



Birding in Baja California Sur

Todos Santos Eco Adventures
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Introduction to Birding in Baja California Sur

Over 430 bird species have been spotted in Baja California Sur, and it is home to six endemic species as well. In this trip we hike, kayak and boat through the estuaries, dunes, coastlines, mountains, islands, deserts, oases, bays and mangroves that make Baja such a magnet for birds, exploring all these incredible habitats which are in such wonderfully close proximity to each other. We enjoy *Birding in Baja California* so much that we published a book with that title!

Day 1:

- Arrive in Cabo and transfer to Todos Santos (90 minute drive)
- Move into lovely rooms with beautiful ocean views: www.loscolibris.com
- Welcome gourmet taco dinner with a sampling of Mexican beers. We're likely to see some of the endemic Baja species on this first night, including Xantus's Hummingbird and the Gray Thrasher.

Day 2:

After an early breakfast we'll do our first local birding in the freshwater estuary in front of Los Colibris. The lagoon is one of the most important habitats in Baja for the endangered endemic species, the Belding's Yellowthroat, and we are likely to see several on this first outing. We're also likely to see Magnificent Frigatebirds, Black-necked Stilts, Black Phoebes, Brown Pelicans, American Coots, Great Egrets, Eared Grebes, Pacific Loons, Tricolored Herons, Northern Pintails, Clark's Grebes, White-faced Ibis and more.

We'll then head to town for lunch at a terrific local restaurant, followed by an historical town tour. Todos Santos has a rich and varied history, from the early missionaries, through the booming sugar years, through its current incarnation as an artists' colony, agricultural center and surfing hotspot. On this guided tour we will visit many of the historic homes and buildings throughout town, learning fascinating stories of the global forces and colorful personalities that brought these buildings into existence and shaped Todos Santos over the years. In the late afternoon we'll head into the palm oasis for more bird watching, where we're likely to see Gila Woodpeckers, Hooded Orioles, Scott's Orioles, Western Tanagers, Wilson's Warbler, Northern Mockingbirds and more. From the palm oasis we'll walk to dinner at El Gusto, a beautiful restaurant right on the lagoon where we can have our final bit of bird watching with drinks on the rooftop terrace before dinner. Overnight at Los Colibris Casitas.





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Day 3:

Today we'll head out into the Sea of Cortez for the beginning of our 3-day/2-night "glamping" trip on Isla Espiritu Santo. Espiritu Santo and the Sea of Cortez is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Sea of Cortez is home to 39% of the world's total marine mammal species, a third of the world's marine cetacean species and 891 fish species. In other words, it's a total bird magnet! On the way out this first day we'll pass several small islands that serve as rookeries for Blue-footed Boobies and Great Blue Herons, and we'll take our time to explore these wondrous spaces. Around lunch time we'll arrive at our safari-style tent camp where a terrific lunch spread will be waiting for us. After lunch we'll settle into the accommodations, walk-in tents with real beds, lovely linens, nice furnishing, sun showers, compost toilets and fabulous food. In the afternoon we'll snorkel and explore the island, then settle in for happy hour and a great birding display at sunset watching Brown Pelicans, Yellow-footed Gulls, Caspian Terns, Franklin's Gulls, Bonaparte's Gulls, Least Terns, Herring Gulls, Snowy Plovers and more score their suppers.

Day 4:

After breakfast today we'll hop in our high speed motor boat and head to the permanent sea lion colony of Los Islotes, which is also a major Blue-footed Bobby rookery. We'll snorkel and swim with the marvellously curious and playful sea lion puppies, while also enjoying the great array of bird life attracted to the island. It is a truly joyous occasion. We'll return to Espiritu Santo for lunch and a siesta, then spend our last afternoon on the island exploring, kayaking, or stand up paddle boarding, then watching another great birding display as the sun sets. Truly wonderful.

Day 5:

After a leisurely morning of breakfast and birding at Espiritu Santo, we'll start making our way back towards land, taking in a Magnificent Frigatebird rookery along the way. We'll get to shore in mid-afternoon, in time for some terrific sunset birding in the town's great shorebird mudflats. Dinner and overnight in La Paz.



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Day 5:

Today we head up to Magdalena Bay, the largest wetlands ecosystem on the west coast of Baja and one of the most important in North America. The World Wildlife Fund ranks it as one of the most important coastal habitats in Mexico. The Bay is the prime calving ground for the gray whale, and January to March it is possible to see – and often pet – a large number of whales, including mothers and calves. Magdalena Bay also has mangrove forests, barrier beaches and sand dune islands, all of which contribute to the incredible biological diversity of the area.

When we arrive in Magdalena Bay we'll enjoy the first of many wonderful seafood feasts. We'll then get in the pangas of the local fishing cooperatives and head out into the lagoons. We will engage in some pelagic birding and will look for Masked Boobies, Craveri's Murrelet, shearwaters, storm petrels, cormorants, nesting Ospreys, with Peregrine Falcons, Mangrove Warblers and some other surprises. Along the way we're also very likely to encounter gray whale mothers and babies, who often come right up to the boat to investigate. We'll check out some of the islands in the lagoon where we're likely to spot Brandt's Cormorants, Little Blue Herons, Hermann's Gulls, Bonaparte's Gulls, Whimbrels, Wilson's Phalarope, Black-crowned Nighthawks, and more. Overnight at in local hotel.

Day 6:

Today will be another wonderful day with whales and birds in Magdalena Bay. We'll head out in the motor boats a couple of times today, to explore the rampant bird life of the mangroves and dunes of Magdalena Bay. We'll also have plenty of time for more interactions with the gray whales. Overnight at local hotel.



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Day 7:

We'll return to Todos Santos, where we'll have our last look at the endemic Xantus's Hummingbird, Gray Thrasher and Belding's Yellowthroat. In the late afternoon we will do a modest, two hour hike with hopes to see Logger-head Shrike, Ash-throated Flycatcher, a sub-specie of Western Scrub Jay, Cactus Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Harris' Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, plus Common and Ruddy Ground Doves and many other birds. We will learn about plants such as cactus, agaves and other succulent plants. We'll then hope to enjoy a colourful sunset and after dinner we can do some star gazing before retiring. Overnight at Los Colibris Casitas in Todos Santos.

Day 8:

Say adios but no good-bye. Transfer to the airport.