

**Western Field Ornithologists  
35th Annual Meeting - October 2010**

**Field Trip to the Colorado River Delta, Sonora and Baja California, Mexico  
October 17-19, 2010**

**Contact:**

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**Field Trip Co-leaders:** Carol Beardmore and Dave Krueper

**Introduction and highlights**

In this 3-day field trip we will visit the wetlands of the Colorado River Delta, in Baja California and Sonora, Mexico. The Colorado delta has experienced drastic environmental changes in the last 100 years due to water diversions and construction of dams in the basin, yet over 80,000 acres of riparian and wetland areas remain and other portions are under restoration, providing critical habitat for 350,000 shorebirds and waterfowl, as well as for migratory landbirds and marshbirds. Over 360 species have been detected in the delta. During the trip we will expect to find from riparian songbirds (Crissal Thrasher, Abert's Towhee, Vermillion Flycatcher) to marine birds (Least and Black Storm-Petrels, Royal Tern, Heermann's Gull), and including shorebirds (Western Sandpiper, Wilson's Plover, American Oystercatcher), waterfowl (American Widgeon, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler), and marshbirds (Yuma Clapper Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora). The field trip is limited to 12 participants.

**Travel Logistics**

The group will depart from Palm Desert, CA on October 17 at 5 AM, carpooling or on individual vehicles. We will park in Calexico, CA and walk across the border, where a rented van will be waiting for the group. We will birdwatch south and east of Mexicali, Baja California, and spend the night in San Luis Río Colorado, Sonora. On October 18, we will go south of San Luis, including a canoe trip in the Cienega de Santa Clara and a boat trip in the Upper Gulf of California. We will spend the night in the coastal town of El Golfo de Santa Clara, Sonora. On October 19 we will birdwatch along the spring wetlands of El Doctor and drive back to the border. We expect to arrive at the border at 2 PM and return to Palm Desert between 4 and 5 PM.

**Itinerary**

Sunday October 17

5:00 AM - Drive from Palm Desert to the border (2 hours)

8:00 AM - Andrade Mesa Wetlands (30 minutes from the border) – marsh wetlands located in between the Algodones Dunes. Beautiful landscape and interesting site for shorebirds, waterfowl and other waterbirds (including some rails). The wetlands were created and maintained by

seepage from the All American Canal. Since the lining of the AAC, water levels have been decreasing, and the wetlands might disappear in a few years.

11:00 PM - Las Arenitas Wetland (40 minutes from Andrade) – 250 acre constructed wetland in the head of the Hardy River, maintained with the effluent of Las Arenitas Wastewater Treatment Plant. Very good site for waterbirds and some wetland related landbirds.

3:00 PM - Colorado River mainstem – Cottonwood/willow sites, interesting for riparian songbirds, raptors and waterbirds.

We will have dinner and spend the night in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora

### Monday October 18

Depart Hotel at 5:30 AM

7:00 AM -Canoe trip in the Cienega de Santa Clara (1 hour from San Luis) – The Cienega is a large marsh (12,000 acres), very interesting for marshbirds and other waterbirds. Some portions are very good for shorebirds. The canoe trip will have a duration of 3 hours. If some participants prefer, the trip can be done in a boat with an electric motor. The tour is organized by the local ecotourism enterprise of the community of Ejido Johnson. We will have lunch at the Cienega, after the canoe trip.

1:00 PM -Boat trip from Golfo de Santa Clara into mouth of the Colorado River – about 40 miles (round trip, 3 hours) in the Upper Gulf of California and Colorado River estuary. El Golfo de Santa Clara (1 hour from the Cienega) is a fishing town in the coast of the Upper Gulf of California. Good place for shorebirds, gulls, terns, skimmers and other seabirds. Some specialties we might encounter include Reddish Egret, Wilson’s Plover, Least Storm-Petrel and Black Storm-Petrel.

We will have dinner and spend the night in El Golfo de Santa Clara, Sonora

### Tuesday October 19

Depart Hotel at 6:00 AM

7:00 AM - El Doctor wetlands (40 minutes from El Golfo de Santa Clara) – a string of spring wetlands located along the escarpment of the Gran Desierto, supported by the desert aquifer as it comes to the surface in the Cerro Prieto fault. This is a stopover site for migratory landbirds, and vagrant birds have been regularly found at El Doctor, including Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, White-eyed Vireo, Prairie Warbler and Baltimore Oriole.

Drive back to the border (estimated arrival: 2 PM) and to Palm Desert (estimated arrival: 5 PM)

## **Accommodations**

The group leader will make room reservations for the group.

On October 17 in San Luis Rio Colorado we will stay at:

Hotel San Antonio  
Ave. Obregon, entre 2da y 3ra  
San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora  
Phone (+52) 653 51 83 781  
www.hotelsanantoniosl.com

On October 18 in El Golfo de Santa Clara we will stay at:

Hotel Las Conchas  
Phone (+52) 651 515 7001

## **Meals**

### October 17

WFO will prepare a breakfast-to-go bag for participants, to be ready as we load into the carpools. For our first meal in Mexico, we will organize a lunch box (prepared by our local hosts). Vegetarian option is available. We will also provide snacks and non-alcoholic beverages. Everybody is invited to join the group for dinner in a traditional Mexican restaurant in San Luis, but feel free to dine on your own. We will make reservations for the group, and expenses for this dinner are to be covered by each participant. Estimated cost between \$10 and \$15 dollars.

### October 18

Breakfast is included at the hotel. During the day we will provide snacks and non-alcoholic beverages.

The ecotourism group of the community of Ejido Johnson will organize the canoe trip in the Cienega de Santa Clara, after which they will prepare a “Carne Asada” lunch for us. The whole package (access to the Cienega, canoe trip and lunch). Vegetarian option is available. We will have dinner at a local seafood restaurant in El Golfo de Santa Clara. We will make reservations for the group, and expenses for this dinner are to be covered by each participant. Estimated cost between \$10 and \$15 dollars.

### October 19

Breakfast on your own at the hotel restaurant. Estimated cost between \$10 and \$15 dollars. We will organize a lunch box (prepared by our local hosts). Vegetarian option is available. We will also provide snacks and non-alcoholic beverages.

## **Equipment and Clothing**

We expect to have warm temperatures at mid-day and afternoon (90's) and cooler temperatures in the evenings and early in the morning (70's), with very sunny days. Bring clothing for this range of temperatures. We recommend long sleeves, pants and closed shoes to protect you from

the sun and insects. Be sure to bring a hat, sunscreen and sunglasses. We don't plan to get in the water, but be prepared to get a little wet.  
Don't forget your binoculars and spotting scopes.

### **Travel Documents**

**You will need to travel with your valid passport** to be able to return to the U.S.

Since we will stay in the border region in Mexico, participant will not require a tourist card or tourist visa for Mexico.

### **Emergency Contact Points**

Pronatura Noroeste in San Luis Río Colorado: (011 52) 653 53 567 38

Osvel Hinojosa cell phone (011 52 1) 653 11 92 683

Upper Gulf of California and Colorado River Delta Biosphere Reserve in San Luis Río Colorado:  
(011 52) 653 53 63757

Hotel San Antonio in San Luis Río Colorado: (011 52) 653 51 83 781

Hotel Las Conchas in El Golfo de Santa Clara:

### **Cost of the Field Trip**

The cost of the field trip is \$400 dollars per participant, to be paid at the time of registration to WFO. This will include:

- Hotel in San Luis Rio Colorado and El Golfo de Santa Clara
- Canoe trip and lunch in the Cienega de Santa Clara
- Boat trip in the Upper Gulf of California
- Van rental and gasoline costs
- 2 lunch boxes and breakfast to-go bag
- Snacks and beverages
- \$100 dollar donation to WFO/Pronatura

In addition to this expenses, please consider that participants will have to pay on their own the dinner on Oct 17 and 18 and breakfast on Oct 19 (approximately between \$35 and \$45 dollars).

### **Cancellation and Refund Policy**

Interested participants need to pay in full to reserve a place in the trip. For cancellations, if we are able to fill the cancelled place, we will offer a full refund. If we cannot fill the cancelled place, we will retain \$50 for cancellations after July 31 **and no refunds will be available for cancellations within 15 days of the trip.**