



Field Guides Tour Report

Arizona: Birding the Border II 2014

May 16, 2014 to May 25, 2014
Chris Benesh

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



The Southwestern Research Station, our base of operation in the Chiricahuas. (Photo by guide Chris Benesh)

Our Birding the Border 2 tour was a great success this year, with a variety of interesting birds and other critters seen along the way. We started with an evening up on Mt. Lemmon and some night birding. The next morning we explored Florida Canyon before heading east to the Chiricahuas. We had a few days to explore this amazing area before heading west to Sierra Vista and access to the Huachuca Mountains. More good birding ensued. We then headed west through the Sonoita grasslands to Patagonia and a new set of birds. Based in Rio Rico, we explored the wilds west of Nogales including California Gulch, and we ended up with some birding in the Santa Ritas and Tucson.

Among the highlights, trip favorites included the colorful male Elegant Trogon seen so well in the Chiricahuas, the Spotted Owl perched majestically above her nest in Miller Canyon, the terrific luck we had with three different pairs of Montezuma Quail in the Chiricahuas, and the fabulous look we had at the silent Poorwill in Hunter Canyon. Other favorites included the strikingly handsome Lark Sparrow, great views of Five-striped Sparrow, energetic Gilded Flickers, elegant American Avocets, and splashes of color by way of Rufous-capped Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Vermilion Flycatcher, Broad-billed Hummingbird, and Western Tanager. So many other ones could have easily have made it on to a favorites list.

Thanks to all of you for making the trip such a success!

--Chris

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)

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – About thirteen were at the Rio Rico Ponds.

MALLARD (NORTHERN) (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*)

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*)

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*)

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (*Anas crecca*)

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*)

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*)

MONTEZUMA QUAIL (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – We had terrific luck with this species in the Chiricahuas, seeing three different pairs crossing roads in various places!

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) [*]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – A couple in breeding plumage at Willcox.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*)

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – After some searching, we fortunately located a pair of birds in St. David. These eventually came close and gave good views!

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

NORTHERN GOSHAWK (*Accipiter gentilis*) – We had a wonderful, brief encounter with one in the Chiricahuas.

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – One seen on the first afternoon on our way up to Mt. Lemmon.

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*)

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*)

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – Plenty around this year with sightings on six different days.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*)

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

WILLET (*Tringa semipalmata*)

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*)

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*)

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*)

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonias niger*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*)

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

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*)

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*)

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*)

Strigidae (Owls)

FLAMMULATED OWL (*Psiloscopus flammeolus*) – Furtive views of this species on Mt. Lemmon on the first evening.

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops kennicottii*) – After a bit of work, we connected with this species near Portal.

WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops trichopsis*) – Nice views on Mt. Lemmon.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) [*]

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – Nice looks in the Chiricahuas.

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*)

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cucularia*) – One seen right in Tucson.

SPOTTED OWL (*Strix occidentalis*) – A female sitting just above her nest in Miller Canyon.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*)

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – Fantastic look at a silent bird in lower Hunter Canyon.

BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR (*Antrostomus ridgwayi*) – A rare bird these days in Arizona. Ours was heard near Proctor Road. [*]

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrostomus arizonae arizonae*) – Despite hearing them on four different nights, none were seen. [*]

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*)

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – Well seen at SWRS. This species has become harder to find away from a few spots in the Chiricahuas.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*)

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*)

COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte costae*) – Some handsome birds in northwest Tucson.

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*)

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cyananthus latirostris*)

VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia violiceps*) – Great views of this species at the Paton's property in Patagonia.

WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD (*Hylocharis leucotis*) – The male White-eared Hummingbird was showing well for us in Miller Canyon.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

ELEGANT TROGON (*Trogon elegans*) – Nice looks at a male along the South Fork of Cave Creek.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

GILA WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes uropygialis*)

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*)

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*)

ARIZONA WOODPECKER (*Picoides arizonae*)

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

GILDED FLICKER (*Colaptes chrysoides*) – A couple well seen on the final day of the trip.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – The best payoff for our trek into Florida Canyon was this petite flycatcher.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*)

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*)

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*)

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondii*)

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*)

PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax difficilis*)

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*)

BUFF-BREADED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) – Seen at a couple of spots in the Chiricahuas.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*)

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*)

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*)

SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*)

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Rio Rico turned out to be the best spot for these, though we also had one at Kino Springs.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*)

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – Good looks at a pair of birds along Sonoita Creek.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

Vireonidae (Vireos)

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*)

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*)

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*)

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*)

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)

WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (*Aphelocoma californica*)

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*)

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*)

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*)

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – Quite a few of these were around the playa in Willcox.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*)

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – Pretty scarce this week, but we did get on to a pair of nesting birds in the Chiricahuas.

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*)

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*)

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (*Psaltriparus minimus*)

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*)

PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*)

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*)

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*)

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*)

BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila nigriceps*) – A real treat was encountering a family group of these in California Gulch. The male gave us the best viewing opportunities.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – Some nesting birds in lower Huachuca Canyon was a real treat.

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – Three were seen in Summerhaven.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH (*Catharus ustulatus*)

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*)

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – The birds in the Portal area seem to be somewhat intermediate between two populations. A proposal to split them is currently under consideration by the AOU.

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – We managed to see three in total.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)

Ptilonotidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*)

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – Some nice views of this species that is not olive and not a warbler. Go figure!

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

LUCY'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis luciae*)

VIRGINIA'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis virginiae*)

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*)

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*) – This was a weird surprise in Montosa Canyon on the final day of the trip.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (*Setophaga coronata*)

GRACE'S WARBLER (*Setophaga graciae*)

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*)

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*)

RUFOUS-CAPPED WARBLER (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – An exciting find for the few lucky enough to see it before it dropped out of sight in Hunter Canyon.

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*)

RED-FACED WARBLER (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – Wow, what a bird!

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – Always a treat to see this colorful species.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – This species is likely soon to be placed in its own family.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (*Pipilo chlorurus*)

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*)

RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*)

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*)

ABERT'S TOWHEE (*Melospiza aberti*)

RUFOUS-WINGED SPARROW (*Peucaea carpalis*) – Including the bird visiting Bob Rodrigues's feeders well east of their normal range.

BOTTERI'S SPARROW (*Peucaea botterii*)

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*)

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*)

FIVE-STRIPED SPARROW (*Amphispiza quinquestriata*) – One of the most sought after Arizona specialties, we had some nice views in California Gulch.

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*)

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*)

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*)

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*)

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (MOUNTAIN) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*)

YELLOW-EYED JUNCO (*Junco phaeonotus*)

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC TANAGER (*Piranga flava*)

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*)

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*)
NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*)
BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)
BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*)
LAZULI BUNTING (*Passerina amoena*) – Great looks at the feeders in Portal.
INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – Singing in Florida Canyon.
VARIED BUNTING (*Passerina versicolor*) – Some nice views of this handsome bunting.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)
EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S) (*Sturnella magna lilianae*)
GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)
BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*)
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)
HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*)
BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*)
SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*)

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)
PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*)
LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [H]

MAMMALS

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)
DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)
BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*)
CLIFF CHIPMUNK (*Tamias dorsalis*)
HARRIS'S ANTELOPE SQUIRREL (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*)
ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*)
ROUND-TAILED GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*)
NAYARIT FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) – Better known as Mexican Fox Squirrel.
ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus arizonensis*)
BOTTAE'S POCKET GOPHER (*Thomomys bottae*)
ARIZONA COTTON RAT (*Sigmodon arizonae*)
COYOTE (*Canis latrans*)
BLACK BEAR (*Ursus americanus*) – A fun encounter with one in Cave Creek.
WHITE-NOSED COATI (*Nasua narica*) – An aged coatimundi visiting a feeding station for a drink and a snack.
COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*)
WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*)
PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – A close one seen briefly soon after entering Fort Huachuca.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 194 bird taxa and 17 mammal taxa