



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Arizona: Birding the Border II 2015**

May 15, 2014 to May 24, 2014

Dave Stejskal

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



*This local Five-striped Sparrow, essentially an endemic Mexican species, gave us the best possible looks at the bottom of California Gulch; if you're going to see this species in the U.S., this is probably where you're going to see it. Photo by guide Dave Stejskal.*

The weather on this year's second Arizona: Birding the Border tour was pretty much idyllic for mid to late May. I don't think the high temps in Tucson, the lowest and hottest spot that we visit on this tour, got much above 90° F, which was fantastic for the season! We did start out with a bit of unsettled weather on the first two days of this tour, but it never slowed us down at all.

Our survey of the best birding spots in S. E. Arizona began in Tucson, where we visited the oasis-like Sweetwater Wetlands and the rugged Tucson Mountains to the west of town. It was then on to the Chiricahuas (via Willcox) for three nights at the comfortable Southwestern Research Station in stunningly beautiful Cave Creek Canyon. Here, we searched the high mountains, the lush watered canyons, the rolling pinyon/juniper/oak woodland, and the arid and sparsely vegetated desert flats. We did incredibly well here, recording a very high percentage of our total trip list in these productive mountains.

Then it was on to the slightly less lofty Huachuca Mountains near Sierra Vista and Ft. Huachuca. As in the Chiricahuas, damage from recent fires and subsequent flooding was very evident nearly everywhere, but the birding was fantastic. I always feel like we barely scratch the surface when we conduct a tour here, but we did very well, again, in our limited time.

We finished up this tour in the Patagonia-Nogales area, where we birded the lush Sonoita Creek area, the seemingly out of place Patagonia Lake, the remote and beautiful California Gulch area, and the birdy Santa Cruz River and Madera Canyon areas. We didn't have much left to see when we arrived at our resort hotel in Rio Rico, but we got just about everything we wanted, and then some!

Some of the avian highlights for me had to include our Elegant Trogons, that stunning male Montezuma Quail, and Mexican Chickadees in the Chiricahuas, a lovely male White-eared Hummingbird and a pair of vagrant Flame-colored Tanagers in the Huachucas, that surprise Pacific Loon at Patagonia Lake, incredible Five-striped Sparrow and Buff-collared Nightjar in California Gulch, and all of those owls that we had spectacular views of. Of course, there are lots of others, so read on!

Thanks so much to all of you for joining me on this year's tour. You were all such wonderful traveling companions during our ten days together, and I

## 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)

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – About sixty of these on a small pond near Rio Rico was an impressive sight!

**GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*) – This species, and most of the other ducks that we saw at Willcox on our two stops there, were late lingering migrants headed north. [b]

**AMERICAN WIGEON** (*Anas americana*) [b]

**MALLARD (NORTHERN)** (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*)

**MALLARD (MEXICAN)** (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – A few of the "Mallards" that we saw at Willcox and Patagonia Lake SP were this hen-plumaged form that was once split out as a separate species, the Mexican Duck (*Anas diazi*). Many of the birds in s. Arizona now show traits of northern Mallard in their plumage, but many still look 'pure'.

**CINNAMON TEAL** (*Anas cyanoptera*) – This beautiful Western duck has been known to nest in S.E. Arizona some years, but I suspect the ones we saw were lingering non-breeders.

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

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

**REDHEAD** (*Aythya americana*)

**RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Aythya collaris*) [b]

**BUFFLEHEAD** (*Bucephala albeola*) – This very tardy duck was spotted by Gabriel & Michael at the Benson sewage ponds.

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – This little duck definitely breeds in the region; there was even a displaying male in the small golf course pond at Willcox during our first visit.

### Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

**SCALED QUAIL** (*Callipepla squamata*) – We never did find this one sitting up and calling like I did on my previous two tour just before this one, but we ran into it a few times at Willcox and at Portal. The best was the pair coming in to the new feeders at Dave Jasper's house in Portal.

**GAMBEL'S QUAIL** (*Callipepla gambelii*) – This charismatic species of the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts was seen very well a number of times on this tour.

**MONTEZUMA QUAIL** (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – We had to work at seeing this one, but it sure paid off with some great scope views of a lovely male near Portal!

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

**WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – All of the birds in the mountains of S.E. Arizona are thought to be the result of reintroduction efforts during the past 35 years here. Those birds at the feeders in Madera Canyon were about as cheeky as they come! [I]

### Gaviidae (Loons)

**PACIFIC LOON** (*Gavia pacifica*) – There was probably no more surprising find than this basic-plumaged bird on Patagonia Lake! Although it was unexpected, there seems to be an emerging pattern of late migrants appearing in the Interior West recently.

### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Including a fuzzy chick at Patagonia Lake SP. [N]

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – This bird has actually bred a couple of times at Willcox, but the birds we saw there were clearly migrants. [b]

### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – Plenty of these at both Sweetwater in Tucson and at Patagonia Lake SP. Numbers of this one, which used to be a review species in Arizona because of its extreme rarity, are exploding in the state. There are places in the Phoenix area where you can now see 1000+ in a day!

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – A couple of subadults at Patagonia Lake SP with the numerous Neotropics.

### Ardeidae (Heron, Egrets, and Bitterns)

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

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – A singleton at Sweetwater. [b]

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – This one is pretty scarce in S.E. Arizona, especially in Cochise County. [b]

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*)

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – It was strange to see these birds out at that ephemeral pond in Willcox during the light of day. Clearly migrants. [b]

### Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**WHITE-FACED IBIS** (*Plegadis chihi*) – We had some nice studies from the van of this Western species at Willcox. [b]

### Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – We had several of these in the Patagonia area. They rarely venture east of here within Arizona.

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

### Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**MISSISSIPPI KITE** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – A detour to St. David brought us some fine views of a perched adult in someone's front yard tree. A

very local breeder within the state and about as far west as this species regularly occurs.

**COOPER'S HAWK** (*Accipiter cooperii*) – The 'default' *Accipiter* at this season.

**HARRIS'S HAWK** (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – This attractive raptor seems to be on the decline locally. We were fortunate to get a look at this one, brief as it was, on our final day in Green Valley.

**GRAY HAWK** (*Buteo plagiatus*) – Once we got to the Patagonia area, we detected this one daily. Our best looks were probably along the Anza Trail near Tubac on our last morning together. This species has been expanding its range and numbers in s. Arizona quite a bit in the last 20 years, and it's now found annually n.w. of Phoenix.

**SWAINSON'S HAWK** (*Buteo swainsoni*) – All of our birds were light-morph individuals. The only time I see dark-morph birds in the state is during migration.

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) – After that decent, but distant, view in Cave Creek Canyon, it was nice to see a couple of closer adults at Patagonia Lake SP. This one is now found from the Mexican border north to the Utah border.

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

#### Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*) [N]

#### Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A pair or two of these may end up nesting at Willcox this year, where it's a rare breeder.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra americana*) – A few of these beautiful shorebirds were already on nests at Willcox during our visits there. [N]

#### Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**SEMPALMATED PLOVER** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – These migrants were getting on the late end of their spring passage. [b]

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*)

#### Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – May is the best month to see numbers of migrants of this one. [b]

**WILLET (WESTERN)** (*Tringa semipalmata inornata*) – These were gone by the time we checked Willcox again after birding the Chiricahuas. [b]

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW** (*Numenius americanus*) – A flock of 37 of these was a good number for May. I have a suspicion that this one actually breeds in small numbers in the grasslands near Willcox, but that's yet to be established. [b]

**BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** (*Calidris bairdii*) – Much more scarce in spring than it is in the fall here. [b]

**WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*) – Very few 'peeps' at all during this tour. [b]

**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus griseus*) – This was the most surprising of our several shorebirds at Willcox this year.

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – We saw some fine-looking females on the Willcox pond during our first visit there on Day 2, and it was nice to have all of those Red-necked Phalaropes mixed in for comparison! [b]

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – This one is especially scarce in the region during spring, so I suspect that the foul weather at the start of the tour put these migrants down at Willcox. [b]

#### Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

**RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*) [b]

**LEAST TERN** (*Sternula antillarum*) – This was a surprise find on our first afternoon at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson. This one is turning out to be a 'rare but regular' bird in the spring here. [b]

**BLACK TERN** (*Chlidonias niger*) – A couple of birds, one in fine alternate plumage, at Willcox on Day 2. [b]

#### Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

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

**BAND-TAILED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – Our best was the single bird perched just off the road in upper Carr Canyon in the Huachuclas.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Unrecorded in the state before 2000. [I]

**INCA DOVE** (*Columbina inca*) – This species used to actually be abundant in Tucson and other spots in S.E. Arizona, but they've all but disappeared due to unknown causes. Portal and Patagonia seem to be the best spots to see them now along our route.

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina passerina*) – Nice looks along the Anza Trail near Tubac.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Everywhere!

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

#### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**GREATER ROADRUNNER** (*Geococcyx californianus*) – We sure had more than our fair share of great looks at this charismatic species during the tour!

#### Strigidae (Owls)

**FLAMMULATED OWL** (*Ptiloscoptes flammeolus*) – We found the right bird to try to see in the Chiricahuas! It took a little extra effort, but we all came away with great views of this rarely seen little owl, which is now in its own genus *Ptiloscoptes* (formerly in *Scops*).

**WESTERN SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops kennicottii*) – We ended up with a great view of this one near Portal one night.

**WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops trichopsis*) – This screech-owl is very local within the US, not ranging much farther north than the mountains around Tucson and barely reaching the New Mexico border ranges. Great views in Cave Creek canyon!

**GREAT HORNED OWL** (*Bubo virginianus*) – All of our birds were seen during the daytime, including an active nest (late?) at our hotel in Rio Rico! [N]

**NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – Michael spotted our best at Stewart Campground in the Chiricahuas. Some taxonomists split these southern birds with paired calls from birds farther north and west, calling it Mountain Pygmy-Owl. [N]

**ELF OWL** (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – Outstanding views of this tiny owl (the world's smallest) after a bit of a wait in Miller Canyon!

**BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*) – This was one our first birds of the trip in Tucson on that first afternoon at Santa Cruz River Park.

**SPOTTED OWL** (*Strix occidentalis*) – YESSS!!!! We were very lucky when we heard this bird call on its own at dusk in the Chiricahuas, and even luckier to be able to see it shortly afterwards!

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**LESSER NIGHTHAWK** (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – We had some good studies across the street from our hotel in Sierra Vista one night, thanks to Pat Newman's advance scouting report!

**COMMON POORWILL** (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – We had a few stunning looks at this little nightjar in the road at a few different spots this year.

**BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR** (*Antrorstomus ridgwayi*) – WOWWW!!! We couldn't have asked for a better look at this one after our picnic dinner near the Mexican border! This year is turning out to be a very good year for this species in s.e. Arizona.

**MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL** (*Antrorstomus arizonae arizonae*) – Great views of this recently split species (from Eastern Whip-poor-will) right after we saw our Spotted Owl in the Chiricahuas.

Apodidae (Swifts)

**WHITE-THROATED SWIFT** (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – The only species of swift known to nest within the state.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD** (*Eugenes fulgens*) – One of the most aggressive of the hummers at both Miller Canyon and the Southwestern Research Station (SWRS).

**BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – The largest of the regularly occurring hummers in the US.

**BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus alexandri*) – Probably the most common hummer that we saw at the feeding stations.

**ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** (*Calypte anna*) – Just a few of these on this tour. Most of our tour route is east of the core of the range of this one in Arizona.

**COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD** (*Calypte costae*) – A single female bird in the gardens at the Paton's feeders in Patagonia. Easily identified by voice, but otherwise very similar in appearance to the female Black-chinned Hummingbird.

**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – Most of the birds we detected on this tour were adult males flying by, their modified primary feather tips in their wings whirring loudly.

**BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – Those feeders at Madera Canyon were just swarming with this species! [N]

**VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia violiceps*) – A couple of dapper birds put in an appearance during our vigil at the Paton's feeders in Patagonia. There's no easier place to see them within the US.

**WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Hylocharis leucotis*) – A lovely adult male put in a couple of appearances for us while we watched the feeders in Miller Canyon this year - I wish that the lighting was a little better, though! Miller Canyon has been THE place to see this Mexican species in the US for the past twenty years or so.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

**ELEGANT TROGON** (*Trogon elegans*) – The South Fork Road in the Chiricahuas has been great for this prized Arizona specialty this year, and we had our fill as it worked the road edge ahead of us during our walk there. Gotta see this one when you do a birding trip to s.e. Arizona!

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**ACORN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – A Corn Woodpecker??

**GILA WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – The common woodpecker in the desert city of Tucson.

**LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides scalaris*) – Like a few of you remarked, the call of this one is very Downy Woodpecker-like.

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides villosus*) – The race that we saw, *P. v. icastus*, is much darker than any of you had seen before in other parts of N. America.

**ARIZONA WOODPECKER** (*Picoides arizonae*) – Excellent views of this local specialty in the Chiricahuas. Formerly called the Strickland's Woodpecker before it was re-split into two species (Strickland's is a s.c. Mexican highland endemic species). [N]

**NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED)** (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – Most of our flickers on this tour were "Red-shafted" types, but we did see an interesting male intergrade (Red-shafted X Yellow-shafted) in the Chiricahuas.

**GILDED FLICKER** (*Colaptes chrysoides*) – Our Gilded on Day 2 in Tucson were not very close, unfortunately, but they were seen in very typical habitat for the species.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*) – Very few on this tour, but they were nesting in the box at Bob Rodrigues's yard near Portal. [N]

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – That perched bird along State Line Road near Portal sure was a beauty!

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

**NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET** (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – Smallest of the N. American flycatchers, we saw this tiny bird quite well along the road along Sonoita Creek and along the Anza Trail s. of Tubac.

**OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Contopus cooperi*) – One of the first of our 21 species of flycatchers on this tour! Arizona is a great place for flycatchers within the US. [b]

**GREATER PEWEE** (*Contopus pertinax*) – We had great views of this specialty pewee in the Chiricahuas - we even got to hear it sing its Spanish song -- 'Jose Maria'.

**WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus sordidulus*) – Seen or heard on every day of the tour.

**HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax hammondi*) – We normally see and hear a number of these western *Empidonax* migrating through the area on this tour, but, like many of the western migrants here, this one was barely detected this year (one at Carr Canyon only). [b]

**GRAY FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax wrightii*) – One late bird along State Line Road. [b]

**DUSKY FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – Just one bird high in the Chiricahuas. [b]

**PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax difficilis*) – We managed just one of these this year along Sonoita Creek. Our 6th species of *Empidonax* on this tour this year. [b]

**CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – These were around the mountains in good numbers this year. There's been talk of lumping Cordilleran and Pacific-slope back into one species, the Western Flycatcher. That would certainly make my life easier!

**BUFF-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) – I'm not sure that this bird has been recorded in Pine Canyon in the Chiricahuas since the late 1980's, so it was good to see that it was still present.

**BLACK PHOEBE** (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Surprisingly few this year!

**SAY'S PHOEBE** (*Sayornis saya*) – A pair feeding young right outside our rooms at SWRS. [N]

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – I never tire of this one!

**DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – You need to get a little bit of elevation before you start to run into this small *Myiarchus*.

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – The dullest of our three *Myiarchus* flycatchers and the one that prefers the driest habitats.

**BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – At home in the Saguaro-dominated Sonoran Desert around Tucson as well as the upper elevation riparian forests in the Chiricahuas.

**SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) – These birds had just arrived from their wintering grounds in w. Amazonia.

**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – On our first and final days of the tour - how's that for symmetry?

**CASSIN'S KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – Usually found in more wooded habitats than Western Kingbird.

**THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – We saw the 'usual' birds in the Patagonia area, but it was great to see a pioneering bird in the Arizona sycamores in Portal again this year! There's no mistaking this one with that massive bill.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

#### *Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Plentiful on the east side of the Chiricahuas, but nearly unrecorded elsewhere.

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

**BELL'S VIREO** (*Vireo bellii*) – Our western birds are much duller-plumaged than birds found in the East.

**PLUMBEOUS VIREO** (*Vireo plumbeus*) – The only "Solitary" Vireo that breeds in the state.

**HUTTON'S VIREO** (*Vireo huttoni*) – Easily misidentified as a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

**WARBLING VIREO** (*Vireo gilvus*) – Very few of these passing through the mountains this year.

#### *Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**STELLER'S JAY** (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – Quite high in the Chiricahuas on Day 5.

**WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (WOODHOUSE'S)** (*Aphelocoma californica nevadae*) – There's a likely split coming up again for Western Scrub-Jay, so make a note that you saw this race that is part of the Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay group.

**MEXICAN JAY** (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – Our most frequently encountered jay on the tour. Formerly called the Gray-breasted Jay.

**CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN** (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – Very similar to, and often confused with, the Common Raven. In fact, I think it's one of the most misidentified birds in s.e. Arizona!

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) [N]

#### *Alaudidae (Larks)*

**HORNED LARK (WESTERN RUFOUS GROUP)** (*Eremophila alpestris adusta*) – A couple of birds with bright rufous backs at Willcox.

#### *Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

**PURPLE MARTIN (DESERT)** (*Progne subis hesperia*) – It was great to see this small Saguaro-nesting race actually sitting on a Saguaro!

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – The common swallow of the mountains of s.e. Arizona.

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – Our birds were getting late and that migrant flock of 65 or so birds at the Benson sewage ponds (presumably put down by the unsettled weather) was pretty impressive for the date! Arizona is the only state on the mainland that doesn't have nesting Bank Swallows. [b]

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

**CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

#### *Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**MEXICAN CHICKADEE** (*Poecile sclateri*) – We couldn't have asked for a better look at this special bird in the Chiricahuas. Since you can't bird the Animas Mountains in s.w. New Mexico, the Chiricahuas are the only place to see this species in the US.

**BRIDLED TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – Certainly one of Arizona's cutest birds!

**JUNIPER TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*) – The Chiricahuas are very near the southern range limit for this species.

#### *Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)*

**VERDIN** (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – Apparently a big fan of grape jelly!

#### *Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)*

**BUSH TIT (INTERIOR)** (*Psaltriparus minimus plumbeus*) – This is another bird that might be due for some splitting, so keep track of where you see them.

#### *Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta canadensis*) – High in the Chiricahuas.

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST)** (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – All of our birds were this breeding race, which may be split out from the birds on the West Coast and birds in the East.

**PYGMY NUTHATCH** (*Sitta pygmaea*) – the Western counterpart of the Southeastern Brown-headed Nuthatch.

#### *Certhiidae (Treecreepers)*

**BROWN CREEPER (MEXICAN)** (*Certhia americana albescens*) – Another split candidate? There are a lot of recognized subspecies of this one and a

lot of plumage and voice variability between major groups, so I wouldn't be surprised if there's some major splitting coming up within what we now call Brown Creeper.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

**ROCK WREN** (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – Great views of a family group in the streambed in Miller Canyon. [N]

**CANYON WREN** (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – We finally connected with this one on the last afternoon at Florida Canyon, after hearing a ton of them earlier.

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*)

**BEWICK'S WREN** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – All of these Interior West birds are quite dull compared to birds in the East and along the West Coast.

**CACTUS WREN** (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – Easily seen in Portal this year. Arizona's state bird!

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

**BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila melanura*) – We had excellent views of this one west of Tucson on Day 2 as we looked for our Gilded Flickers.

**BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila nigriceps*) – We found this scarce Mexican bird twice in the same day! A couple of them at Patagonia Lake SP and then a responsive male at California Gulch late the same afternoon.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus calendula*) – Only one! [b]

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

**WESTERN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia mexicana*) – Great looks high in the Chiricahuas.

**HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*) – We heard more of these than we saw this trip.

**AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

**CURVE-BILLED THRASHER** (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – The only 'common' thrasher of the tour.

**BENDIRE'S THRASHER** (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – The pair that I'd found earlier on one of my prior tours was still in the area and still being followed by their recently fledged youngsters. [N]

**CRISSAL THRASHER** (*Toxostoma crissale*) – This skulking pair didn't make my job any easier, but I'm glad we at least saw them!

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

Sturnidae (Starlings)

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

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

**CEDAR WAXWING** (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – A late pair at SWRS one morning.

Ptilionotidae (Silky-flycatchers)

**PHAINOPEPLA** (*Phainopepla nitens*) – We started seeing big numbers of these once we got to the Patagonia/Nogales area.

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

**OLIVE WARBLER** (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – We enjoyed unbelievable close looks at an adult male near Rustler Park in the Chiricahuas, then we watched a female actively building a nest (my first) in a pine in upper Carr Canyon. Now in a family all its own. [N]

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*)

**LUCY'S WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis luciae*) – The only warbler breeding out in the mesquite and desert washes.

**VIRGINIA'S WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – We had a heck of a time trying to get a look at this one in the Chiricahuas and Huachucas, but most folks ended up with a pretty decent view of it in Carr Canyon.

**MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – A single migrant seen by some from the van along State Line Rd. [b]

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

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) [N]

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** (*Setophaga coronata*) – All of our birds were the western "Audubon's" type, which may be re-split from the "Myrtle" Warbler sometime soon.

**GRACE'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga graciae*) – This pine specialist was a common voice in the Chiricahuas and the Huachucas, and we actually saw a few of them, too!

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – We found this handsome species in nearly all of the highland habitats that we visited. Often mistaken for a chickadee or a Black-and-white Warbler.

**TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – A single female along the South Fork Road was the only one that we could find this year. [b]

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Like all of the other migrants, this one was in very short supply this year. [b]

**RED-FACED WARBLER** (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – This stunning little bird was seen very well in the Chiricahuas a couple of times. This bird seems to be expanding its range pretty aggressively in the state, being found almost routinely now north to the Grand Canyon area.

**PAINTED REDSTART** (*Myioborus pictus*) – One of my favorite birds in the world, we had a number of memorable encounters with this confiding species. [N]

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*)

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

**SPOTTED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo maculatus*) – A split from the old Rufous-sided Towhee.

**RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – A pair of these were feeding young that had just left the nest in Huachuca Canyon while

we searched for the elusive Sinaloa Wren. [N]

**CANYON TOWHEE** (*Melospiza fusca*) – Formerly lumped with the California Towhee as Brown Towhee.

**ABERT'S TOWHEE** (*Melospiza aberti*) – The bird at the Rodrigues feeders near Portal was a real rarity there. This one is as close to an Arizona endemic as there is in the bird world, with its range being almost totally confined to the lower Colorado River drainage.

**RUFOUS-WINGED SPARROW** (*Peucaea carpalis*) – This handsome species is almost exclusively found in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona and neighboring Sonora, Mexico.

**BOTTERI'S SPARROW** (*Peucaea botterii*) – We had a rather distant view of this one along State Line Rd. near the Chiricahuas, but we later nailed it near Florida Wash below Madera Canyon on our final day together.

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*)

**BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW** (*Spizella atrogularis*) – One of these distinctive sparrows performed pretty nicely for us in the open juniper woodland along the Paradise Rd. near Portal.

**LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*)

**FIVE-STRIPED SPARROW** (*Amphispiza quinquestriata*) – We had some of the best looks that I've ever had at this Mexican species in California Gulch and at our picnic dinner site near there. The total US population of this one probably doesn't exceed 150 individuals.

**BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – Pairs had already fledged young by the time our tour had started. [N]

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

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (*Melospiza lincolni*) – A late migrant at SWRS. [b]

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (MOUNTAIN)** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – A couple of late birds were briefly seen at Willcox on Day 2. This is the race that breeds in the s. Rocky Mountains and winters in Mexico. [b]

**YELLOW-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Plenty of these distinctive juncos throughout the Chiricahuas and the Huachucas, including a very confiding pair at SWRS.

#### Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

**HEPATIC Tanager** (*Piranga flava*) – One of the most widespread of the Piranga tanagers in the New World - though these 'tanagers' aren't really tanagers anymore!

**SUMMER Tanager** (*Piranga rubra*) – Especially common as we headed west from the Huachucas.

**WESTERN Tanager** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – This was one of the only western migrants that seemed to be around in near normal numbers.

**FLAME-COLORED Tanager** (*Piranga bidentata*) – YESSSSS!!!! News of a pair of these in Ramsey Canyon hit the streets shortly after this tour started, and a hike up to the staked out spot proved very fruitful for us. We all saw the female - or at least a piece of her - as she sat on the nest and we were then treated to the male sitting quietly bringing in a mouthful of food for his mate at the end of our stay there. I think it's only a matter of time before this Mexican species becomes established as a regular breeder in the state.

**NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Brighter red, and with a longer crest and tail than birds in the East.

**PYRRHULOXIA** (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – Super looks at this pretty Northern Cardinal relative at the feeders in Portal.

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEEK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – This western counterpart of the familiar Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen daily on this tour.

**BLUE GROSBEEK** (*Passerina caerulea*) – These birds had just arrived earlier in the month from their wintering grounds in Mexico.

**LAZULI BUNTING** (*Passerina amoena*) – Just a few females left at the Portal feeders. [b]

**INDIGO BUNTING** (*Passerina cyanea*) – You had to be quick to get a look at the perched male at the Paton's before he flew off.

**VARIED BUNTING** (*Passerina versicolor*) – Our best was certainly that adult male at the Sinaloa Wren spot in the Huachucas.

#### Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

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

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S)** (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – This pale western race is thought by some to represent a distinct species, the Lilian's Meadowlark.

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

**BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – Michael finally found us one of these distinctive cowbirds at our picnic breakfast at Tubac.

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

**HOODED ORIOLE** (*Icterus cucullatus*) – The smallest of our nesting orioles in s. Arizona, the females of which are often confused with female Orchard Oriole.

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus bullockii*) – Several fine males at the feeding stations in Portal. It's still hard for me to believe that this was once lumped with the Baltimore Oriole.

**SCOTT'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus parisorum*) – We finally caught up with a close bird at Dave Jasper's feeders in Portal.

#### Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

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

**PINE SISKIN** (*Spinus pinus*) – Still good numbers of these around at the feeders. [b]

**LESSER GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus psaltria*)

#### Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

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

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## MAMMALS

**DESERT COTTONTAIL** (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – This one is the only cottontail found in the flat desert lowlands.

**BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT** (*Lepus californicus*) – This is the smaller of the two jackrabbits that we had on our tour and it has obvious black ear tips and a black tail.

**ANTELOPE JACKRABBIT** (*Lepus alleni*) – This was that giant Jackrabbit that we saw at night as we drove out of California Gulch. It lacks those black ear tips, has HUGE ears, and much less black in the tail. It also happens to be the 2nd largest hare in N. America.

**CLIFF CHIPMUNK** (*Tamias dorsalis*) – This is the only true chipmunk along our tour route.

**HARRIS'S ANTELOPE SQUIRREL** (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*) – We had this little guy, which looks a bit like a chipmunk, along the Paradise Rd. near Portal. He always cocks his tail up over his back.

**ROCK SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – This was the most common "squirrel" on the tour and it's actually much more closely related to the next species than it is to the true squirrels in the genus *Sciurus*.

**ROUND-TAILED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*) – We watched a couple of these chase each other 'round and 'round at Sweetwater on our first afternoon of the tour.

**MEXICAN FOX SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) – The pretty squirrel with all of the orange on its belly was this guy. Like the Mexican Chickadee, the only place where you'll see this one in the US is in the Chiricahuas.

**ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus arizonensis*) – This big gray squirrel doesn't make it as far east as the Chiricahuas and is replaced there by the Mexican Fox Squirrel.

**BOTTAE'S POCKET GOPHER** (*Thomomys bottae*) – I can't think of a better or easier place to see this one than the main compound at SWRS.

**YELLOW-NOSED COTTON RAT** (*Sigmodon ochrognathus*) – This was the rat that came visiting Dave Jasper's feeders in Portal.

**ARIZONA COTTON RAT** (*Sigmodon arizonae*) – We briefly saw this one run across the path at Sweetwater that first afternoon.

**WHITE-THROATED WOOD-RAT** (*Neotoma albigula*) – A few of us saw this big, plump rat run across the rock wall behind the willows and behind the buildings at SWRS (where we saw our first N. Pygmy-Owl).

**GRAY FOX** (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – Michael may have been the only one to get a look at this one in the Chiricahuas.

**COYOTE** (*Canis latrans*) [\*]

**COLLARED PECCARY** (*Tayassu tajacu*) – We saw about twenty animals in the big herd at Portal.

**WHITE-TAILED DEER** (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – These deer, known as Coues's White-tailed Deer, are the 2nd smallest race of White-tailed Deer in the US (only Key Deer is smaller).

**PRONGHORN** (*Antilocapra americana*) – These magically appeared on the right side of the highway just after I said "Watch the grassland here for Pronghorn!"

### Herps

**CANYON TREEFROG** (*Hyla arenicolor*) – Heard by some in the stream in lower Miller Canyon after our picnic dinner there. It sounds a bit like a braying sheep. [\*]

**AMERICAN BULLFROG** (*Rana catesbeiana*) – These non-natives are serious predators on our native frog species. [I]

**PAINTED TURTLE** (*Chrysemys picta*) – We had both this species and the Pond Slider at Sweetwater that first afternoon. People get tired of their pets and let the go here. [I]

**POND SLIDER** (*Trachemys scripta*) [I]

**COMMON LESSER EARLESS LIZARD** (*Holbrookia maculata*) – We saw at least one of these along the Anza Trail south of Tubac.

**ORNATE TREE LIZARD** (*Urosaurus ornatus*) – Ours happened to be on a rock - but they're still tree lizards. We had these near the dam at Patagonia Lake SP.

**STRIPED PLATEAU LIZARD** (*Sceloporus virgatus*) – A pretty common species in the leaf litter in the lower canyons of the Chiricahuas. It's got bold buffy lateral stripes on the sides of its back.

**SOUTHWESTERN FENCE LIZARD** (*Sceloporus cowlesi*) – Now, this one was properly on a fence post along State Line Rd.

**DESERT SPINY LIZARD** (*Sceloporus magister*) – Quite a few of these were out and about at Sweetwater Wetlands on that first afternoon.

**CLARK'S SPINY LIZARD** (*Sceloporus clarkii*) – This is more of an arboreal species than the Desert Spiny Lizard and is much paler overall. They can get pretty big and happen to be the favorite prey item of Gray Hawks in Arizona.

**YARROW'S SPINY LIZARD** (*Sceloporus jarrovi*) – This one is a rock-loving species in the mountain canyons near the border. It often has quite a bit of turquoise or blue on the upperparts and in the tail.

**GILA SPOTTED WHIPTAIL** (*Aspidoscelis flagellicauda*) – This was the common whiptail in the leaf litter in the canyons in the Chiricahuas.

**SONORAN SPOTTED WHIPTAIL** (*Aspidoscelis sonorae*) – We had these along the Anza Trail south of Tubac.

**DESERT GRASSLAND WHIPTAIL** (*Aspidoscelis uniparens*) – The pretty whiptail with the blue tail at Willcox was this species.

**TIGER WHIPTAIL** (*Aspidoscelis tigris*) – We saw a few of these at Sweetwater on our first afternoon and it happens to be the only whiptail of the four species we saw that is not an all-female species.

**COMMON KINGSLAKE** (*Lampropeltis getula*) – We had a gorgeous yellow and black individual cross one of the paths at Sweetwater on our first afternoon.

**BLACK-TAILED RATTLESNAKE** (*Crotalus molossus*) – This was a nice surprise for us - at a prudent distance - on our way down Ramsey Canyon after seeing the Flame-colored Tanagers. One of the mellowest of the many rattlesnake species in Arizona.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 211 bird taxa and 18 mammal taxa**