



Field Guides Tour Report

Arizona Winter Specialties 2012

Dec 28, 2012 to Jan 2, 2013

Dave Stejskal

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, [please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.](#)



Searching for sparrows in the expansive San Rafael grasslands. (Photo by Lena Senko)

Winter in Southern Arizona has a lot of appeal, both to humans and to the birds that are drawn to this normally mild haven at this season. We enjoyed some of that famed balmy winter weather for the first few days while we birded the Phoenix area, the Santa Cruz Flats near Casa Grande, and the Patagonia/Patagonia Lake region. Our luck with the weather changed on Day 4 when we visited the Santa Rita Mts. south of Tucson where we had to try our luck in the canyons while dodging rain, snow, cold, and windy conditions. Good thing for us, this Pacific storm was fast-moving, and we were back to sunny, but cool, conditions for our finale in the Sulphur Springs Valley. Despite the challenging weather, we still managed to pull off another delightful wintertime tour to this rich region that I call home in between my many tours.

We did well with the marquee species on this year's tour, getting good looks at four species of thrashers near Phoenix (including the local Le Conte's), a trio of Ruddy Ground-Doves at Whitewater Draw, a cooperative Baird's Sparrow on a fence in the San Rafael Valley, a flock of Mountain Plovers south of Casa Grande, thousands of vocal Sandhill Cranes in the Sulphur Springs Valley, a flock of lovely Lawrence's Goldfinches in Green Valley, and the tiny Rosy-faced Lovebird in Phoenix - newly added to the official ABA checklist of North America. Besides these obvious draws, we enjoyed a number of local residents and seasonal specialties that added to the appeal of a visit here during the colder months of the year. Some of those include a fine variety of raptors like White-tailed Kite, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, a surprise Zone-tailed Hawk, Crested Caracara, and the uncommon Prairie Falcon, a big flock of Long-billed Curlews feeding in a flooded field near Buckeye, charming Greater Roadrunners in the Sulphur Springs Valley, a cooperative Arizona Woodpecker and a stunning Painted Redstart in Florida Canyon, gorgeous male Vermilion Flycatchers at various spots along the way, a delightfully vocal Canyon Wren in Montosa Canyon, swirling flocks of Chestnut-collared Longspurs in the San Rafael Valley, Sage Sparrows scurrying between the bushes at the thrasher spot near Buckeye, colorful male Pyrrhuloxias & Lazuli Buntings at the feeding station in Patagonia, and a field full of male Yellow-headed Blackbirds near Buckeye.

I thoroughly enjoyed our time together exploring the back roads of s. Arizona with all of you, and thank you so much for joining me on this short, but productive tour. Thanks also to Lena Senko who was able to join our group on such short notice. Her good cheer and willingness to help us all get on the many great birds of this tour were greatly appreciated by me and others, and I do hope we see more of her on future trips! Have a wonderful 2013 and I hope to see all of you again down the road!

--Dave

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*) – One at Encanto Park in Phoenix was a surprise there since it hadn't been reported before our discovery.

SNOW GOOSE (*Chen caerulescens*) – The Sulphur Springs Valley (Willcox in particular) was good for this one. One never finds that many of these anywhere in the state away from the Colorado R. on the western border.

ROSS'S GOOSE (*Chen rossii*) – A single adult with the flock of Snow Geese was great to see. Every year sees a few more of these wintering in the state.

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – A few in the Phoenix area was all that we had. Arizona doesn't see the big numbers of this one that other parts of the country see.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*) – We couldn't pick out any Eurasians among this more common and expected species. This seems to be a bad winter in the state for Eurasian Wigeon.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – Long ago (maybe 35 years ago?), this one was split out from Mallard as a separate species (Mexican Duck). There are lots of birds in AZ that appear to be hybrids between the two, but much of that variation might actually be normal for this one. I may get re-split someday, or it may actually be assigned to Mottled Duck.

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*) – This used to be a real rarity in the winter months in AZ, but it's very regular now (witness the flock of 40 that we had at Whitewater Draw!). Still, it's a gorgeous duck.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – We saw a lot of ducks on this trip, but we didn't run into this one until the last day.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*)

CANVASBACK (*Aythya valisineria*) – This one is never very common anywhere in AZ.

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*)

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – These can really be tricky if you don't get the perfect look. At first glance, it really looked like those scaup we saw at Gilbert Water Ranch were Greater, but after watching them for a while, it was clear they were this species.

BUFFLEHEAD (*Bucephala albeola*) – We had a bunch of these on the small golf course pond in Benson on New Year's Day.

COMMON GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala clangula*) – A pair at Patagonia Lake near Nogales was a little unexpected.

HOODED MERGANSER (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) – That female at the Faria Dairy pond south of Willcox was another unexpected find.

COMMON MERGANSER (*Mergus merganser*) – This is the expected merganser during the winter months here, but you could run into all three.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*) – One of the most characteristic, and charismatic, species in the Sonoran Desert.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – These were a nice surprise in the light snow at Florida Canyon in the Santa Rita Mts. All of the Wild Turkeys in s.e. AZ are the result of reintroduction efforts.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – Some of those birds on Patagonia Lake in the late afternoon light looked very Horned Grebe-like.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – When I first started birding as a kid in AZ, this bird was a real mega-rarity with only about 3 or 4 records for the entire state. Now, there are a few breeding colonies in the state that number 100's of pairs!

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Outnumbered now in s.e. and central AZ by the above species.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – Not a regular winterer in the state anywhere.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Just a quick driveby look for some on Tempe Town Lake on the first afternoon of the tour. There are relatively few winter records for the state (it's more of a late summer bird in AZ).

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – This and the Snowy Egret are both birds that have increased tremendously in the past 20 years as wintering birds in AZ.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – A single immature bird at Gilbert Water Ranch on the first afternoon.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – Decent looks in the scopes for all on that first afternoon.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – Like the above egrets, it's now a much more common winterer in the state than in the past.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – The Patagonia area is one of the strongholds for this species in s.e. AZ and it doesn't often occur east of there.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – A few wintering birds in the Buckeye area on the first full morning of the tour. This one has really increased as a winterer in s. AZ.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – Excellent scope studies of a perched pair of these in the leafless cottonwoods in the San Rafael Valley. Before 1981, this was another mega-rarity in the state.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – At least two, probably three, adults near Buckeye on our first full day of the tour. Another was spotted in s. Tucson on Day 4 by Lena & Doug (a real rarity anywhere in the county!).

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) – Along with the Red-tailed Hawk, this was one of the most common and conspicuous raptors of the entire trip. One female catching and eating a Killdeer on the first morning was quite a sight!

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – All of the birds seen in the lowlands at this season are wintering birds from farther north, but the Cooper's could be local breeders.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – These were right where they were supposed to be and they afforded us some great views from the bus!

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – Now, this one was a surprise! We made quite the mad dash to track this one down after seeing it from the freeway, but we all got good looks at this lost immature bird in Green Valley. A very rare wintering bird in the state anywhere.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – A nice variety of plumages and ages. The most common raptor in s. AZ in the winter months.

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (*Buteo regalis*) – We ended up with very nice scope views of this handsome hawk s.w. of Phoenix, and again just outside of Patagonia. Never very common in the state in the winter (there are very few breeding pairs in the state), but always findable.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – That immature bird right next to the vehicle was seen and enjoyed by all. A couple more distant adults later that same afternoon. This species is quite local in the state, and the wintering population here in the Santa Cruz Flats area was only recently discovered.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – Nice views in the Sulphur Springs Valley on the last day.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – A few birds in the Phoenix area and in the Santa Cruz Flats.

PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*) – That first one in the Santa Cruz Flats area got away from us, but we caught up with it nicely in the Sulphur Springs Valley on the last day.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus limicola*) [*]

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) [*]

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Gruidae (Cranes)

SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*) – The s. Sulphur Springs Valley is certainly the place to see this one in the state during the winter months. The numbers we saw at Whitewater Draw were about average or perhaps a little below that. Still, seeing 7000-8000 cranes in one spot, all of them vocalizing, is quite an experience!

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

MOUNTAIN PLOVER (*Charadrius montanus*) – This site has proven to be very reliable in recent years and we enjoyed our looks of a flock of 21 birds foraging on the sod. Mountain Plover numbers overall have been decreasing, elevating the concern for the species in recent years.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A few at Gilbert Water Ranch that first afternoon.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – A single bird associating with the above stilts at Gilbert Water Ranch. Not very common as a wintering bird in the state.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – Good numbers near Buckeye on the first morning, and then a surprising 15 birds at Whitewater Draw on the last day.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) – I counted at least 96 birds feeding in the flooded field near Buckeye that first morning. We've been finding that this species is more regular as a winterer in the agricultural regions of the state than we previously thought.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – At least 150 birds at Gilbert Water Ranch that first afternoon.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – Two birds at Willcox on the last morning of the tour.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Absolutely everywhere in the state now after first being detected in AZ only in 2000. [I]

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Generally a scarce and local winterer in the state. Much more common from March-August.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – This dove's numbers in the state have fallen off of a cliff in the last fifteen years for unknown reasons. I now have to work at finding it on my tours!

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina talpacoti*) – Thanks to a hot tip, we were able to locate three of these wanderers from Mexico at Whitewater Draw on the last full day of the tour. This species was unknown in the state prior to 1981, but there are now well over 200 records for AZ and it's even bred a couple of times here.

Psittacidae (Parrots)

ROSY-FACED LOVEBIRD (*Agapornis roseicollis*) – Our timing was very good for this one since the ABA checklist committee had just voted to add it to the official ABA N. American list. Great views in Phoenix on our first full day! [H]

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – One of the most charismatic species of the American Southwest and one that all visiting birders want to see. Trouble is, there's no sure fire spot to take anyone to see it, so you just have to put your time in driving the backroads in AZ. We ended up with some super views in the Sulphur Springs Valley on the last full day.

Strigidae (Owls)

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – I was counting on seeing this one at Whitewater Draw, but we saw another roosting pair in some leafless cottonwoods just north of there.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Lena spotted four of these feeding over the field just to the south of Whitewater Draw. You sometimes see large flocks of these Western swifts feeding over agriculture in the winter months in s. AZ.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*) – Nicely on our first afternoon at Gilbert Water Ranch.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – We had a couple of nice looks at one or two birds feeding at the hummingbird feeders in the Paton's yard in Patagonia. Away from feeders in Tucson, this one is quite a rare winterer elsewhere in the state.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – Good looks at Gilbert Water Ranch on that first afternoon.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Wonderful views at the Paton's feeders.

GILA WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – This is the 'default' woodpecker throughout much of s. AZ.

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) – One of these feeding quietly in the trees at the corner of the Paton's yard gave us a thorough study.

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – Another good woodpecker in the Paton's yard.

ARIZONA WOODPECKER (*Picoides arizonae*) – We pulled one of these in at Florida Canyon for good views. That spot is probably at the lower elevational limit for the species.

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

GRAY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax wrightii*) – Excellent scope looks at Patagonia Lake. This is probably the most expected wintering Empidonax in s.e. AZ.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Almost always associated with water here.

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – Lena spotted one of these rare but regular winter visitors at Patagonia Lake.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – This one occurs in almost all of the lowland habitats in s. AZ during the winter months.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – All of our Vermilions were gorgeous males, with the best view coming at Willcox on the last full day.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – Heard only at Paton's yard. Quite a rare bird in the winter here. [*]

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Birds in the West don't seem to be in the serious decline that birds in the East are undergoing.

Vireonidae (Vireos)

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – I was a little surprised that this was our only vireo on the tour. Very similar to the familiar Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (*Aphelocoma californica*) – The race here, A.c. woodhouseii, might get split from the coastal races, so watch for a change sometime soon.

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – We had a nice encounter with these along the trail at Florida Canyon. The scientific name of this one just recently changed when the s. Mexican race was split out as a separate species.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – We couldn't pick any Chihuahuan Ravens out of all of these.

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*)

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – Certainly the cutest of the N. American titmice, right?

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – Found in most habitats throughout the lowlands of s. AZ.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*) – Eating from the suet cage in the Paton's yard. There's talk of splitting the familiar White-breasted Nuthatch into three species (ours would be *Sitta mexicana*).

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – Surprisingly, it took us until the final day to see Arizona's state bird!

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – It was quite a surprise to see this one on the roof of a house in the Sulphur Springs Valley!

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – Always a favorite, we enjoyed prolonged scope views of this one in Montosa Canyon.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) – We finally got a good look at this one at the golf course pond at Willcox.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*) – A couple of birds at the Buckeye thrasher spot performed well for us.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – The bird at the Buckeye thrasher spot was pretty shy, but we caught up with nice views of it near Whitewater Draw.

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – The most widespread of our thrasher species on this tour.

CRISSAL THRASHER (*Toxostoma crissale*) – This was pretty much the last bird that we got for the tour. This thrasher tends to be the sneakiest of the resident thrasher species in the state, so getting a good look is often a challenge.

LE CONTE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma lecontei*) – It took some patience, but we finally tracked this one down for some good scope looks near Buckeye on our first morning together. There's a lot of habitat for this bird in the state, but most of it is not easily accessible.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) – Most of these were in the Phoenix area this year.

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – A single bird in the trees next to the golf course pond at Willcox was, surprisingly, the only one seen on the tour.

Ptilonotidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – A stop on our way up to Florida Canyon got us good looks at this mistletoe specialist.

Calcariidae (Longspurs and Snow Buntings)

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (*Calcarius ornatus*) – We saw a decent number of these birds in flight, but never close enough on the ground to see much of anything. One flock did have a rather brightly-plumaged male, but it was tough to pick out.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – We had a few of these here and there, but none that stuck around for long. Southern AZ is actually a pretty good place to see this one in winter, but they're most common in the lowland riparian stands.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – A bright adult male at the edge of the golf course pond brightened our visit there.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – Watch for a (re-)split of this one into at least two, and likely three species. You'll have to start calling them Myrtle & Audubon's warblers again.

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – This one was a nice splash of color on the trail into Florida Canyon. Rare but regular in winter in the canyons of the s.e. AZ mountains.

Emberizidae (Buntings, Sparrows and Allies)

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – This one was a nice bonus for us on our way out of Florida Canyon.

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – We swept the towhees on the morning of Day 4 this year, with this one being seen in Florida Canyon.

RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – Pulled him in for a great look along the Florida Canyon trail.

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – Another one of our Florida Canyon towhees, but also seen well elsewhere.

ABERT'S TOWHEE (*Melospiza aberti*) – We ended up seeing this local species on the first four days of the tour. The entire world range of this one barely extends beyond the boundaries of the state.

RUFOUS-WINGED SPARROW (*Peucaea carpalis*) – An excellent study along the Anza Trail in Green Valley. This local species has enjoyed a boom in its numbers and its range in the past decade or so.

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*)

BREWER'S SPARROW (*Spizella breweri*) – We had much better views of this one in the Sulphur Springs Valley on the final day, though he's not much to look at.

VESPER SPARROW (*Poocetes gramineus*) – One of the most common species out in the San Rafael grasslands.

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – Amazingly, I think we just had the one bird on our way into Whitewater Draw.

SAGE SPARROW (*Amphispiza belli*) – Our looks at this local wintering species were pretty good out at the thrasher spot.

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – A few of these sat up on the fences in the Sulphur Springs Valley, giving us decent looks from the van.

BAIRD'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus bairdii*) – This one didn't appear to be as common in the grasslands this year as it was last year, but we still managed a really fine view of a bird perched on the fence. The grasslands here and in adjacent Mexico seem to be a very important wintering area for this uncommon species.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*)

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*)

SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*) – Several in the cattails at Whitewater Draw.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – At least a couple of birds at the feeders at Patagonia Lake. Another rare but regular species in winter here.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (MOUNTAIN) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – These were the birds that sported the black lores and pink bills. It's much less common in mid-winter in s. AZ than the next subspecies.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (GAMBEL'S) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) – The majority of the White-crowns that we saw on this tour were this pale-lored race.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Longer-crested and longer-tailed than the race in e. North America.

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – Our best were likely at the Paton's feeders in Patagonia.

LAZULI BUNTING (*Passerina amoena*) – It was nice to see a couple of males coming to the Paton's feeders as well. Not very common at all in winter in AZ.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S) (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – For years, there's been talk of possibly splitting this distinctive southwestern race of E. Meadowlark out as a separate species, but there's been no move to date.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*)

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – We found a field full of these stunning blackbirds near Buckeye on that first full morning.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Every day on this tour. Would you believe that this common, widespread species was unknown in the state before the 1930's? It's still aggressively expanding its range throughout N. America.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – Several at the Paton's feeders in Patagonia.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – Easily the most common and widespread goldfinch here. That big flock in Montosa Canyon was really interesting - I normally never see big flocks of this species.

LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH (*Spinus lawrencei*) – Our searching the Santa Cruz R. bed in Green Valley paid off nicely with great scope looks at this beauty. This species doesn't occur in numbers every year in s. AZ, but this year was a pretty good invasion.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) **[1]**

MAMMALS

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – A little longer eared than the very similar E. Cottontail, which occurs at slightly higher elevations.

ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus arizonensis*) – In the Patagonia area on Day 3.

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – These can show up anywhere in the state, including my front yard in Tucson!

COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*) – Unfortunately, these appeared at the same time as our first Prairie Falcon, which took precedence. They got away from us while we were tracking the falcon.

MULE DEER (*Odocoileus hemionus*) – This is the deer species that normally occurs in the desert valleys throughout the south. White-tailed Deer is more of a mountain species in s. AZ.

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – The herd in the San Rafael Valley has dwindled down to the seven individuals that we saw there. There's apparently only one old male in the group, and he's probably too old to breed.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 157 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa