



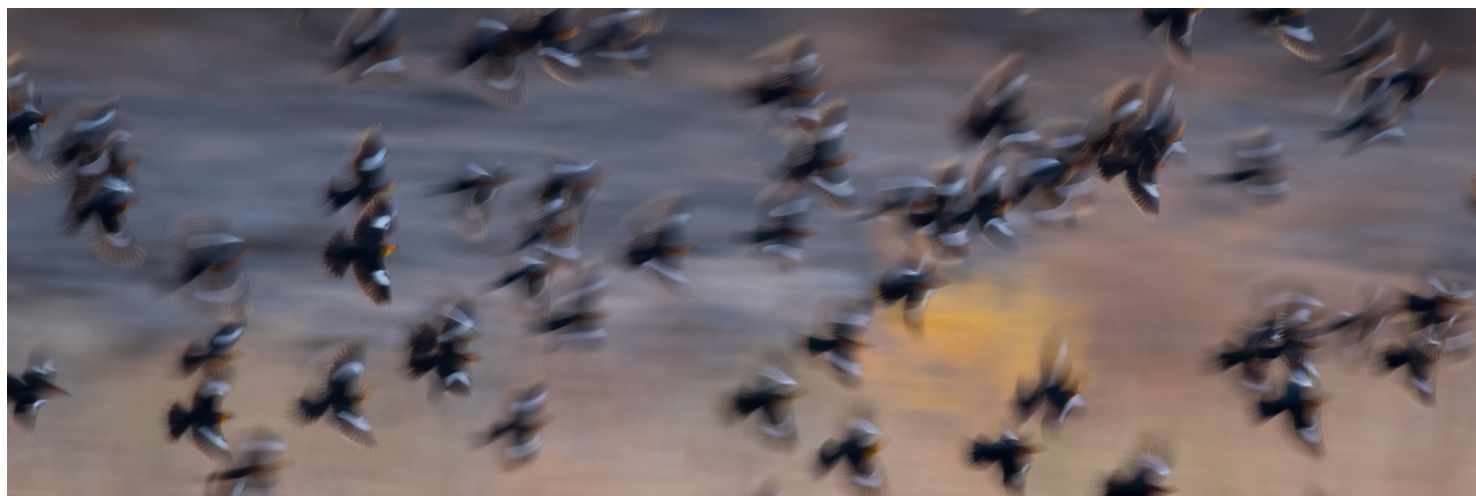
Field Guides Tour Report

Arizona Winter Specialties 2017

Dec 27, 2017 to Jan 2, 2018

Tom Johnson

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



The waves of 10,000 Yellow-headed Blackbirds coming in to roost in Tucson led several large-scale bird spectacles that we witnessed on this short tour. Here, with a slow shutter speed, the blackbirds blur together against a wetland backdrop. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.

This short tour through southern Arizona is timed to provide a great opportunity to see a nice cross-section of wintering birds as well as any Mexican rarities that might have strayed across the border. In addition to lots of waterfowl (multiple Eurasian Wigeon!), raptors (Ferruginous Hawks were nice), cranes, blackbirds, and much more, we saw some nice Mexican rarity flare in the form of a Ruddy Ground-Dove, 3 Rufous-backed Robins, and 3 Black-capped Gnatcatchers.

Delicious Mexican food, comfortable hotels, warm, settled weather, and a great group helped cap off an excellent week in this birdy corner of our country.

Thanks, and good birding!

Tom

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)

SNOW GOOSE (*Anser caerulescens*) – About 25 birds were mixed in with Sandhill Cranes at Whitewater Draw.

ROSS'S GOOSE (*Anser rossii*) – One immature bird accompanied Greater White-fronted Geese at Lake Cochise in Willcox.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*) – A group of 28 birds continued with other waterfowl at Lake Cochise in Willcox.

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – Several sightings of flocks in the greater Phoenix area.

CINNAMON TEAL (*Spatula cyanoptera*) – Good views of both drab females and sharp males at the Avra Valley WTP and Patagonia Lake SP.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*) – Common and widespread.

GADWALL (*Mareca strepera*) – Fairly common on ponds in the Tucson area.

EURASIAN WIGEON (*Mareca penelope*) – Somewhere between 2.5 and 3 individuals - let me explain. One lovely male accompanied a scruffier individual that *might* in fact be a hybrid (in retrospect, pale cheeks could suggest some American Wigeon parentage) at the Avra Valley WTP. Later, we saw another beautiful male Eurasian Wigeon on Lake Cochise in Willcox.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Mareca americana*) – Very common.

MALLARD (NORTHERN) (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*) – Common, especially around the Phoenix area.

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – These dark brown Mallards put in a few good appearances at Patagonia Lake SP and in the Sulphur Springs Valley. We also saw a few intergrades in the Tucson area.

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – Fairly common, with especially good views at the Gilbert Water Ranch.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – Common, with close views at Patagonia Lake SP.

CANVASBACK (*Aythya valisineria*) – We only found scattered individuals until we arrived at Benson WTP, where 28 "Cans" floated amongst other waterfowl.

REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*) – Ten were mixed in with Canvasback and other ducks at Benson WTP.

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – Very common, with lovely close views at Gilbert Water Ranch and Encanto Park.

GREATER SCAUP (*Aythya marila*) – One was a rare sighting at Patagonia Lake SP.

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – Scattered sightings at Gilbert Water Ranch and Patagonia Lake SP.

BUFFLEHEAD (*Bucephala albeola*) – A few of these small divers were at the Glendale Recharge Ponds.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – Rather common throughout the trip.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – One was mixed in with Gambel's Quail along the edge of the golf course at Willcox.

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*) – Fairly common in desert habitats including the Gilbert Water Ranch and the golf course in Willcox.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Fifteen of these impressive birds strolled around near the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Scattered sightings, with up to 6 at Sweetwater Wetlands.

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – One was at Tempe Town Lake, and three more were mixed in with the ducks at Benson WTP.

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) – One was with the Eared Grebe at Tempe Town Lake.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – Fairly common in the Phoenix area.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Common around the Phoenix area, with 3 more at Patagonia Lake.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – We saw over ten of these huge black-and-white birds in the vicinity of Buckeye.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – One immature was a rarity at the Amado WTP. On our second morning in the vicinity, we found this big, lost seabird soaring over the median of I-19 as we cruised past.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – One at the Santa Cruz Flats, and another at Patagonia Lake.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Scattered individuals in the greater Buckeye area.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Around 50 flew in to roost at the Gilbert Water Ranch on our first evening.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – A few sightings at Gilbert Water Ranch and Sweetwater Wetlands.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – We estimated 850 piling in to a flooded field near Buckeye.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – We just spotted a few of these big soaring birds.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Ours were at the Gilbert Water Ranch and Robbins Butte in the greater Phoenix area.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – Three were perched along the roadside in grasslands just east of Sonoita.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus hudsonius*) – A common species in grassland and desert areas.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – Two sightings of this small, migrant raptor. One was at the Gilbert Water Ranch, and another bolted through the private yard in Mesa that hosted the Ruddy Ground-Dove.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – Common in the desert, with sightings on most days.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – A massive immature bird flew past us at Gilbert Water Ranch on our first evening.

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – An immature bird was just outside of Willcox in an area where this patchily distributed species breeds.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Very common in open areas. We saw a nice variety of light, rufous, and dark morph birds.

RED-TAILED HAWK (HARLAN'S) (*Buteo jamaicensis harlani*) – One dark adult with a gray-streaked tail and white splotches on its chest and head was soaring over the Santa Cruz Flats. This same, distinctively marked bird has been returning to the exact same intersection for >5 years.

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (*Buteo regalis*) – Excellent views of this big Buteo near Buckeye.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus limicola*) – A few were calling at Sweetwater Wetlands, and we managed to see one at the edge of Patagonia Lake.

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) – We heard four at Sweetwater Wetlands. [*]

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Very common in wetlands.

Gruidae (Cranes)

SANDHILL CRANE (*Antigone canadensis*) – A few hundred flew in overhead and landed in the shallow ponds at Willcox, and around 5000 were in the shallow water at Whitewater Draw.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets).

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – These lovely shorebirds accompanied a flock of Avocets at the Gilbert Water Ranch.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Good views at the Gilbert Water Ranch.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings).

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Fairly common.

MOUNTAIN PLOVER (*Charadrius montanus*) – 22 of these scarce plovers were on the turf at the Evergreen Sod Farm on the Santa Cruz Flats, where we scoped them. This was a big target species for several members of our group.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) – Beautiful, close views in agricultural fields near Buckeye.

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) – Two at Whitewater Draw were rare for the winter season.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Scattered sightings - this is the common "peep" in Arizona in the winter.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – One was a scarce winter sighting with the two Dunlin at Whitewater Draw.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – Great, close views (and nice loud "keek" calls) of a flock at the Gilbert Water Ranch.

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*) – Two were at the Gilbert Water Ranch, where they didn't hide particularly well.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – A few sightings near Buckeye and at Sweetwater Wetlands.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – These big waders were in the flooded fields in the Buckeye area with the large flock of White-faced Ibis.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers).

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – Five circled around with some American White Pelicans at a small reservoir near Buckeye.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves).

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Common near humans. [I]

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Common, especially in agricultural areas. [I]

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – An impressive flock of 90 helped to hide a vagrant Ruddy Ground-Dove in Mesa.

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina talpacoti*) – One of these widespread tropical doves was a fine US rarity that we were able to visit in a private yard in Mesa. It was mixed in with a tumultuous flock of Inca Doves.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Only a few here and there until we got to Patagonia Lake, where they were everywhere!

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Common and widespread.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos).

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – A few nice sightings of the famous "Arizona Ground-Cuckoo" along the roadsides.

Strigidae (Owls).

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – One sat up alongside the road as we watched Mountain Plovers in the Santa Cruz Flats.

Apodidae (Swifts).

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Two were over the Santa Cruz Flats, and then we saw three more at the Avra Valley WTP.

The nice, warm weather helped us find this species - its natural history in winter is still only poorly understood but warm conditions certainly aid them in capturing flying insects.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds).

RIVOLI'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*) – These newly re-named hummers were at the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon. Rivoli's is the name for the northern population of what was formerly called "Magnificent Hummingbird." Those related birds in the highlands of Costa Rica and Panama are now known as "Talamanca Hummingbird."

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*) – Fairly common, especially in the Phoenix area. This species was named for Anna Massena, Duchess of Rivoli and wife of Francois Victor Massena, Duke of Rivoli (for whom Rivoli's Hummingbird was named).

VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia violiceps*) – One of these snazzy hummingbirds came in a few times to feed at the Paton's feeders in Patagonia.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers).

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – Two were along irrigation canals in the Buckeye area.

Picidae (Woodpeckers).

LEWIS'S WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes lewis*) – One of these beautiful woodpeckers was foraging in pecan trees in the Santa Cruz Flats. The species is typically quite scarce in this region in winter.

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Common around the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

GILA WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – Quite common in the Phoenix area and on the Santa Cruz Flats.

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) – Three joined a Red-breasted Sapsucker in Patagonia, and we saw a few others along the way, too.

RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus ruber*) – One was a continuing rarity in Patagonia. This individual seems to fit very well with the southern form daggetti and did not show any obvious signs of hybrid parentage (though Red-breasted x Red-naped hybrids can be difficult to rule out in such cases).

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – Fairly common in desert woodlands.

ARIZONA WOODPECKER (*Picoides arizonae*) – We saw these uncommon sepia-toned woodpeckers at Patagonia Lake SP and again at the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – Seen repeatedly in many habitats.

GILDED FLICKER (*Colaptes chrysoides*) – We found these Sonoran Desert specialties on the west side of the Tucson Mountains, where they perched side-by-side on a giant saguaro cactus.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras).

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – One soared overhead during our crossing of the Santa Cruz Flats.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – Common in open habitats.

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – One was at the Santa Cruz Flats; another was perched up near Whitewater Draw on our final day.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – Several sightings - in Mesa, at Sweetwater Wetlands, and at the Avra Valley WTP.

PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*) – We scoped one of these handsome brown-toned falcons on a utility pole near Buckeye, and another in a tree in the Sonoita Grasslands.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots).

ROSY-FACED LOVEBIRD (*Agapornis roseicollis*) – These handsome, introduced parrots were very common at Encanto Park in Phoenix where they were scouting out nest sites. We saw a few more in a residential neighborhood in Mesa. [I]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers).

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*) – We were fortunate to compare one of these small-billed, long-winged *Empidonax* flycatchers to Dusky Flycatcher in the mesquite bosque at Patagonia Lake SP.

GRAY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax wrightii*) – One of these distinctive tail-dippers was in mesquites in Rio Rico.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – Two were with other flycatchers at Patagonia Lake SP. We had some nice studies of these birds and got to hear their soft "whit" calls.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Common - seen every day, usually near water.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – A common open-country phoebe.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – A few of these snazzy flycatchers were around Phoenix and in the Santa Cruz Flats.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – One popped up in the early morning at the "thrasher spot" near Buckeye.

Laniidae (Shrikes).

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Seen frequently along desert roadsides; usually perched on wires.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies).

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – Point-blank views of these garrulous jays in Madera Canyon.

CHIHUAHUA RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – A few of these small, cryptic ravens appeared for us in the Sulphur Springs Valley and near Sonoita, too. Separating this species from the larger Common Raven is a major challenge and careful study is necessary - we let plenty of distant ravens go unidentified in this area due to these issues.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Common in open habitats.

Alaudidae (Larks).

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – Common in desert grasslands as well as agricultural areas like the Santa Cruz Flats where we saw 130 individuals.

Hirundinidae (Swallows).

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – A few of these brown swallows appeared at various water spots around the Phoenix area including the Glendale Recharge Basins.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice).

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – Good views of these pretty songbirds near Tubac, at Patagonia Lake, and in Madera Canyon.

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits).

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – Common in lower desert habitats.

Sittidae (Nuthatches).

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – A few scattered sightings in the Patagonia area and at Madera Canyon where they were attending feeders.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers).

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*) – One approached us closely in the mesquites at Patagonia Lake SP.

Troglodytidae (Wrens).

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – A couple skulked around in hedgerows and brush piles. Most memorable was the one at our feet at the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) – A few quick sightings in cattails at Gilbert Water Ranch, Sweetwater Wetlands, and Patagonia Lake.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – Fairly common, with especially good looks in the log piles at Patagonia Lake SP.

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – A few toyed with us from the cholla-covered hillsides of the Tucson Mountains.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – These little devils whined at us from the desert woodlands at Sweetwater Wetlands and Avra Valley WTP.

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*) – Especially common around the "thrasher spot" west of Buckeye.

BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila nigriceps*) – Three calling birds appeared immediately overhead in the mesquite bosque at Patagonia Lake SP, a traditional location for this species. In recent years, this Mexican species has been a rare, permanent resident of thornscrub forest in a narrow elevation band around the Santa Rita Mountains and surrounding ranges.

Regulidae (Kinglets).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – Common - an anchor of mixed flocks.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies).

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – Fairly common - we saw plenty feeding on the fruits at Santa Gertrudis Lane with the Rufous-backed Robins; more were in the mesquites at Patagonia Lake.

RUFIOUS-BACKED ROBIN (*Turdus rufopalliatu*s) – Excellent! These Mexican vagrants were foraging on fruit at Santa Gertrudis Lane in Tumacacori at very close range on our second visit. Rufous-backed Robins are quite similar to American Robins overall, but are decidedly more secretive in their habits, preferring dense riparian areas with plenty of fruit. This was the best winter in recent memory for the species in the United States.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – The common desert thrasher in southern AZ - we saw many of them.

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – This uncommon species posed well for us alongside the LeConte's Thrashers near Buckeye. We could easily see their mostly straight bills with the pale base, and enjoyed watching them foraging on the desert floor.

LECONTE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma lecontei*) – This is the rare diamond of Arizona's desert thrashers, and on our second attempt, we had some excellent views of two near Buckeye. In addition to perched birds in the scope, we got to see them foraging and running full-tilt through the desert scrub.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Common in a variety of habitats.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Common only around towns and agricultural areas. [1]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) – Lots were in the agricultural areas west of Phoenix and also in the Santa Cruz Flats.

Ptiliognatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – Some nice sightings in areas where desert trees were infested with clumps of mistletoe (a favored food source for these silky-flycatchers).

Calcariidae (Longspurs and Snow Buntings)

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (*Calcarius ornatus*) – Large flocks wheeled around chattering in the Sonoita Grasslands and later near Willcox, though we never really saw them well on the ground.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – A common wintering warbler in the area.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – A few skulked in the reeds at Sweetwater Wetlands.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – Multiple sightings of these uncommon wintering warblers at Gilbert Water Ranch and Sweetwater Wetlands.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – This rare, wintering vagrant was in a cottonwood tree at the Gilbert Water Ranch on our first afternoon.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – Very common wintering species in most habitats.

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – One moved past the feeding area at the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

Passerellidae (New World Buntings and Sparrows)

RUFIOUS-WINGED SPARROW (*Peucaea carpalis*) – Several nice sightings of this range-restricted sparrow between Tucson and Patagonia. Strange was the individual out-of-habitat in the parking lot of the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – Good views perched up in small trees in the Sonoita Grasslands with the Baird's Sparrows.

BAIRD'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus bairdii*) – We waited until the final day for some nice, calm weather, and it really paid off! We found at least 8 of these scarce wintering sparrows in beautiful native grassland NE of Sonoita. Several perched up in small mesquite trees that dotted the golden grasslands and let us ogle them through the scope.

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – Common in wooded areas south of Tucson such as Patagonia and Madera Canyon.

BREWER'S SPARROW (*Spizella breweri*) – This is typically a very common bird in desert scrub and grasslands in southern AZ in the winter, but this year, they were very scarce. We only had two sightings, in the Tucson Mountains and later at Willcox.

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – Several of these classsy desert sparrows were found at Robbins Butte and in the Tucson Mountains.

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*) – A flock of 7 moved past us at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson.

LARK BUNTING (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) – Paralleling our luck with Brewer's Sparrows, we found only a few of these large, chunky sparrows in areas that often host hundreds or thousands in winter. Ours were in the Santa Cruz Flats (2) and later along Kansas Settlement Road in the Sulphur Springs Valley (12).

DARK-EYED JUNCO (*Junco hyemalis*) – The feeders at the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon were loaded with these variable sparrows. Pink-sided, Oregon, Gray-headed, and a few intergrades made up the phenotypes that we saw there at close range.

YELLOW-EYED JUNCO (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Two were mixed in with a nice melange of Dark-eyed Juncos at the Santa Rita Lodge feeders in Madera Canyon.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (ORIANATHA) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – We saw only a few of these dark-lored, montane breeders mixed in with the more common Gambel's White-crowned Sparrows.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (GAMBEL'S) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) – Rather common as a wintering bird here.

SAGEBRUSH SPARROW (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*) – This is the interior group of "Sage Sparrow" with the streaked back and weak moustache stripe. We saw lots of these in sparse desert scrub west of Buckeye.

BELL'S SPARROW (CANESCENS) (*Artemisiospiza belli canescens*) – We found a few of these smooth-backed, dark-moustached sparrows at Robbins Butte and one on our second visit to the "thrasher spot" near Buckeye. The picture of the relative wintering distribution of Bell's and Sagebrush Sparrows in Arizona has only recently started to become clear.

VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*) – At least 10 were in the Sonoita Grasslands with the Baird's and Grasshopper Sparrows.

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Very common in desert grasslands.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*) – A few were in riparian areas such as Patagonia Lake SP.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) – Good views of these finely streaked sparrows at several occasions in shrubby areas and at feeding stations.

SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*) – One popped up for a quick but good observation at the edge of the marsh at Whitewater Draw on our final afternoon.

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – One scratched around in the open parking lot at the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon with a Rufous-winged Sparrow.

ABERT'S TOWHEE (*Melospiza aberti*) – Very common in the desert lowlands of the Phoenix area. The Gilbert Water Ranch hosted a whole bunch of these regional specialties.

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – One was skulking around the edges of the private yard in Mesa where we saw the Ruddy Ground-Dove.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies).

HEPATIC TANAGER (*Piranga flava*) – A pair came in to the feeding station at the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Great views of these long-crested desert cardinals at Santa Gertrudis Lane and Patagonia Lake SP.

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – Two were at the feeders at Patagonia Lake SP for some close views.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – One of the big highlights of the trip was the evening experience of seeing ~10,000 of these striking blackbirds swirl past us before they settled into their marshy roost on the west side of Tucson.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*) – Common in agricultural fields.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S) (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – We saw this lover of native grasslands several times in the Sonoita area.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Fairly common, with the largest numbers accompanying the Yellow-headed Blackbirds in their Tucson roost.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – Groups flew past us as we watched the large blackbird roost in Tucson.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) – Plenty at Gilbert Water Ranch and again on the Santa Cruz Flats.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – These huge, long-tailed grackles are common in the desert lowlands, especially around agriculture.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – Common in the desert.

RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*) – An early winter invasion of this wandering finch into the lowlands of southern Arizona had largely fizzled by the time our tour rolled around. We heard a few birds flying over the Santa Cruz river from Santa Gertrudis Lane during our robin vigil, but we never saw them. [*]

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – Common at the feeders in Madera Canyon

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – Common and widespread. Nice views with siskins at the Santa Rita Lodge feeders.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows).

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Plentiful in towns. [I]

MAMMALS

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – The common bunny in lowlands.

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*) – One was along the edge of Lake Cochise in Willcox.

ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus arizonensis*) – A few sightings in Madera Canyon.

ARIZONA COTTON RAT (*Sigmodon arizonae*) – One, presumably this species, scooted across the path in front of us at Gilbert Water Ranch.

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – One trotted through an agricultural field near Buckeye early one morning.

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – We watched a fine group of 50 of these "goat antelopes" ducking under a fence and then crossing the highway in front of us just north of Sonoita. In southern AZ, this species occurs only in native grasslands and therefore is fairly range-restricted here.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 169 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa