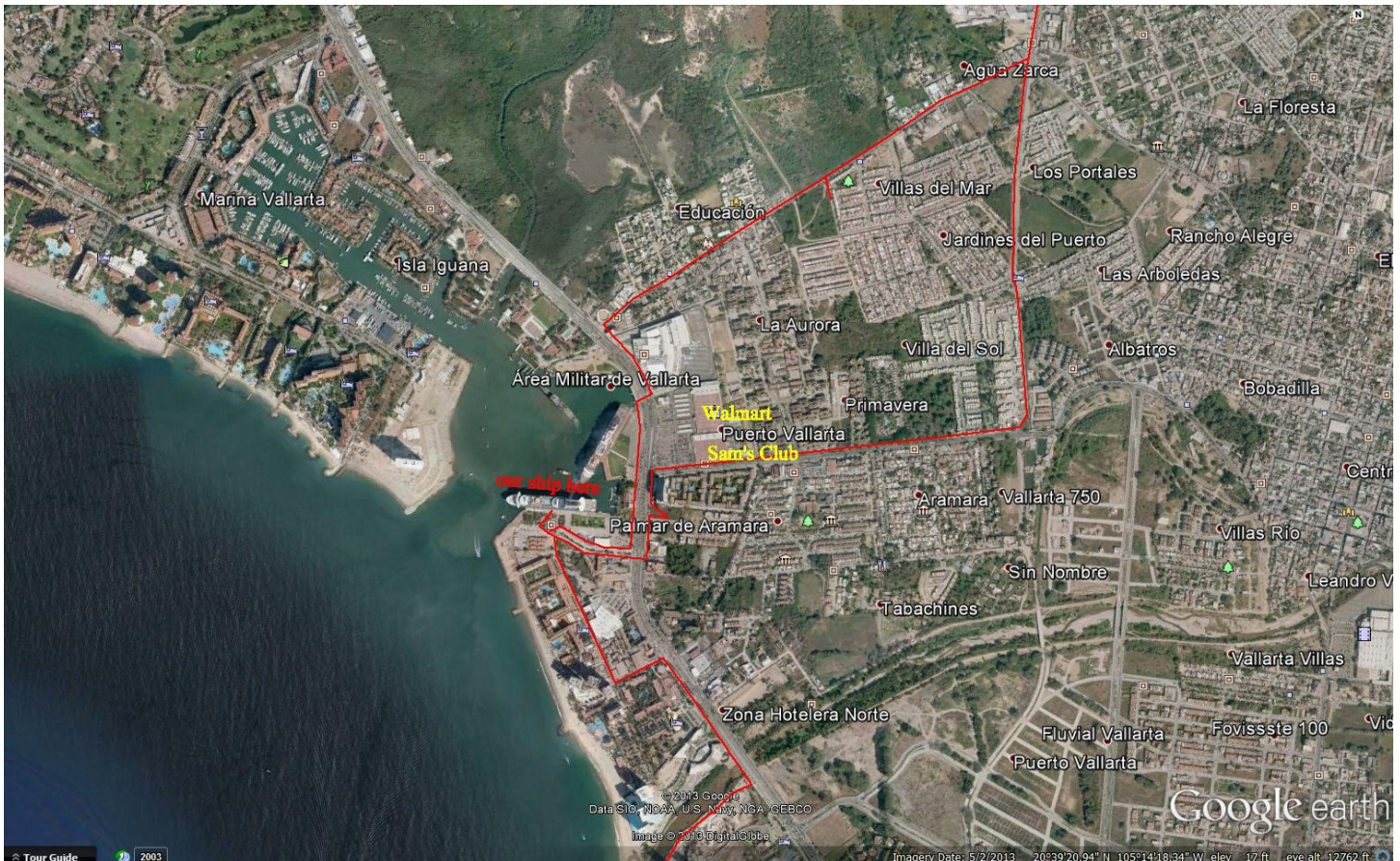


## Mexico

Our plans for two port stops in western Mexico did not go as planned. First we were told that our stop at the southern tip of Baja California would not happen. On two previous times the ship was there it was severely rocked by giant waves. Our stop was therefore cancelled for safety reasons. Secondly, as we arrived at Puerto Vallarta we were informed that our tour to a National Marine Park was cancelled because of likely rain. It had rained for the previous four days and persistence was likely. As it turned out, the group that went to the botanic garden got soaked by rain. But in the city the weather was partly cloudy and nice. So we were on our own for activities. I had on my computer this satellite view of the port and surrounding area. I decided that we could walk the streets to areas of green space. It turned out that some were behind walls, but we found enough.



I have marked in red where we walked. The northeastern route took three hours in the morning. After lunch we took the southern route to the beach and back, lasting two hours. I was photographing birds with a telephoto lens and so have no reasonable photos of most views or buildings. But for me the time was well spent. I saw eight bird species that I had never seen before in my life, including three of those species in one tree. I do have some beach photos. We used a public access to get there. Hotels tended to block direct access but did not prevent walking on the beach in front of their properties. The next page shows God's love of variety in color and form.



south view

Gail in blue and white

north view



Black-necked Stilt



Brown Pelican



Cattle Egret



Bullock's Oriole



Elegant Tern



Golden-cheeked Woodpecker



Gray Hawk



Grayish Saltator



Great Kiskadee



Groove-billed Ani



Heermann's Gull



Inca Dove



Laughing Gull



MacGillivray's Warbler



Neotropic Cormorant



Painted Bunting



Roadside Hawk



Rufous-backed Thrush



Snowy Egret



Streak-backed Oriole



Tricolored Heron



Tropical Kingbird



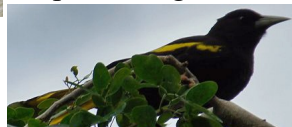
Varied Bunting



White-collared Seedeater



White Ibis



Yellow-winged Cacique



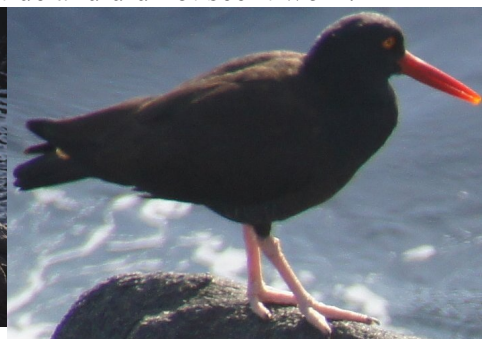
White-winged Dove

All of the bird photos were from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Our substitute stop, after the cancellation of Cabo San Lucas, was Ensenada, Mexico, south of the USA border. We arrived about noon. The city has mountains partly surrounding it.



For our first tour stop we visited an historical museum close to the ship. There were good wall and ceiling paintings and interesting wooden beam structures. Then we went to the tip of a peninsula southwest of the city. Its rocky shore had an arrangement of rocks that would cause incoming waves to create a tall spray of water at high tide. The name is La Bufadora. But we arrived at low tide and did not see it work.



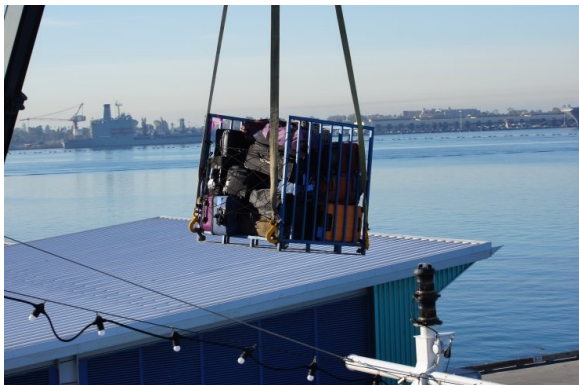
There were several types of birds on the rocks. Back at the ship was a Clark's Grebe, similar to the Western Grebe.

Black Oystercatcher

Friday, 3 January, we arrived at San Diego at about 8 AM after passing through thick fog. In late morning a crane was used to get everyone's luggage off the ship. We then went to the nearby airport and waited for our afternoon flight back to Denver.



Clark's Grebe



Ed Holroyd, January 2013