

Quick Overview – This would be the first time most of this group had ever been to the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge and there was a lot to see with the new visitor's center, all the wintering waterfowl and we can't forget the Tule Elk herd that reside here. **Let's Go Birding** & the **Los Gatos Birdwatcher** work together to plan new destinations so folks get to visit places they have never been. As we entered the refuge we were surprised to find a Barn Owl sitting on a fence post and all got great views. We then drove the waterfowl auto tour. The Bald Eagle was a target bird and we soon found a subadult circling overhead with several Red-tailed Hawks. With the hunting season in full swing the waterfowl were a bit cautious, but with each stop we'd find new species tucked away within the reeds. Snow & Ross's Geese were only observed overhead, but Greater White Fronted Geese were scattered throughout the ponds. We found some hard to find species like Wilson's Snipe & Common Gallinules, and a flock of several hundred Sandhill Cranes put on quite a show as the birds maneuvered between fields. We stopped for lunch near the Sousa Trail and ate outside near a large pond and a flock of Tundra Swans. These beautiful birds were moving about the entire time with birds leaving the flock and new birds arriving. All learned the "kwooo" of a wild Tundra Swan. We also observed large flocks of ducks & geese lifting by the thousands from far away fields. We then spent time at the visitor's center exploring their displays and enjoying a Lincoln's Sparrow from the observation window. We ended our day on the Tule Elk auto tour where we had great views of the herd & ended our day with a Great Horned Owl sleeping in a tree.



Birds Observed –

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|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Tundra Swans | Greater Yellowlegs |
| Greater White-Fronted | Wilson's Snipe |
| Canada Goose | Killdeer |
| Snow Goose | California Gull |
| Ross's Goose | Rock Pigeon |
| Mallard | Mourning Dove |
| Gadwall | Barn Owl |
| American Wigeon | Great Horned Owl |
| Northern Pintail | Anna's Hummingbird |
| Northern Shoveler | Northern Flicker |
| Bufflehead | Black Phoebe |
| Canvasback | Say's Phoebe |
| Scaup in route | Loggerhead-Shrike |
| Ring-necked Duck | Common Raven |
| Green-winged Teal | Tree Swallow |
| Cinnamon Teal | Marsh Wren |
| Ruddy Duck | Rock Wren (Romero) |
| Pied-billed Grebe | Ruby-crowned Kinglet |
| Eared Grebe (Romero) | Northern Mockingbird |
| Double-crested Cormorant | European Starling |
| American White Pelican | American Pipit |
| Great Blue Heron | Yellow-rumped Warbler |
| Great Egret | Common Yellowthroat |
| Snowy Egret | Orange Crowned Warbler |
| Black Crowned Night Heron | Spotted Towhee |
| White Faced Ibis | California Towhee |
| Turkey Vulture | Song Sparrow |
| Bald Eagle | White-crowned Sp |
| Northern Harrier | Golden-crowned Sp |
| White-tail Kite | Lincoln's Sparrow |
| Red Shouldered Hawk | Savannah Sparrow |
| Red-tail Hawk | Red-winged Blackbird |
| American Kestrel | Brewer's Blackbird |
| Sandhill Crane | Western Meadowlark |
| Sora | American Goldfinch |
| American Coot | House Sparrow |
| Common Gallinule | |
| Black-necked Stilt | |

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All images taken during our day – Bull Tule Elk taken from the Tule Elk Auto Tour / male Common Yellowthroat near the Visitor's Center / one of many, many Red-tailed Hawks seen throughout our visit / Catching Tundra Swans in a perfect heart pose plus four Tundra Swans coming in for a landing directly over the group's picnic near the Sousa Trail all by trip participant Marti Wright / American Coots by the hundreds – and Barn Owl sitting on the fence post – Lisa Myers

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