

**Quick Overview** – This day focused on the different areas throughout the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. Located west of Modesto we started our morning birding before the refuge as we stopped to admire six Sandhill Cranes standing in a field on S. River Road. We then stopped along Dairy Road to check out the American Pipits and Horned Larks working through an open field. A Merlin fly-by got all the birds in the air including the many Killdeer also found here and of course, no one could ever get tired of seeing California's endemic, the Yellow-billed Magpie. Once we got to the refuge we could see a Peregrine Falcon sitting on a power pole across Pelican Road. All around us were California Quail & many White & Golden Crown Sparrows chipping from the bushes. The morning consisted of walking the nature trail in a loop which took us through various habitats. We had great views of several Northern Harriers and Red-tail Hawks, Plus White-tailed Kites and a Cooper's Hawk. We had great views of Northern Flickers and we also found Fox and Lincoln Sparrows feeding in the trail ahead. Once on higher ground we walked the levee and were surprised to first hear and then see a Varied Thrush! Not the ideal habitat for this species, we assumed we caught this bird on its migration to another location where it will spend its winter. After lunch we drove over to the "Beckwith Platform" and stopped en route to scan the blackbirds at a dairy along Gates Road. There were hundreds of blackbirds in amongst the cattle including Tri-colored, Red-wing, Brewer's and a female Yellow-headed Blackbird. And when you add all the Brown-headed Cowbirds, House Sparrows + the starlings – there were birds everywhere! We then made it to the platform where we found the surrounding fields dry, but we also found more Sandhill Cranes and a distant flock of Cackling Geese. They kept lifting and soon there were hundreds if not thousands of these little geese. There was also a wet pond east of the platform and next to the road where Least Sandpipers were foraging in the mud with Greater Yellowlegs flying overhead. The green grasses surrounding the pond seemed like an ideal spot to find snipe so we went on a snipe hunt and found two! With that we headed home. It was a beautiful, crisp fall day and just the beginning of what will be some fantastic winter birding. Thank you to all that came along.

Birds Observed –	
Cackling Goose	Yellow-billed Magpie
Mallard	American Crow
California Quail	Common Raven
Double-crested Cormorant	Tree Swallow
American White Pelican	Horned Lark
Great Blue Heron	Bushtit
White Faced Ibis	Bewick's Wren
Northern Harrier	Marsh Wren
White-tail Kite	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Red Shouldered Hawk	Western Bluebird
Red-tail Hawk	Varied Thrush
Cooper's Hawk	Wrentit
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Northern Mockingbird
Turkey Vulture	European Starling
American Kestrel	American Pipit
Peregrine Falcon	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Merlin	Spotted Towhee
Sandhill Cranes	California Towhee
Greater Yellowlegs	Song Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	White-crowned Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Killdeer	Fox Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Lincoln's Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Savannah Sparrow
Eurasian Collared Dove	Red-winged Blackbird
Anna's Hummingbird	Tri-colored Blackbird
Nuttall's Woodpecker	Brewer's Blackbird
Northern Flicker	Brown-headed Cowbird
Black Phoebe	Yellow Headed Blackbird
Say's Phoebe	Western Meadowlark
Loggerhead-Shrike	House Finch
Western Scrub-Jay	American Goldfinch
	House Sparrow



Images from our day at San Joaquin River NWR –  
 Six Sandhill Cranes standing in a field – Patty Brown  
 The group walking the Nature Trail – Greta Muller  
 Learning more about the Varied Thrush we just  
 heard and then saw – Patty Brown  
 Dairy Cattle, always a great place to look for  
 blackbirds! – Lisa Myers

