ALVARO'S ADVENTURES
birding & nature tours

MORRO BAY PELAGIC INFORMATION SHEET –
Boat: The Endeavor 2021

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PROCEDURES DURING COVID-19

We will be adhering to regulations set forth by San Luis Obispo County with regards to charter boat operations. These regulations may be updated as the season progresses. Currently mask use is necessary while in the cabin, but not on the deck. We encourage mask use throughout the trip, but it is not a requirement.

WHERE AND WHEN

Morro Bay Landing – Morro Bay, California.
The port is in Morro Bay, you can navigate to 1213 Embarcadero. Morro Bay, CA. Here you will find free parking. Morro Bay Landing is along the coastal road (Embarcadero), north of the town of Morro Bay. Morro Rock will be to your West, and the big smokestacks are across from the Embarcadero.

We will be meeting outside of the Morro Bay Landing building, look for Alvaro with a clipboard to check you in.

Be there by **6:30 am for a 7:00am departure**. We will be traveling on the Endeavor. Do not board the boat unless a crew member or one of the guides is there to help.

Web site for the shop: https://www.morrobaylanding.com

I do need a telephone number, preferably cell number, just in case we need to contact you last minute. As well, if I do not have your address from the PayPal payment, please let me have this information for the trip manifest.

My cell phone is 650-504-7779 just in case.

PARKING
Parking is free for the day at Morro Bay Landing.

OUR BOAT

The boat we will be on today is the **Endeavor**, she is a 55' vessel equipped with a hot galley. When it comes to astounding vessels, the Endeavor hits the mark. The Endeavor is comfortable, stable and spacious even when at full capacity with plenty of rail space. The vessel is equipped with all the latest electronics. It has a full-service galley ready to provide a hot breakfast, lunch or snack. Captain Brad League and deckhands are accommodating, efficient and work hard to provide you the best excursion possible. Our captain has been enjoying the birding excursions during the Morro Bay Bird Festival, and he is keen on finding birds and incorporating his knowledge of the sea conditions to

inform where we go and where the life, the birds and whales, should be. Our deckhands will be available to help with safety and cleanliness of the boat.

This is the Endeavor

OUR GUIDES – SPOTTERS

All of our guides are volunteers, some may be professional biologists, teachers, tour guides, or just great seabirders but they do this for the experience of getting many hours out on the ocean, and their interest in both seabirds, and showing people seabirds. But to be clear they are not employees, they do this because they find it interesting and fun. As such, keep in mind that they will do all they can to get you on the birds, inform you about the birds, and share the excitement of offshore seabirding but they are not working, they are sharing! Do understand that for me I put a great deal of importance in expertise and experience, but I value highly the ability to communicate, and inform about the local birds. Some guides are born educators, others are born rare bird finders, and some are a bit, or a lot, of both. Where possible I also try to involve young people as guides, to foster their interest in birding, the ocean, and particularly so young birders who have an interest in making the natural world their career.

FIELD GUIDE – Birds and Wildlife

Local California birders Steve Howell and Brian Sullivan have written a small and very practical guide to the species we see offshore on our trips. For more information: https://www.amazon.com/Offshore-Sea-Life-Guide-Princeton/dp/0691166137

http://press.princeton.edu/titles/10465.html

Steve Howell and Kirk Zufelt have just (Aug 2019) published an amazing book for the identification of seabirds throughout the world. Highly recommended: https://press.princeton.edu/titles/14015.html

Note that Steve Howell and Brian Sullivan are sometimes spotting for our trips, so perhaps you can get your book signed!

CHUMMING
In this part of California, we are not birding within marine sanctuaries. As such, we are able to chum in order to bring in birds for identification as well as photography. We may be dripping fish oil and may have fish or squid to offer up to the birds offshore. If the right conditions exist, we may deploy the "chumsicle" which is frozen bait, that slowly melts and become accessible for the birds to feed on, while creating a fishy smelling feast, that may attract other birds in the area. Note that chumming is not always successful, but when it does work, it can be quite neat to experience for a more intimate look at offshore seabirds.

TIPPING
Our birding guides do not expect a tip, although if you are a tipper, please go ahead. However, to conduct our operations we are required by law to employ a deck hand. The deck hand helps the captain to pilot the vessel, as well as in cleaning, maintenance, keeping the restrooms looking good etc. They are an invaluable part of our trip. In fishing trips deck hands make their earnings largely on tips and filleting fish, on birding trips this does not happen. Out of Port San Luis we are chartering a fishing vessel. To keep birding boats happening, we would love to keep deck hands and crew happy. If you wish to do so, a tip for our deckhand and boat crew would be greatly appreciated. Little by little we are turning these folks into birders, sometimes they have spotted some good stuff for us too! It is amazing what a life time at sea does to prime you to be a great bird, shark, or whale spotter. We are thankful for the great deck hands we have on our boats.

LUNCH
Lunch will not be provided onboard. Note that the Endeavor does have a hot galley, which means that they can cook up some hot food for you, either breakfast or lunch. I do not have a menu or costs. I expect that they will be a cash only operation as they may not have phone signal offshore to charge credit cards, but I may be incorrect. Otherwise, please pack your own lunch to bring on the boat. Take plenty of water or liquids. Essentially, be prepared to be out all day so have an appropriate amount of food and drink. Keeping your stomach active and working on something is often a good way to avoid seasickness; some folks munch on dry crackers, saltines or ginger snaps throughout

the day! I am of the opinion that this helps substantially in keeping you feeling comfortable on a boat.

COMFORT AND SEASICKNESS

Part of what makes this such a rich part of the ocean are the cold-water currents and upwelling of cold water offshore. This cold water makes for a generally cool to cold air temperature on a pelagic boat trip as compared to land. The key is to have layers, that way you can take layers off or put some on depending on the cold or warmth you will experience. Even on a still and relatively warm day, the movement of the boat itself creates enough breeze to drop the effective temperature by a noticeable margin. What can be assured is that it is not going to be hot, and rarely does it ever feel warm. So, avoid shorts, short sleeves and make sure you are prepared for it to be cool. Extra layers you do not need can be left in your pack in the cabin, but you may be happy to have the extra layers if it is a cold day! Better safe than sorry.

If there is a breeze and we have some spray be prepared to guard your binoculars and or camera against the salt water. Have plastic bags and or dry paper towel to keep your gear from getting wet and drying it off if need be. You can store gear in the cabin and have it safe from the elements if you need to.

Comfortable footwear is good! You will be standing for a great part of the day, and often balancing as the boat moves, comfortable shoes that are also not slippery are great to have on a boat. Avoid any slippery shoe, even if it is not all that wet, the deck of the boat can get moist and you want to make sure you have a firm grip on the deck at all times. Avoid open toed sandals; first of all because you may get cold, but second of all because in trying to maintain balance you may get stepped on by a fellow birder! It happens, and it can be really painful if you are wearing sandals. But if this is your preferred footwear and are most comfortable wearing them, just be aware of the negatives.

Do not bring a scope, or tripod. These are essentially useless and a bother on a boat. They will channel the boat vibrations right to your scope or camera and the boat movement will make it impossible to use your scope or camera on a tripod. If you will be doing photography, hand holding the camera is the way to go!

Seasickness

I have a detailed hand out on avoiding seasickness, please let me know if you want a copy sent to you.

If prone to seasickness, look into over the counter medications, and choose the non-drowsy varieties. There is non-drowsy Dramamine, although some folks prefer Bonine. You can also call your doctor to get a prescription Scopace patch, people swear by "the patch" although many complain that they get a dry mouth feeling, so do bring along plenty of fluids. The main prevention is to get lots of rest the night before! The times I have felt seasick coming on have been when I have had too short a night before a boat trip. Also avoid alcohol and spicy food prior to trip. Eat something bland (i.e. toast

and milk) so your stomach is not totally empty; keeping something in your stomach goes a long way to minimizing the effects of seasickness. Consider Ginger products: Ginger Snaps, real Ginger Ale, Ginger candy, and also soda crackers.

Once on the boat, concentrate on the bird, whales, wildlife and keeping yourself in a "good frame of mind." If you are prone to seasickness, stay outside in the fresh air; do not head into the cabin more than is necessary. Also look at the horizon as much as you can! Hopefully the sea will provide enough distraction that discomfort will be the last thing on your mind, but if you are prone to it – call your doctor for the patch or get something over the counter.

WEATHER ISSUES

One thing we cannot control is the weather and sea conditions. There are three factors that can affect our trip. One is fog, the other is wind, and the third is swells. Sea level fog reduces visibility, although it often occurs when the wind is still, and sea conditions are good. Fog will allow us to get to our destination, and often it does not last all day, but it does decrease chance of observations although sometimes less than you would think. Wind can churn up waves and create a wet situation on the boat from sea spray rising off the bow. In days of low wind, it will be drier on the boat. If the wind is high, then this could create wind waves that could keep us from reaching our destination; this depends on the strength of the wind and the direction it is coming from. Swells are the large rounded waves coming off the ocean, often created by distant storms. One can have large swells that are well spaced, and this will be fine. Moderate swell that is closely spaced will create a difficult ride, so we hope for either small swells or distantly spaced swells. We cannot do anything about the weather – but be aware that the sea conditions will dictate whether we can reach specific birding areas or whether we even get off the dock. The ultimate decision on what we can do and where we can go will be up to the captain. But just think good thoughts and hope the weather will not be an issue at all – most of the times this is the case.

Weather information is available here:
https://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS56.KLOX.html

BIRDS AND MAMMALS

Another file will be sent to you with a checklist of the most likely species we could encounter in a summer or fall pelagic trip. Some species are rarer and are bolded to note their higher level of rarity. This is an all-inclusive list for pelagic and Farallon trips and does include some species which are not as likely on an Aug trip as on an October trip (mainly gulls) – so keep that in mind. We will try to see as much as possible, but nature always dictates what is out there for us to find. There are no guarantees that any species will be found, but we will try!!

We are eBird friendly and are happy to share the trip e-bird lists that are submitted by guides on the trip. eBird is a fantastic source for checking on the likelihood of finding certain species, this is the bar chart of occurrence for San Luis Obispo County. Scroll down to the tubenoses, alcids, jaegers to have an idea of relative abundance during the time of year you are taking a trip:

https://tinyurl.com/yakfo9ja

During a trip, we follow the pelagic protocol for eBird. This divides the day into hour long increments or shorter. This creates a larger individual number of checklists, but they are much more useful for helping us understand, long term, the distribution of birds at sea. Each transect is mapped on eBird at the start of the transect, and we estimate the distance traveled during the period. In the checklist summary, we will note any interesting mammals, fish or other creatures we may see offshore.

CANCELLATION POLICIES

Alvaro's Adventures is a registered California Seller of Travel, CST: 2105497-40, Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

Cancellation due to weather or any other reason is entirely at the discretion of the Captains of each boat. If the weather looks very bad, cancellation may occur the day before and we will make an attempt (phone or e-mail) to contact you and pass on the information. Remember, it is possible that the trip could be cancelled at the dock. There are no guarantees that we will sail until the captain says it is OK. Barring no communication from us, you should show up at the meeting spot and be prepared to sail.

Trips to the Farallons have the aim of getting to the islands. If sea conditions do not allow us to arrive at the islands, no refund will be given. Similarly, county trips will try as much as possible to stay in county waters, but sometimes weather and waves dictate what can happen. However, at all times we will make the best, safe effort to achieve the stated goals of each boat trip.

REFUNDS AND CREDITS

The following are our policies concerning refunds:

* If for any reason the trip is cancelled, you will receive a full refund.
* If you cancel 10 days or more before the trip, you will receive a full refund.
* If you cancel less than 10 days before the trip, you will only receive a refund if we are able to fill the trip.
* There is no penalty if you provide your own replacement, provided they are not already signed up for the trip.
* If a trip departs but must return early, and the Captain charges a pro-rated refund to Alvaro's Adventures, you will receive a partial refund based on the pro-rated amount.

If a trip is cancelled, you may choose to receive a refund or credit for another trip.

Refund checks are normally mailed out within a week of the trip date.

COMPANY LIABILITY
We aim to provide a safe a trip as possible. However, it is important to remember that these trips take place on a moving boat on the ocean, with a number of other participants on board. THIS CAN POTENTIALLY BE DANGEROUS!

Alvaro's Adventures is not responsible for any injuries, broken, lost, or stolen property, seasickness, or any other misfortunes that occur during these trips.

Alvaro's Adventures makes no guarantees concerning trip destination or species we are attempting to see.

DISCLAIMERS
Alvaro's Adventures is not responsible for events or situations that are beyond its direct and effective control. Without limitation, the following are some factors that are beyond our direct control; bad weather, traffic, traffic accidents, labor disputes and strikes, participant lateness, road construction, mechanical breakdown of boats, cars etc., civil disorder or failure of third party providers.

Alvaro's Adventures reserves the right to refuse to provide tour services to any individual or private group without limitation or any civil or financial liability, whatsoever.

8/21 - AJ