces every winter in search of birds we just don’t usually get to see around the bay. This trip was scheduled later in the winter than usual, but all were eager to see what we would find. Many this trip had never been to the area so the entire day was an adventure & it turned out to be an incredible clear blue day with temps in the mid 70’s. Currently in the midst of a terrible drought, we knew this was impacting all habitats and the animals that live there. We started our day from the east & entered off I-5 and worked our way west. Our first stop was to explore the orchards in full bloom & alive with bees. Afterward we stopped with each new species or to scan inviting areas. A juvenile Horned Lark all alone in a field provided a great learning opportunity & Lark Sparrows were another bird encountered several times during our day. And the raptors! A Golden Eagle flying directly overhead had us all holding our breath. We also had three Prairie Falcons, two Ferruginous Hawks and one Red-tail. The swallows are back as we had our FOS Cliff Swallows. Roughly 60 were flying around a dry creek bed, but not until there is some rain will they find mud needed for nest building. A Cassin’s Kingbird was a fun find in addition to a pair of Lewis’s Woodpeckers! We ate lunch out at the Griswold Hills picnic spot where a single hummingbird came in and disappeared before we could make its ID. We also got to see real cowboys & cattle out that way. Unfortunately there would be no stopping at the Panoche Inn because they were closed due to a problem with their well. So we continued west toward Paicines, but stopped first on Browns Valley Road where we had a wonderful encounter with Mountain Bluebirds & a singing Western Meadowlark. Our last stop was at the Paicines Reservoir. The water was so low it took a powerful scope to ID anything at a distance, but the American White Pelicans were easy to spot before we called it a day.

Birds Observed –

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ruddy Duck | Northern Flicker |
| California Quail | Acorn Woodpecker |
| Pied-billed Grebe | Say’s Phoebe |
| American White Pelican | Cassin’s Kingbird |
| Turkey Vulture | Loggerhead-Shrike |
| Golden Eagle | Western Scrub-Jay |
| Northern Harrier | Yellow-billed Magpie |
| Red-tail Hawk | American Crow |
| Ferruginous Hawk | Common Raven |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | Cliff Swallow |
| American Kestrel | Horned Lark |
| Prairie Falcon | Oak Titmouse |
| American Coot | Bushtit |
| Killdeer | White Breasted Nuthatch |
| Ring-billed Gull | Cedar Waxwing |
| California Gull | Spotted Towhee |
| Rock Pigeon | California Towhee |
| Mourning Dove | White-crowned Sparrow |
| Eurasian Collared Dove | Golden-crowned Sparrow |
| Anna’s Hummingbird | Lark Sparrow |
| Rock Wren | Savannah Sparrow |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet | Dark-eyed Junco |
| Western Bluebird | Red-winged Blackbird |
| Mountain Bluebird | Brewer’s Blackbird |
| American Robin | Western Meadowlark |
| Northern Mockingbird | House Finch |
| European Starling | Lesser Goldfinch |
| Nuttall’s Woodpecker (H) | House Sparrow |
| | (H) = heard only |



Images from our day – One of several Ferruginous Hawks seen during our day – & an adult Golden Eagle - Priya Balasubramaniam / One of three Prairie Falcons seen - Priya Balasubramaniam / Looking through the scope at some beautiful species - Rick Row / Honey Bees working an orchard in bloom – Lisa Myers / A California Endemic, the Yellow Billed Magpie – Rick Row / Real American Cowboys herding cattle - Priya Balasubramaniam / Male Mountain Bluebird about to land – Rick Row / Cassin’s Kingbird - Priya Balasubramaniam / One of two Lewis’s Woodpeckers - Rick Row