Unfortunately we were quite close to a fisherman waiting for a chance to grab his fish when he pulled it out of the water. Unfortunately we were unable to linger to find out who got the fish.

We saw several species of raptors: 7 Ospreys, two of which were calling back and forth to each other from across the channel; a kestrel was perched on the Osprey’s nesting platform by the Back-Bay Science Center; 2 White-tailed Kites were near each other in a tree; a Northern Harrier was chasing a flock of Willets in flight; and a Red-tailed Hawk was perched high on the side of a cliff overlooking the bay.

The Least and Western Sandpipers must have arrived recently; they were still in enormous flocks tightly massed together on the mudflats. When a flock took off in flight, it was like a glimmering cloud. Since the tide was still high, there weren’t any spacious mud flats from which they could feed. There were lots of Black-bellied Plovers massed on top of the Santa Ynez Spit as well as on a couple of mud flats and many still had black bellies. Other shorebirds included Whimbrels, Long-billed Curlews, Marbled Godwits, Short-billed Dowitchers, Spotted Sandpipers, and Willets.

Barn Swallows were swooping overhead catching insects. Western Gulls were all over the place. Large Mullets were leaping out of the water. Caspian Terns were resting in their usual spot right below the Science Center, their red bills prominent in the soft lighting. In the little bay past the Caspian Terns, we were thrilled to spot a juvenile Yellow-crowned Night Heron feeding on crabs at the water’s edge. We sat in the boat watching him for quite a while and he paid no attention to us. There were a number of Snowy Egrets singly and in groups all the way along. The Black Skimmers were still inhabiting the upper part of the bay in giant flocks, many on the ground, some flying around and we could hear their distinctive cry from quite a distance. On the way back, we watched with amusement as a Great Blue Heron stood on the shore quite close to a fisherman, waiting for a chance to grab his fish when he pulled it out of the water. We had been so close to a fisherman waiting for a chance to grab his fish when he pulled it out of the water. Unfortunately we were unable to linger to find out who got the fish.