

## Final Trip Report – Panoche Valley, January 30, 2010 A California winter hot spot!

**Quick Overview** – Panoche Valley is a target destination for all birders. Just last month Birder's World Magazine named the area as a California winter hot spot #83! From the Bay Area it's ideal to start this trip south of Hollister at the Paicines Reservoir. The Paicines Ranch welcomes all birders. Our stop here provided an opportunity to watch a Bald Eagle flush just about everything off the water. From here we headed east through open spaces that appear to have been forgotten by time. The hardest part of a trip like this is getting through this beautiful habitat, finding all the birds you can, and doing it all in one day. With every stop we added new species from Yellow Billed Magpies to Rufous Crowned Sparrows and a Phainopepla. Getting to the Panoche Inn for lunch is the goal, but we always show up late. On *Let's Go Birding* trips we all order sandwiches the day before. Larry and his wife have them ready for us when we arrive! For \$7 you get a fabulous sandwich made to order, a bag of chips and a soda. It's a great lunch and a wonderful way for birders to help the local economy in which we bird. After lunch we continued east to look for the wintering Mountain Bluebirds and Mountain Plovers reported earlier in the week. We found the bluebirds, but no such luck on the plovers. For a trip leader, this was a very painful loss. I guess if we always knew what we would always get it wouldn't be so exciting. We did add two Ferruginous Hawks to the day before heading to Mercey Hot Springs where we had fantastic views of the roosting Long Eared Owls before watching the full moon rise on our way home.

### Memorable Observations!

- Two Bald Eagles at Paicines Reservoir
- Male Hooded Merganser displaying for a female
- A three Merlin day!
- A California Thrasher singing from the sidelines
- Golden Eagle & a Sharp Shinned Hawk circling in the same area
- A male Phainopepla was a lifer for many
- A Horned Lark sitting alone with its cow paddy



*Horned Lark image provided by Tom Grey  
Paicines Reservoir's Cassin's Kingbird taken by trip participant  
Marti Wright*

### Total Species Counted for the Day = 75 includes heard only (H)

Mallard	Red-tail Hawk	Cassin's Kingbird	American Pipit
American Wigeon	Ferruginous Hawk	Loggerhead-Shrike	Phainopepla
Northern Shoveler	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Western Scrub-Jay	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Bufflehead	American Kestrel	Yellow-billed Magpie	Spotted Towhee
Canvasback	Merlin	American Crow in route	California Towhee
Ring-necked Duck	American Coot	Common Raven	White-crowned Sparrow
Common Merganser	Black-necked Stilt	Horned Lark	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Greater Yellowlegs	Oak Titmouse (H)	Lark Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Peeps at a distance	Chestnut Backed Chickadee (H)	Rufous Crowned Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Killdeer	White Breasted Nuthatch	Savannah Sparrow
California Quail	Rock Pigeon	Bewick's Wren	Dark-eyed Junco
Western Grebe	Mourning Dove	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Red-winged Blackbird
Clark's Grebe	Great Horned Owl	Western Bluebird	Tri-colored Blackbird
American White Pelican	Long Eared Owl	Mountain Bluebird	Brewer's Blackbird
Double-crested Cormorant	Anna's Hummingbird	American Robin	Western Meadowlark
Turkey Vulture	Northern Flicker	Hermit Thrush	House Finch
Golden Eagle	Acorn Woodpecker	European Starling	Lesser Goldfinch
Bald Eagle	Black Phoebe	Wrentit (H)	House Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Say's Phoebe	Northern Mockingbird	

# Birding Panoche Valley, January 30, 2010



**From top left to bottom** – Birders welcome sign posted at the Paicines Reservoir - Lisa Myers / Handsome Buffalo living at one of the ranches – Marti Wright / The group scanning for new species – Marti Wright / A Raven, Golden Eagle, Sharp Shinned Hawk and a Northern Harrier were all flying around the red outcropping – Joe Diandrea / Great Panoche Valley habitat shot – Joe Diandrea / One of two Golden Eagles enjoyed on this day – Marti Wright / One of two Ferruginous Hawks – Marti Wright / One of the many Long Eared Owls at Mercey Hot Springs – Marti Wright / Albino House Sparrow nest building at the Panoche Inn – Marti Wright / Mountain Plover NOT found this day provided by Sonny Mencher / Mountain Bluebird with American Pipit shot provided by Sonny Mencher