

**Quick Overview** – The open spaces of “Panoche Valley” are a winter birding hotspot for Northern California. This would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to the area this winter for *Let's Go Birding*, but this time we'd start at the Paicines Reservoir and work our way east. When we arrived at the reservoir we found well known birder Debi Shearwater conducting a count of the species in the immediate area. We scanned the waters & she shared some (behind the scenes) birding info before we continued our journey. Traveling through rolling hills dotted with oaks we found target birds like Phainopeplas, Rufous Crowned Sparrows and several California Thrashers. The Canyon Wren & Red Breasted Sapsucker were two great finds for our morning. There is so much to see that it's a real challenge to keep the group moving. We eventually stopped for lunch overlooking a beautiful meadow and ate in the company of Wild Turkeys, in addition to a skulking coyote and a Great Blue Heron. After lunch we worked our way to Decaldeo Road and ran into all the other birding groups looking hard for Mountain Plover and Mountain Bluebirds. There was Matthew Dodder with his Palo Alto class, Clay Kempf with the Santa Cruz Bird Club, and Chris Hartzell conducting a photography workshop. We all compared observations and continued the search. Although *Let's Go Birding* had observed Mountain Plovers on our previous January 13, 2013 trip, no one re-found any on this day. However, we were surprised to witness a Snow Goose fly close with a Raven attacking from above. This was no place for a Snow Goose & when it landed it was apparent it was in poor condition. Our attention quickly turned to the Vesper Sparrows pointed out by Matthew. We got good views of these shy birds while also getting close views of Horned Larks & our only Merlin. Soon we were off toward Shot Gun Pass where we found a Golden Eagle. We continued with the sun quickly setting behind us. Our final stop was at Little Panoche Dam. The sky soon turned brilliant colors of pink & yellow with below, her “purple mountains majesty”. The temperature's dropped and we all headed for home; better late than never. Thank you everyone for joining in the fun. I am ready to go back and find those bluebirds!



### Birds Observed –

Canada Goose	Black Phoebe
Snow Goose	Say's Phoebe
Mallard	Loggerhead-Shrike
American Wigeon	Western Scrub-Jay
Northern Shoveler	Yellow-billed Magpie
Canvasback	Common Raven
distant Scaup	Tree Swallow
Ring-necked Duck	Horned Lark
Ruddy Duck	Oak Titmouse
Wild Turkey	White Breasted Nuthatch
California Quail	Bewick's Wren
Pied-billed Grebe	Canyon Wren
Eared Grebe	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Western Grebe	Western Bluebird
Great Blue Heron	Hermit Thrush
Great Egret	Wrentit
Golden Eagle	Northern Mockingbird
Northern Harrier	California Thrasher
White-tail Kite	European Starling
Red Shouldered Hawk	American Pipit (H)
Red-tail Hawk	Phainopepla
Ferruginous Hawk	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Spotted Towhee
American Kestrel	California Towhee
Prairie Falcon	Song Sparrow
Merlin	White-crowned Sparrow
American Coot	Lark Sparrow
Black-necked Stilt	Rufous Crowned Sparrow
Long-billed Curlew	Vesper Sparrow
Killdeer	Savannah Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Dark-eyed Junco
Mourning Dove	Red-winged Blackbird
Eurasian Collared Dove	Tri-colored Blackbird
Anna's Hummingbird	Brewer's Blackbird
Red Breasted Sapsucker	Western Meadowlark
Nuttall's Woodpecker	House Finch
Northern Flicker (H)	House Sparrow
Acorn Woodpecker	Heard only = (H)



All images taken during our day – Our first stop, the Paicines Reservoir where we ran into Debi Shearwater or “Shearwater Journeys” – Lisa Myers / Hermit Thrush, Red-Breasted Sapsucker & Canyon Wren all observed along Panoche Road – Brooke Miller / Using her own words, a “lazy” local rancher walking her horse – Lisa Myers. *More on page 2.*





Continued from page 1, all images taken during our day – Not healthy Snow Goose flew into Panoche Valley harassed by Ravens – Brooke Miller / All smiles; many other birding groups were also in Panoche Valley this day – Lisa Myers / Frisky horses, Horned Larks, Tri-Colored Blackbirds, Lark Sparrows & Vesper Sparrows all captured by Brooke Miller / “Birdaloo” at sunset from Little Panoche Dam – Lisa Myers