

Trip 4 – Episode #10: Encounters of the Fowl Kind

After our brief encounter with the California Redwoods, it was time to head south. We had made an appointment for Charles in Las Vegas, where there's a company that has a good reputation for servicing our make of RV. And Charles needed servicing.

So, for a while we drove along the coast again.



But then we headed inland, into mountain territory.



It's always fun to drive through the mountains in Charles. But ... wait. Is that snow??



Snow was something we didn't want to see. At one point, we stopped at a lookout point, and while we were there, we spoke with a guy who had been coming the other way. He said they were expecting a few feet of snow. Feet??



As we continued south, the skies looked ominous...



... and we drove past some snowplows coming the other way...



And we kept expecting to see snow around the next bend...



But, except for seeing some white on distant mountaintops, we didn't have to deal with any snow.



We ended up having a pleasant drive through the mountains, along the Trinity River.



In fact, it often looked more like autumn than winter. (Which of course it still was, but we're not used to seeing fall colours at the end of November.)



I'm sure most of you would assume we'd stay in a place with this name.



But no, although it was tempting... We kept going.





We drove through Redding, but never found out how many miles it was from Redding.
(A joke only CBC radio listeners might get).



And again, we kept going.



We stayed one night at this campground on the Sacramento River.



And that worked for us.



The next day, we got back on the road again.



Along the way we passed through Yuba City.



Which would not be particularly memorable, except that we kept seeing chickens by the side of the road.



Apparently, that's one of the things (maybe the only thing?) that Yuba City is famous for. Apparently, it's a bit of a mystery how the wild chickens came to call Yuba City home, but the most popular explanation is that there used to be a stockyard in the downtown core (near where the Starbucks and the IHOP now are) where chickens were auctioned off, and sometimes, chickens escaped. And they still hang around the same neighbourhood, apparently happy to pick up any stray fries or croissant crumbs they might find.

We thought this was a fun story. But we had no idea that we had another wild bird story ahead of us.

We continued our journey south on Hwy 99, enjoying the varied landscapes and skies along the way.





Eventually, we found ourselves in Pasadena, which is a pretty, and obviously prosperous part of Los Angeles.





We were driving through this neighbourhood in Santa Anita in search of fuel. Instead, we found ... fowl! Pea fowl, specifically. Just casually walking around.





A little research uncovered that the peafowl had been imported, back in the 1850's, by a business tycoon named Elias "Lucky" Baldwin. He brought them from India to populate his huge ranch (now an arboretum) in the Santa Anita area. But that population grew to over 100 of them, and they wander the neighbourhood, which they feel is home. Unfortunately, their presence isn't appreciated by their neighbours. If you've ever heard a peacock's call, you might understand. One resident claimed, "It sounds like babies being tortured."

Just this January, the residents finally won their battle to have the foul fowls relocated to ranches throughout California. So, if we'd made this trip just two months later, I'd have one less item for my blog!

We end this blog with our return to Desert Edge, not far from Palm Springs, an area known for its hot springs. We decided to stop for a few days and enjoy the beautiful setting and the several hot pools they had in our campground.

This sounded especially inviting, as we'd been having problems with our hot water tank, and had been without hot water for about a week. Ironically, the campground we stayed in was having major construction on their water pipes, and although the pools still had hot water, the showers didn't.

Still, it's a beautiful spot and we enjoyed our stay. You can see why.









We had one other coincidence in this part of our trip. Our friend Carol Starr happened to be in Palm Springs, so we were able to meet up with her for lunch!



The next day, we started the last leg of that journey – but that'll be for another blog.