



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**ARIZONA WINTER SPECIALTIES (MAINE AUDUBON) 2020**

Mar 14, 2020 to Mar 20, 2020

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



*It's always a little shocking to see that gleaming yellow eye of the Yellow-eyed Junco for the first time! (Photo by participant Bill Thompson)*

This private Maine Audubon tour to Arizona was a lot of fun to guide for such a small group, but we sure had to jump a few hurdles to pull it off along the way! A few road closures, a little nasty weather in the south, a little early pandemic, lots of restaurant closures, flight uncertainty, etc. all had us recalibrating our plans – but we pulled it off!! We ran this tour at a non-traditional time (for us) this year, but I think you'd all agree that the birding was super in mid-March, and we got to enjoy a few early spring arrivals along our route along with most of the winter specialties that we come to expect on this itinerary.

We started off with a fine afternoon in the warm sun at Gilbert Water Ranch just east of our Phoenix hotel. What a great introduction to the wintertime avifauna of this area! The next morning found us out in the (relatively) lush desert near the small community of Buckeye. After tallying scope views of LeConte's and Bendire's thrashers and a surprise appearance of Gilded Flicker, we scoured the agricultural fields southwest of Phoenix for a wide variety of wintering birds, including a few rare Ruddy Ground-Doves in a residential yard full of Indian Peafowl! We finished up our first full day with great views of countable Rosy-faced Lovebirds and a surprise Greater White-fronted Goose at Encanto Park.

Our next day found us in the Santa Cruz Flats region south of the city of Casa Grande. Unfortunately, our usual Mountain Plovers were AWOL during our visit, but we did find the likes of Crested Caracara, nesting Barn Owl, nesting Great Horned Owl, a vagrant Lewis's Woodpecker, and lots of others, before we continued south to Tucson. In the city parks there, we tracked down a wintering Greater Pewee, a lovely female Williamson's Sapsucker, multiple showy Vermilion Flycatchers, Snow Goose, Wood Duck, Bronzed Cowbird, and others.

With rainy weather looming on the horizon, we headed to the dirt roads of the San Rafael Grasslands south of Tucson. We tried our best to get a killer look at Baird's Sparrow in the beautiful rolling grasslands here, but we never really got the looks we wanted. Sprague's Pipit also gave us fits, surrendering only fleeting looks in flight. Still, our time out in the grasslands was rewarding and the scenery was tough to beat! We continued on to the town of Patagonia, where we had hummers on our mind. We weren't disappointed at the Paton's feeders, with a few great views of Violet-crowned Hummingbird, along with multiple Broad-billed, Anna's, and Black-chinned hummers. A visit to Patagonia Lake SP just down the road toward Nogales

was worthwhile in the afternoon, with Lazuli Bunting, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Pyrrhuloxia, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, and others showing well for us.

Our expected winter storm rolled in overnight before we headed southeast to the wide-open Sulphur Springs Valley. Our first stop was at birdy Whitewater Draw near the little town of McNeal. It was here that we found our only Sandhill Cranes – hundreds of them! – in the fields near the lake. As our rainy, chilly day progressed, we tacked on Ferruginous and Swainson's hawks, Lark Bunting, White-faced Ibis, Wilson's Phalarope, an impressive variety of ducks, Chihuahuan Raven, a couple of different families of Great Horned Owls, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and so many more before we called it quits and sat down for a delicious Mexican dinner in Willcox.

Our final day together was focused on what's known as the Tucson-Nogales birding corridor. A couple of hikes along the Santa Cruz River flowing northward out of Mexico yielded some great sightings, from Common Black Hawk and Gray Hawk, to the fabulous Greater Roadrunner, and from Bridled Titmouse to Black-throated Gray Warbler, with loads of other goodies along this important riparian stretch south of Tucson. Madera Canyon provided lots of bird entertainment at the feeders there and elsewhere, and we picked up the likes of Rivoli's Hummingbird, Acorn Woodpecker, Hepatic Tanager, Mexican Jay, and a lovely Painted Redstart in nearby Florida Canyon.

Thanks to all of you for joining me for this short Arizona tour – I really hope that you liked what you saw and it gives you all reason to return. I really had a great time guiding all of you and traveling through the southern half of my beautiful state. I wish all of you good health and I look forward to seeing you in the field again – maybe back in Arizona!

--Dave

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#### 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

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### BIRDS

#### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl).

**SNOW GOOSE** (*Anser caerulescens*) – Our first bird was a habituated wintering adult at Reid Park in Tucson, but we did see a small wild flock of these at Whitewater Draw a few days later. Whitewater seems to be the only reliable spot in s.e. Arizona where this one winters. [b]

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (*Anser albifrons*) – I'd heard about an adult wintering at Encanto Park in downtown Phoenix, and it turns out that it was pretty easy to find, despite the throngs of people! You sometimes get decent numbers of these wintering in far w. Arizona along the lower Colorado R., but it's a pretty scarce bird during the winter months anyplace else. [b]

**CANADA GOOSE** (*Branta canadensis*) – This actually used to be a pretty scarce bird in s. Arizona when I first started birding in the late '60's-'70's, but the numbers have just exploded in the Phoenix area (and elsewhere). It's still a good find in s.e. Arizona.

**WOOD DUCK** (*Aix sponsa*) – A single drake at Reid Park in Tucson one afternoon was a nice find. Generally a scarce bird at any season in s. Arizona. [b]

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Spatula discors*) – A single female bird at Whitewater was our only one of the trip. [b]

**CINNAMON TEAL** (*Spatula cyanoptera*) – This and the Ruddy Duck were the only ducks that we recorded on every day of this tour. The males were looking mighty fine! [b]

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Spatula clypeata*) [b]

**GADWALL** (*Mareca strepera*) [b]

**AMERICAN WIGEON** (*Mareca americana*) – That seething mass of 100's of wigeon that we found on the golf course at Willcox is a sight that I won't soon forget! It's a shame that we couldn't find any Eurasian Wigeons in that flock. [b]

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*) – We get semi-domesticated Mallards all year long in some places, but I think that many of the birds that we saw on this tour were truly wild birds (except for Encanto and Reid parks).

**MEXICAN DUCK** (*Anas diazi*) – The males of this recently split species look like a really dark female Mallard with a yellow-green bill. It's not difficult to find birds that are apparent hybrids throughout s. Arizona.

**NORTHERN PINTAIL** (*Anas acuta*) [b]

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN)** (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) [b]

**CANVASBACK** (*Aythya valisineria*) – Never very common anywhere in s. Arizona, we had one bird at Patagonia Lake SP and another three at Benson of a golf course pond. [b]

**REDHEAD** (*Aythya americana*) [b]

**RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Aythya collaris*) – This is typically the most common diving duck that winters in s. Arizona. [b]

**LESSER SCAUP** (*Aythya affinis*) – I was a little surprised to see as many as we did up at Gilbert Water Ranch. [b]

**BUFFLEHEAD** (*Bucephala albeola*) – We saw quite a few of these, including lots of pretty males, at the Glendale Recharge ponds in the Greater Phoenix area. [b]

**HOODED MERGANSER** (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) – A single bird at a small pond in St. David south of Benson was a little bit of a surprise find. Not a common bird anywhere in s.e. Arizona. [b]

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

#### Odontophoridae (New World Quail).

**GAMBEL'S QUAIL** (*Callipepla gambelii*) – We had several good looks at this charismatic desert species, but none better than the bird on the fencepost on our drive down to Whitewater Draw!

#### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies).

**WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Many habituated birds at the Santa Rita Lodge feeders in Madera Canyon. Wild Turkey had been effectively extirpated in Arizona for many years, but an aggressive reintroduction program in the 70's & 80's has them re-established in all of the mountainous



areas of the state.

Podicipedidae (Grebes).

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – We had many more Eared Grebes than we had Pied-billeds, which is normal for the season. [b]

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves).

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) [I]

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) [I]

**INCA DOVE** (*Columbina inca*) – This mostly Mexican species has retreated from much of s. Arizona, starting around the turn of this century. I used to get 20-30 birds daily in my Tucson yard, but no more.

**RUDDY GROUND DOVE** (*Columbina talpacoti*) – Thanks to the hospitality of the nice woman up in Buckeye, we were invited into her yard to get good looks at a few of these wanderers from Mexico. The first birds in the state were recorded in the '70's, and they've been annual visitors since then - even breeding in the state a couple of times - but they're not quite established yet.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) – This species was starting to trickle back into the state during the course of our tour.

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaida macroura*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos).

**GREATER ROADRUNNER** (*Geococcyx californianus*) – As usual, we ended with a few sightings of the widespread but sparse resident. Our best sighting was of one in a mesquite tree along Santa Gertrudis Lane south of Tubac.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds).

**RIVOLI'S HUMMINGBIRD** (*Eugenes fulgens*) – We counted at least four birds during our visit to Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon. Until recently, this one had been known as the Magnificent Hummingbird - then it was split into two species. Rivoli's Hummingbird is actually the name that I knew when I started birding in the late '60's.

**BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus alexandri*) – One of the first migrants to arrive in the early spring, we found this one at several birding venues during the tour.

**ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** (*Calypte anna*) – Our most widespread and common hummer on the tour.

**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – We heard a distinctive male fly overhead in the Santa Cruz Flats south of Phoenix. The in-flight whistle of the adult males is produced by modified primary feathers in the wings. [\*]

**BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – The adult males are really stunning with the shining metallic blue throat, green body, and bright orange bill. Really unlike any other hummer in the U.S.

**VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia violiceps*) – This very local Mexican hummer sometimes winters in Patagonia at the Paton's feeders, but not always. The combo of bright white underparts, purple crown, and coral bill is unique in the U.S. [\*]

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots).

**SORA** (*Porzana carolina*) [b\*]

**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*)

Gruidae (Cranes).

**SANDHILL CRANE** (*Antigone canadensis*) – While we didn't have the huge numbers from earlier in the season, we still were impressed with the sight and the sound of the 100's that we saw in the agricultural fields and at the lake at Whitewater Draw. [b]

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets).

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – The Phoenix area is always an excellent place to find this one in the the winter months since it's so much lower in elevation (warmer) than most of the rest of the state.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Most of the birds that we encountered at Gilbert Water Ranch that first afternoon were already sporting the tawny head and neck of their breeding plumage.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings).

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies).

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – This is the only 'peep' that winters regularly in numbers anywhere in Arizona. [b]

**LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – This is the expected dowitcher species at any season in the state. [b]

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – The birds that we saw at Willcox were early spring migrants. [b]

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – This species greatly outnumbers the Lesser Yellowlegs in the winter months here. [b]

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) – A couple of birds at Gilbert Water Ranch on that first afternoon were unexpected there at this season. [b]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers).

**RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*) – Arizona has recorded a surprising number of gull species over the years, but finding any gull in s. Arizona on any given day is a still little exciting for Arizona birders, even if it's a Ring-billed. [b]

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags).

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – The Phoenix area has been inundated with this species, but that wasn't always the case. This one was still a review species for the Arizona bird records committee until the late '70's, and it wasn't until the late '90's that the numbers in Phoenix really exploded.

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – The great size difference between this one and the above Neotropic was really apparent in the scope at Patagonia Lake SP.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns).

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*)

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – This and the Snowy Egret used to be rare in Arizona during the winter months.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*)

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*) – Never a common heron anywhere in the state at this season.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

*Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)*

**WHITE-FACED IBIS** (*Plegadis chihi*) – That close flock of birds feeding in the flooded grass west of Phoenix on our first full day were fun to see up close like that. It wasn't until the last 20 years of so that this one started to winter in numbers in the Phoenix area. Before that, it was pretty darned rare in the state during the winter months. [b]

*Cathartidae (New World Vultures)*

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – Never as common here as the ubiquitous Turkey Vulture.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*)

*Pandionidae (Osprey)*

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – A single bird at the Gilbert Water Ranch that first afternoon was our only encounter with this one. [b]

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**NORTHERN HARRIER** (*Circus hudsonius*) – We had several really nice adult male birds in the grasslands this year. Most of the birds that winter here are females of juveniles. [b]

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** (*Accipiter striatus*) – Usually less common than Cooper's Hawk, but we saw the same numbers of Sharpies and Cooper's on this short tour. [b]

**COOPER'S HAWK** (*Accipiter cooperii*)

**BALD EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – That nesting pair that we saw w. of Phoenix was right at the edge of a suburban housing development – not the usual scenario in Arizona.

**COMMON BLACK HAWK** (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – We saw a migrant adult flush from the tall Freemont Cottonwoods along the Santa Cruz R. near Tumacacori, but we never got a great look at it.

**HARRIS'S HAWK** (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – A couple of birds flew right over our heads while we were enjoying the stilts and avocets feeding in the pond next to the trail at Gilbert Water Ranch that first afternoon.

**GRAY HAWK** (*Buteo plagiatus*) – This one had just arrived from the wintering grounds in Mexico and was very vocal during our walk along the Santa Cruz R. near Tumacacori.

**SWAINSON'S HAWK** (*Buteo swainsoni*) – I was a little surprised to find this one along the roadside near Elfrida, thinking that it was a bit early for a spring arrival. It's the most common raptor in that area right now as I write this.

**RED-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

**FERRUGINOUS HAWK** (*Buteo regalis*) – After a lot of scanning w. of Phoenix, in the Santa Cruz Flats, and elsewhere, we finally ran into a few birds in the agricultural fields n. of Elfrida in the Sulphur Springs Valley. [b]

*Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)*

**BARN OWL** (*Tyto alba*) – It was quite a thrill to see this one on a nest in that empty farm building in the Santa Cruz Flats! Our first of three owl species that day. [N]

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**GREAT HORNED OWL** (*Bubo virginianus*) – We had some memorable encounters with this one in the Santa Cruz Flats and in the Sulphur Springs Valley. [N]

**BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*) – We found at least three different territories along that irrigation canal near Buckeye, and then another couple of birds in the Santa Cruz Flats. Always a crowd pleaser!

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – We found a couple of wintering birds near Buckeye. [b]

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*) – This one doesn't typically winter in the lowlands in Tucson, but I guess those ornamental pines were just too nice for this one to pass up! [b]

**LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes lewis*) – Every winter finds a few of these high elevation birds in the Arizona lowlands. Pecan trees are often a favorite hang out when they do descend to the desert. [b]

**ACORN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – The feeders in Madera Canyon are a great place to see this striking woodpecker.

**GILA WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – This is the 'default' woodpecker species throughout the lowlands in s. Arizona and is typically the only woodpecker that you see in large cities like Phoenix and Tucson.

**LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER** (*Dryobates scalaris*) – Not much bigger than a Downy Woodpecker, and it sounds quite a bit like that one, too.

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

**GILDED FLICKER** (*Colaptes chrysoides*) – We had some super views of this one near Buckeye at the thrasher spot, and then again the next day out in the Tucson Mountains west of Tucson.

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**CRESTED CARACARA** (*Caracara cheriway*) – We never did see this one perched in the Santa Cruz Flats, but we did have some good looks at a couple of birds in flight.

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*)

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) – Never common anywhere in the state, but we did see this one three days in a row on our tour. [b]

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – A surprise find at the Benson sewage ponds east of Tucson.

*Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)*

**ROSY-FACED LOVEBIRD** (*Agapornis roseicollis*) – Once we got to Encanto Park in Phoenix, this one was not difficult to find! **[I]**

*Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)*

**NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET** (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – We found a super-confiding bird along the path at Patagonia Lake SP.

**GREATER PEWEE** (*Contopus pertinax*) – We didn't find this wintering bird on our first run through Reid Park in Tucson, but a final check of a favored tree paid off with great views as it sallied out to catch a few flying insects late one afternoon.

**GRAY FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax wrightii*) – Surprisingly, this was the only species of *Empidonax* flycatcher that we detected on this tour.

**BLACK PHOEBE** (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Recorded daily on this tour. Almost always found near water.

**SAY'S PHOEBE** (*Sayornis saya*) – A very common wintering species in all open habitats.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – It is hard to get your fill of this beautiful bird!

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – A couple of birds in the Buckeye area probably wintered locally.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – It sounds like we established a new early spring arrival date for Pinal County (by one day) with our sighting in the Santa Cruz Flats.

*Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)*

**BELL'S VIREO** (*Vireo bellii*) – This is one of the earliest of the returning spring migrants in s. Arizona.

**HUTTON'S VIREO** (*Vireo huttoni*) – A single bird in Madera Canyon on the last day. This one looks remarkably similar to the smaller Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

**CASSIN'S VIREO** (*Vireo cassinii*) – The bird along the trail at Patagonia Lake SP was very likely wintering there. A greener, migrant version of the next species. **[b]**

**PLUMBEOUS VIREO** (*Vireo plumbeus*) – This is the only member of the old "Solitary Vireo" complex that breeds in the state. We had ours along the Santa Cruz R. near Tumacacori.

*Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – This one seems to be doing just fine out in the West.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**MEXICAN JAY** (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – A duller, larger version of the scrub-jays and a common visitor to the feeders in Madera Canyon.

**CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN** (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – All of the birds that we saw were seen in the Sulphur Springs Valley, which seems to be the stronghold for this species in Arizona.

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*)

*Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**BRIDLED TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – This is the only 'chickadee' in much of SE Arizona, but we do have other species locally throughout.

*Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)*

**VERDIN** (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – Very common in suburban settings and throughout the deserts of s. Arizona.

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris*) – A common breeder throughout the grasslands of SE Arizona.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – This is the only swallow that winters regularly in s. Arizona and it was our most widespread swallow on this tour.

**TREE SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – Swallows, in general, migrate very early in the springtime in s. Arizona (some starting to move northward even in January!). This one is usually one of the most common of the early migrating species here. **[b]**

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – A few of these were mixed in with the more common Tree Swallows at the Benson sewage ponds.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*)

**CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – This species typically arrives at traditional breeding colonies in s. Arizona in late February-early March, so the ones that we saw were already pretty established for the season.

*Regulidae (Kinglets)*

**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus calendula*) **[b]**

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST)** (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – The White-breasted Nuthatches here sound very different than what you hear in the East – and probably ought to be split.

*Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)*

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – We found this one where we were hoping to find the rare Black-capped Gnatcatcher - which looks quite a bit like it.

**BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila melanura*) – We had some nice looks at this one out at the thrasher spot near Buckeye that first full morning of the tour.

*Troglodytidae (Wrens)*

**MARSH WREN** (*Cistothorus palustris*) – I think that we got our first visual at Whitewater Draw - before the rain hit. **[b]**

**BEWICK'S WREN** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – A really common voice in all of the lowland riparian areas and oak woodland of SE Arizona.

**CACTUS WREN** (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – We only had this one – Arizona's state bird – in the Tucson area on this tour. **[N]**

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) **[I]**

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers).

**CURVE-BILLED THRASHER** (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – Our most widespread thrasher, as expected.

**BENDIRE'S THRASHER** (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – Fabulous looks at this look-alike species near Buckeye and also in the Santa Cruz Flats.

**LECONTE'S THRASHER** (*Toxostoma lecontei*) – The first bird that I heard when I stepped out of the van at the famous 'thrasher spot' was this local species. We ended up with super views in the scope of a bird singing loudly in the top of a mesquite. A real specialty of this itinerary. [b]

**NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies).

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia sialis*) – We had a couple of birds in the oak woodland as we drove out to the San Rafael Grasslands. The race here, *S. s. fulva*, is only found here in SE Arizona within the U.S. (it ranges south through Mexico).

**HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*) – One bird below Madera Canyon stayed still long enough to be seen by all on the final afternoon.

**AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*) – Just one bird on the entire trip!

Priliogonotidae (Silky-flycatchers).

**PHAINOPEPLA** (*Phainopepla nitens*) – An elegant bird that I never tire of.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows).

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

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits).

**AMERICAN PIPIT** (*Anthus rubescens*) – It was a little strange to see these up on the power lines next to the road in the Santa Cruz Flats. [b]

**SPRAGUE'S PIPIT** (*Anthus spragueii*) – We had some quick, disappointing flyby looks in the San Rafael Grasslands during our morning of birding there. A very scarce wintering bird here. [b]

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).

**HOUSE FINCH** (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

**PINE SISKIN** (*Spinus pinus*) – I think that all of ours were at feeders, no? [b]

**LESSER GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus psaltria*) – This is the 'default' goldfinch here in s. Arizona.

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows).

**RUFOUS-WINGED SPARROW** (*Peucaea carpalis*) – Our best views were at the feeders at Patagonia Lake SP.

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – This one popped up onto a fence wire when we were trying to find Baird's Sparrow out in the an Rafael Grasslands. Not a bad look in the scope!

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – Surprisingly scarce this year.

**BREWER'S SPARROW** (*Spizella breweri*) – Not many of these seemed to be around this year, but we did get a couple of great looks.

**LARK BUNTING** (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) – The numbers that we had n. of Elfrida in the Sulphur Springs Valley were really impressive! [b]

**DARK-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco hyemalis*) – There was a nice mix of wintering races at the feeders in Madera Canyon. [b]

**YELLOW-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco phaeonotus*) – These were also frequenting the feeders at Santa Rita Lodge, providing great comparisons with the above Dark-eyed, especially the 'Gray-headed' Juncos with similar bright red backs.

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (ORIANTHA)** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – A couple of birds were wintering with the more common pale-colored gambelii White-crowns at Gilbert Water Ranch. [b]

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (GAMBEL'S)** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) – The common wintering form here. [b]

**VESPER SPARROW** (*Poocetes gramineus*) [b]

**SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) [b]

**BAIRD'S SPARROW** (*Centronyx bairdii*) – We gave this scarce wintering species a lot of time in the San Rafael Grasslands and got it to perch up on fence wires a couple of times, but it just wouldn't behave and let us put it in the scope! This one has always been a challenge on this tour. [b]

**SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*)

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (*Melospiza lincolni*) – I've always thought that this was the most handsome of all of the sparrows that winter in Arizona. [b]

**CANYON TOWHEE** (*Melospiza fusca*) – I remember when this one was called the Brown Towhee - until it was split into three in the late 70's.

**ABERT'S TOWHEE** (*Melospiza aberti*) – Very common and approachable at Gilbert Water Ranch.

**RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – One of these put in a very brief appearance in one of the brush piles at Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

**SPOTTED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo maculatus*) – Do you remember when this one was called the Rufous-sided Towhee?

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies).

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – The feedlots up in the Phoenix area attracted a lot of these, but we got our best looks in the small cattail pond at Whitewater Draw. [b]

**WESTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella neglecta*) – The relatively lush conditions in the Santa Cruz Flats area and in the Sulphur Springs Valley had these birds up and singing. They normally do not breed in either location.

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S)** (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – This is the widespread breeding meadowlark in SE Arizona. Someday, this form might get split out as the Lilian's Meadowlark.

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

**BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – A couple of birds spent the entire winter at Kennedy Park in Tucson, where we saw our female Williamson's Sapsucker.

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*)

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) – Very similar to the Rusty Blackbird, but the male is more colorful. [b]

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Everywhere we went.

Parulidae (New World Warblers).



**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Leiothlypis celata*) – This is probably the second most common wintering warbler in s. Arizona, after Yellow-rumped. [b]

**LUCY'S WARBLER** (*Leiothlypis luciae*) – This is one of the very early spring arrivals in the state, and we heard birds singing on territory at a few spots along our route.

**COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*)

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – Another early arrival here.

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (MYRTLE)** (*Setophaga coronata coronata*) – We had one very messy-looking bird at Gilbert Water Ranch on the first afternoon, and then another bird in Patagonia. [b]

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S)** (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*)

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – I suspect that the birds that we saw were birds that had wintered in the area.

**PAINTED REDSTART** (*Myioborus pictus*) – John spotted our only Painted Redstart of the trip in Florida Canyon near Madera on our final afternoon. What a bird!

#### Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

**HEPATIC TANAGER** (*Piranga flava*) – A lone male put in an appearance at the feeding station at Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

**NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – This was very common along the Santa Cruz River near Tumacacori and Tubac. The race here, *C. c. superbus*, is longer-tailed, has a longer crest, and it's brighter red than the birds in the East.

**PYRRHULOXIA** (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – A fine-looking close relative of the Northern Cardinal.

**LAZULI BUNTING** (*Passerina amoena*) – That adult male at Patagonia Lake SP was a nice piece of 'eye candy'! [b]

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## MAMMALS

**DESERT COTTONTAIL** (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – All of the cottontails in the low deserts were this species. It's got noticeably longer ears than the very similar Eastern Cottontail, which occurs at higher elevations.

**BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT** (*Lepus californicus*) – The huge ears and long legs help separate this one from the cottontails.

**ROCK SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – This ground-squirrel was responsible for all of the holes that the Burrowing Owls were using in Buckeye.

**ROUND-TAILED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*) – Much smaller than its cousin above, this is the species responsible for the hole that the Santa Cruz Flats Burrowing Owls were using.

**ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus arizonensis*) – This squirrel has a very small world range - but it looks quite a bit like the Eastern Gray Squirrel.

**COYOTE** (*Canis latrans*) – One of these posed nicely for us in the alfalfa near Buckeye.

**WHITE-TAILED DEER** (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – The race here in SE Arizona, *O.v. couesi*, is the second-smallest race in all of N. America ('Key' Deer is the smallest)

**PRONGHORN** (*Antilocapra americana*) – A few of these in the grasslands, where they're doing well.

#### Herps

**ORNATE TREE LIZARD** (*Urosaurus ornatus*) – Our only lizard of the trip was this small arboreal species.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 170 bird taxa and 8 mammal taxa**