

## **Spring 2006 Searcher Pelagic Trip**

(Posted 3/19/06)

Good news!! This trip is a go. Secondly, there are still a few open spots available.....

Please join us for a 5-day pelagic trip out of San Diego on April 26-30. During the previous three years we've had good looks on every trip of such difficult west coast specialties as Laysan Albatross, Black Storm-petrel, Red-billed Tropicbird, and Xantus' Murrelet. We've found multiple Murphy's Petrels on three of our four trips. We've had a few Cook's Petrels during the spring, although our September trip is more reliable for that species.

Other expected species include Black-footed Albatross, Northern Fulmar, Pink-footed Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Short-tailed Shearwater, Black-vented Shearwater, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Ashy Storm-Petrel, Red-necked Phalarope, Red Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Parasitic Jaeger, Long-tailed Jaeger, Sabine's Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Arctic Tern, Common Murre, Xantus' Murrelet (*scrippsi*), Cassin's Auklet, and Rhinoceros Auklet. We've also found Manx Shearwater and Flesh-footed Shearwater during these trips.

We bird offshore at the extreme southwestern corner of the ABA area. We visit the California Channel Islands, Point Conception, Rodriguez Dome, San Juan Seamount, Cortez Bank and deep water beyond the continental shelf. On our last day, we often edge into Mexican waters, so this is an opportunity to add to your Mexico list.

We've had impressive numbers of whales on these tours, including sperm, mesoplodon, ziphius, humpback, blue, and fin. We've also seen Orca, bottlenose, long-beaked common, short-beaked common, northern right-whale, Risso's, Pacific white-sided dolphins and Dall's porpoises. Other marine mammals include California Sea-lion, Guadalupe fur seal, northern fur seal, northern elephant seal, and harbor seal.

Using the 95-foot live-aboard "Searcher," we limit our trips to 29 passengers and 4 leaders. The boat provides 2-3 person cabins, showers and three excellent meals a day. Our leaders for this trip are Walter Wehtje, Todd McGrath, David Compton and a special mystery leader to be announced next week. Todd McGrath has several hundred days experience leading pelagic trips on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, Walter Wehtje has led pelagic trips in Southern California for more than 10 years, and David Compton is a very experienced birder from Santa Barbara, and a member of the California Bird

Records Committee.

We will travel north from San Diego and arrive in the Santa Barbara Channel the following morning. After spending a day in the Santa Barbara Channel, we overnight at Point Conception, and head out towards deep water the following morning. We travel to Rodriguez Seamount, San Juan Seamount, and points along and past the continental shelf. The exact itinerary will vary based on the leaders' and captain's judgments about bird abundance and weather conditions.

Additional information and trip lists are at  
<http://www.bajawhale.com/birdingtrips.html>.

Date of 2006 trips: April 26-30, September 4-8  
Cost: \$850 (includes all food and beverages, excludes crew gratuity).

For more information on this and future trips, feel free to contact me directly, or:

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