



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Arizona: Birding the Border II 2016**

May 12, 2016 to May 21, 2016

Dave Stejskal

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



*By the time we made our trip into California Gulch at the end of the tour, we still needed a good 'group look' at the retiring Montezuma Quail. Fortunately, thank to Max's sharp eyes, we all came away with unforgettable views of this gorgeous creature! (photo by guide Dave Stejskal)*

This tour started out pretty hot, but below the century mark. As the days went on, our temps cooled to the point where some folks actually had to break out light jackets and sweaters for the evenings and early mornings in the mountains. Nice! If you can get that in mid-May in southeastern Arizona, enjoy it! It was toasty enough during the daytime, especially away from the high mountains, but it certainly wasn't awful. Late spring in southeastern Arizona can be hot and windy; I'd say that we had it just right for this lovely tour!

We started out south of Tucson, searching Madera Canyon and the surrounding area for a few local specialties like Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Rufous-winged Sparrow, among others. The real show started after our delicious picnic dinner, when we recorded our first owls of the trip. Before we got back to our hotel in Tucson, we had great views of Whiskered and Western screech-owls, and Elf Owl under our belts. What a start!

After some morning birding in the Tucson area, where we scored on such prizes as Burrowing Owl, Gilded Flicker, Tropical Kingbird, and others, we headed east on I-10 to the lofty Chiricahua Mountains in eastern Cochise County, making a quick stop in Willcox along the way. The highlight of our trip to the tiny town of Portal on this first full day was seeing the stakeout Slate-throated Redstart which had wandered north from its mountain home in Mexico -- woo-hoo!! But our stay in the Chiricahuas would treat us to numerous additional highlights during our three nights there. Special birds like Scaled Quail, Golden Eagle, Greater Roadrunner, Flammulated Owl, Common Poorwill, Mexican Whip-poor-will, Magnificent and Blue-throated hummingbirds, Elegant Trogon, Arizona Woodpecker, Thick-billed Kingbird, Mexican Chickadee, Bendire's and Crissal thrashers, Yellow-eyed Junco, and others, all made our stay here at the start of the tour memorable and made us hungry for more!

We got more of what we wanted in the Huachuca Mountains to the west. Our two days in the area proved to be extremely productive, and we 'cleaned up' on several birds that had given us the slip in the Chiricahuas. My favorites here were the Northern Pygmy-Owl and the Spotted Owl in Miller Canyon, a close flyby Zone-tailed Hawk, a fantastic male Lucifer Hummingbird, Greater Pewee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, a silent Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, and all of those specialty warblers -- Virginia's, Grace's, Red-faced, and, of course, Olive.

We saved some of the best for last in the Patagonia and Nogales area. Based for two nights in nearby Rio Rico, we birded some of southeast Arizona's most famous birding sites, like Patagonia and Sonoita Creek, Patagonia Lake SP, California Gulch, and Madera Canyon. We had a real knack for finding some tough birds on this trip and thrilled at the likes of Montezuma Quail, Gray Hawk, another Northern Pygmy-Owl, Buff-collared Nightjar, Violet-

crowned Hummingbird, tiny Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, at least two more Black-capped Gnatcatchers, Five-striped Sparrow, Varied Bunting, and, at the very end, a surprise Plain-capped Starthroat at the feeders in Madera! What a trip!

I had a wonderful time traveling with all of you and having the chance to share the birds that I love in my home state with each of you. Thanks for joining me! I hope that we have many more opportunities to bird and travel together in the future

Cheers,

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)

**GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*) – A couple of males at some ponds in Nogales were where this species has nested historically, so I suspect that they're at it again.

**AMERICAN WIGEON** (*Anas americana*) – This one, along with the Cinnamon Teal, N. Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, and Lesser Scaup were all at Willcox and getting late for northbound migrants. [b]

**MALLARD (NORTHERN)** (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*) – Few pure 'Northern' Mallards remain in s. Arizona to breed. Most of the Mallards that we saw on this trip were intergrades between this form and the "Mexican" Mallards.

**MALLARD (MEXICAN)** (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – Once split out as a separate species and called the Mexican Duck (*Anas diazi*). Many of the birds that superficially resemble this form in s. Arizona are actually intergrades between this form and typical Mallard. [N]

**CINNAMON TEAL** (*Anas cyanoptera*) [b]

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

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

**LESSER SCAUP** (*Aythya affinis*) [b]

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – A few late migrants lingered at Willcox, but a few pairs breed there and at Nogales, too.

#### Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

**SCALED QUAIL** (*Callipepla squamata*) – Good looks near Portal and at the grasslands of Las Cienegas NCA near Sonoita.

**GAMBEL'S QUAIL** (*Callipepla gambelii*) – Common and widespread throughout the lowlands on this tour.

**MONTEZUMA QUAIL** (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – We had a couple of brief sightings early on in the tour, but didn't really nail it until Max spotted a pair right next to the road on our way in to California Gulch. What a look!!

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

**WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – All of our birds were the result of re-introduction efforts about 30-40 years ago.

#### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

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

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – A couple of birds at Willcox on our first visit there, and then another encounter at Patagonia Lake SP where we watched them feeding in very shallow water at the eastern end of the lake. This species only rarely breeds in s. Arizona. [b]

#### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – We saw a bunch of cormorants at Patagonia Lake SP, and most of them were this mostly tropical species. Forty years ago, this species was a real rarity here in Arizona, but things started to change in the '80's and they're now abundant breeders in the Phoenix area.

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

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

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

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*)

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – A couple of singletons at Willcox and at Amado. Much more common in s.w. Arizona.

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

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

#### Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**WHITE-FACED IBIS** (*Plegadis chihi*) – Several colorful adults at Willcox and Nogales. [b]

#### Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – This one is very scarce in Arizona east of Patagonia.

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

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

**GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – We spotted this one soaring above the desert east of the AZ/NM line near Rodeo.

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

**GRAY HAWK** (*Buteo plagiatus*) – The range of this one has exploded across s. Arizona and it now breeds n.w. of Phoenix. Years ago, Sonoita Creek

used to be about the only place where you could expect to see this tropical species.

**SWAINSON'S HAWK** (*Buteo swainsoni*) – All of our birds were, as expected, light-morph individuals.

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) – Excellent flyby views while we tried to get a look at the Montezuma Quail on the Carr Canyon Rd.

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

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

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

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Far outnumbered by the next species at Willcox.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra americana*) – By far, this was the most common shorebird at Willcox this year. [N]

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*) [N]

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularia*) – This and Killdeer were the only shorebirds that we saw away from Willcox this year. [b]

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – It was quite late for this northbound migrant in Arizona. [b]

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) – This one is a very scarce migrant in the state, especially so in the spring.

**WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*) – A small flock of these lingered at Willcox. [b]

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – Small numbers of these colorful shorebirds were still trickling north at Willcox. [b]

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – A small flock of these northbound migrants dropped in for a rest at Willcox during our return visit there. Very unusual was the basic-plumaged bird in the flock. [b]

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**FRANKLIN'S GULL** (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) – A single adult on both Willcox visits. [b]

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

**CALIFORNIA GULL** (*Larus californicus*) – Most springs at Willcox see one or two bedraggled immature birds drop in for a rest - and they sometimes stay for months! [b]

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

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

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

**INCA DOVE** (*Columbina inca*) – We had decent numbers at both Portal and at Patagonia. Still, the numbers now pale compared to the 1000's that used to inhabit Tucson alone last century!

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina passerina*) – Nice comparisons with the similar Inca Dove in the Paton's yard in Patagonia.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Everywhere, except for the highest mountains.

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

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**GREATER ROADRUNNER** (*Geococcyx californianus*) – This was a particularly good trip for this one, with the group recording it on 7 of 10 birding days.

*Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)*

**BARN OWL** (*Tyto alba*) – Great looks at an adult that flushed from one of the trees near the golf course at Willcox on our second visit there!

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**FLAMMULATED OWL** (*Ptiloscoptes flammeolus*) – I'm really glad that we tried just one more spot for this one on our final night in the Chiricahuas! Fantastic looks!!

**WESTERN SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops kennicottii*) – This was the last of our three owls on that first night of the tour in Madera Canyon. This one prefers much more open woodland than the next species.

**WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops trichopsis*) – Really lovely views - and some great audio - of this small screech-owl in the oaks in Madera Canyon that first evening together.

**NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – We saw this one very well in the Huachucas. These two-noted Northern Pygmy-Owls might prove to be specifically distinct from the other pygmy-owls to the north and west. That bird along Harshaw Rd. near Patagonia was a real bonus!

**ELF OWL** (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – Another owl that we tallied on that first evening together in Madera Canyon. The smallest in the world - but not by much!

**BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*) – My preferred stakeout Burrowing Owl was a 'no show', so we had to track down another in the dry Santa Cruz River bed in Tucson before we headed east to the Chiricahuas.

**SPOTTED OWL** (*Strix occidentalis*) – This magnificent owl was on the very same perch as on my Nightbirds tour a couple of weeks earlier! The pair here in Miller Canyon has been the most reliable in the region for several years now.

*Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

**LESSER NIGHTHAWK** (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – Very nice looks in the bright lights of the U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint near Amado, and some good flyby views on that first evening, too.

**COMMON POORWILL** (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – 'Up close and personal' looks along the Paradise road in the Chiricahuas. Much shorter-tailed than the other nightjars in the region.

**BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR** (*Antrostomus ridgwayi*) – Woo Hoo!!! It took a little bit of walking, but we ended up with decent views of a singing male perched in a tree next to the road in lower California Gulch. Very rare and local within the U.S.

**MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL** (*Antrostomus arizonae arizonae*) – We weren't getting anywhere with the bird at Herb Martyr in the Chiricahuas so we ended up looking elsewhere. I'm sure glad that we did since we ended up seeing this one (now split from Eastern Whip-poor-will) so well!

Apodidae (Swifts)

**WHITE-THROATED SWIFT** (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Always in the mountains on this trip and always near big cliffs or rocky outcrops.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD** (*Eugenes fulgens*) – The most numerous and widespread of the 'large' hummers on this itinerary. Many super views of both males and females. Formerly called the Rivoli's Hummingbird.

**PLAIN-CAPPED STARTHROAT** (*Heliomaster constantii*) – WOWWWW!!! What a way to end the trip! We had no idea that this rarity from Mexico had shown up this year in Madera Canyon earlier on the very same day that we decided to make a visit. What a thrill to see this big, rare hummer so well just prior to our calling it quits for the day!

**BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – Nice views of a female incubating eggs on nest under the eaves of the building. The largest of the 'regular' hummers in the U.S. [N]

**LUCIFER HUMMINGBIRD** (*Calothorax lucifer*) – We didn't have to wait too long for that stunning little male to come in for a meal at Ash Canyon. Great views of this rare and local species!

**BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus alexandri*) – I used to think that this was the most common and widespread hummer along our route, but I think those honors now belong to the Broad-billed Hummingbird.

**ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** (*Calypte anna*) – Not at all common in S.E. Arizona at this season away from the larger towns with feeders.

**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – This one was detected every day of the tour - mostly it was adult males with their loudly whistling wings heard flying by. They only breed in the high mountains, so migration was still well underway for this one during the trip.

**BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – Many gorgeous males seen nearly daily on this trip.

**VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia violiceps*) – This stunning hummer tried to pull a fast one on us by visiting a different feeder than the one that I usually see it at, but Max's sharp eyes spotted it at one of the feeders behind us.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

**ELEGANT TROGON** (*Trogon elegans*) – One of those 'must see' species in S.E. Arizona is this beauty, and it didn't disappoint us along the South Fork road in the Chiricahuas.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**ACORN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Common in all of the venues with oaks on this tour - which is pretty much everywhere.

**GILA WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – Portal is a little far east for this one, but it was a common feature just about everywhere else in the lowlands.

**RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) – Still hanging out in the same Chinese Elm where I saw it on my Nightbirds tour a couple of weeks earlier. Mid-May is getting late for this one in the region. [b]

**LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides scalaris*) – This one's about the same size as a Downy, and it sounds very similar to that one, too.

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides villosus*) – Much darker with fewer white markings on the wing than birds in the East. [N]

**ARIZONA WOODPECKER** (*Picoides arizonae*) – Formerly called the Strickland's Woodpecker (Brown-backed Woodpecker before that), this distinctive species is widespread in the mountains of S.E. Arizona - the best place to see it in the U.S.

**NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED)** (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – All of the nesting flickers in the mountains of Arizona are this form, once known as Red-shafted Flicker.

**GILDED FLICKER** (*Colaptes chrysoides*) – We had a nice encounter with this desert-nesting species just west of Tucson.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

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

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – Arizona was one of the last strongholds of this species in the U.S. back when it was in serious trouble.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

**NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET** (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – Fantastic views of a very responsive bird in Harshaw Canyon near Patagonia. The smallest of the N. American tyrant flycatchers.

**OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Contopus cooperi*) – Several northbound migrants. [b]

**GREATER PEWEE** (*Contopus pertinax*) – Carr Canyon is a terrific place to see this one in the state.

**WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus sordidulus*) – Lots of migrants still moving through during the course of this tour.

**HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax hammondi*) – This one is still moving through the mountains of S.E. Arizona up until the last few days of May, but it doesn't breed in the s.e part of the state. [b]

**DUSKY FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – A couple of latish birds in the Chiricahuas during our visit. [b]

**PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax difficilis*) – We didn't run into these migrants until we got to the Patagonia area. I'm not sure if it's rock-solid or not, but the general assumption is that if you see a "Western" Flycatcher in the lowlands at this season, it's a Pacific-slope (the ones I heard this year certainly were). [b]

**CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – These breeders had just arrived in the mountains from Mexico a week or so before the start of the tour.

**BUFF-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) – Great views in both Miller and Carr canyons in the Huachuas. Rather surprisingly, none in the Chiricahuas this year, where they are expanding their range. This one is a very local species within the U.S.

**BLACK PHOEBE** (*Sayornis nigricans*) – The Western replacement species of the Eastern Phoebe.

**SAY'S PHOEBE** (*Sayornis saya*) – That rusty belly is unique among the N. American tyrant flycatchers.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Always a little shocking to see!

**DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – The smallest and most gracile of the three 'regular' Myiarchus in the state.

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – Pale and poorly marked compared to the other Myiarchus here.

**BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – After hearing a number of these in the first half of the tour, we finally caught up with some good looks at it in the Patagonia area. The largest Myiarchus here, and the one with the largest bill.

**SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) – This primarily tropical species was late in arriving on the Arizona breeding

grounds this year and the only one that we saw was a silent bird in Miller Canyon in the Huachucas.

**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Nicely at both Willcox and in Nogales. This primarily tropical species seems to be expanding its range within Arizona.

**CASSIN'S KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – Our most common and widespread kingbird on the tour.

**THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – A single bird in 'downtown' Portal, where it's extremely rare, was the only one that we could find this year.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – Similar to Cassin's, but much paler overall, especially on the head and chest.

#### Laniidae (Shrikes)

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – These are doing better in the West than they are in the East.

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

**BELL'S VIREO** (*Vireo bellii*) – Often heard, but seldom seen on this trip.

**PLUMBEOUS VIREO** (*Vireo plumbeus*) – A common breeder in the mountain canyons here.

**CASSIN'S VIREO** (*Vireo cassinii*) – We found many more of these migrants from the Pacific Coast on this year's tour than I normally find (I consider myself rather lucky if we find one on this trip - we had at least 6!) [b]

**HUTTON'S VIREO** (*Vireo huttoni*) – Very similar to the familiar Ruby-crowned Kinglet, but with a different voice, thicker legs and bill, and a different wing pattern.

**WARBLING VIREO** (*Vireo gilvus*) – Rather scarce this year for some reason.

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

**STELLER'S JAY** (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – Only in the highest mountains here at this season.

**WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (WOODHOUSE'S)** (*Aphelocoma californica woodhouseii*) – The American Ornithologists Union just split this into two species, so ours on this tour were Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, distinct from California Scrub-Jay.

**MEXICAN JAY** (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – The common "blue" jay on this tour.

**CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN** (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – We only saw a couple of birds that were definitely small enough to be this species.

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

#### Alaudidae (Larks)

**HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris*) – All of the Horned Larks that we saw were the reddish, nearly unstreaked subspecies *E. a. adusta*.

#### Hirundinidae (Swallows)

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

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – The only nesting swallow in the higher mountains here.

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – A few late birds with other swallows at Willcox. [b]

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

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

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

**MEXICAN CHICKADEE** (*Poecile sclateri*) – Nice views of this local specialty high in the Chiricahuas - the only accessible place to see this one in the U.S.

**BRIDLED TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – Incredibly cute!

**JUNIPER TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*) – The Great Basin pinyon pine/juniper habitat that this one likes is pretty scarce in S.E. Arizona, but when you find that habitat, you generally find the bird, too. Good looks in the Chiricahuas.

#### Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

**VERDIN** (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – A common denizen of the lowest, hottest deserts along our route.

#### Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

**BUSH TIT (INTERIOR)** (*Psaltriparus minimus plumbeus*) – These interior Bushtits look a bit different from the birds on the West Coast and might be a potential split (think of the splits of Brown Towhee, Plain Titmouse, and Scrub Jay).

#### Sittidae (Nuthatches)

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta canadensis*) – The highest reaches of the Chiricahuas are typically the only place where we find this one along our route.

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST)** (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – The birds of the Rocky Mts. sound quite different from the birds of the East and birds of the West Coast.

**PYGMY NUTHATCH** (*Sitta pygmaea*) – Another terribly cute bird and #4000 for Ian!!

#### Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

**BROWN CREEPER (ALBESCENS/ALTICOLA)** (*Certhia americana albescens*) – The birds breeding in the mountains of S.E. Arizona look and sound a little different from the birds that breed north of here.

#### Troglodytidae (Wrens)

**ROCK WREN** (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – Nesting again in the Beatty's yard in Miller Canyon. [N]

**CANYON WREN** (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – Great views of a singing bird along Harshaw Rd. near Patagonia. One of the most distinctive songs of the Southwest.

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

**BEWICK'S WREN** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – Almost daily.

**CACTUS WREN** (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – Numerous great views of Arizona's state bird.

#### Poliopitilidae (Gnatcatchers)

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

**BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila melanura*) – We found a pair of these desert gnatcatchers while we were enjoying our Gilded Flickers west of Tucson.

**BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila nigriceps*) – We ended up recording three different birds on the tour (Proctor Rd., Patagonia L., and California Gulch). The status of this one sure has changed in Arizona in recent years! Crazy as it sounds, I think we may have had more of these than any other gnatcatcher on the tour.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia sialis*) – We had a nice adult male sitting up just off the road on our way to California Gulch. The race here, *S.s. fulva*, barely gets into the U.S. from Mexico.

**SWAINSON'S THRUSH** (*Catharus ustulatus*) – Not as common as some years, these were all heading north to the breeding grounds. [b]

**HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*) – All of our birds were in the Chiricahuas, where it breeds.

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

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**CURVE-BILLED THRASHER** (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – Always the most common of the thrashers on this tour.

**BENDIRE'S THRASHER** (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – We saw one adult bird bringing food to a hidden nest just across the road from the Arizona border.

**CRISSAL THRASHER** (*Toxostoma crissale*) – This shy thrasher played hide-and-seek with us just east of the Chiricahuas.

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

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

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

*Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**AMERICAN PIPIT** (*Anthus rubescens*) – We had a brief look at a very late individual at Willcox on our first visit there. [b]

*Bombycillidae (Waxwings)*

**CEDAR WAXWING** (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Most of our lingering birds were in the Portal area. Arizona is one of the few states where this bird does not breed. [b]

*Ptilionotidae (Silky-flycatchers)*

**PHAINOPEPLA** (*Phainopepla nitens*) – Very easy once we got to the Patagonia area.

*Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)*

**OLIVE WARBLER** (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – YESSSS!!! This bird gave us the slip in the Chiricahuas, but we were rewarded with exceptional encounters with this lovely, unique bird high in the Huachucas.

*Parulidae (New World Warblers)*

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – May and September are the months to see this scarce migrant in Arizona. We ended up seeing two on this trip - at Sweetwater in Tucson and then again in Portal. [b]

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*) – A couple of late migrants in the Chiricahuas. [b]

**LUCY'S WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis luciae*) – The most common warbler breeding in the lowlands.

**VIRGINIA'S WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – We wound up with some uncharacteristically great views of this one in the Huachucas! It can be really tough to get a look at during May.

**MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – Max spotted one of these migrants working the edge of the vegetation at Sweetwater. [b]

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

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*)

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** (*Setophaga coronata*) – All of our birds were the Western "Audubon's" Warbler.

**GRACE'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga graciae*) – Nice looks at this pine specialist in both the Chiricahuas and the Huachucas.

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – This is the common oak/juniper woodland breeding warbler here.

**TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – Still a few northbound migrants trickling through the mountains during the tour. [b]

**HERMIT WARBLER** (*Setophaga occidentalis*) – Max spotted our only bird of the tour, an adult female, foraging low in the oaks behind us up in Carr Canyon in the Huachucas. [b]

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – The most common migrant warbler of the tour. [b]

**RED-FACED WARBLER** (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – Fantastic looks of a very responsive bird in Miller Canyon! There's really nothing else like this one.

**PAINTED REDSTART** (*Myioborus pictus*) – An exceptional bird, in my opinion, and one of my favorites since I was a kid learning how to bird.

**SLATE-THROATED REDSTART** (*Myioborus miniatus*) – One of our biggest surprises of the trip was seeing this vagrant from Mexico in Pinery Canyon in the Chiricahuas. Not long after the tour ended, photos were obtained of three bob-tailed fledglings from the pairing of this Slate-throated Redstart and its 'mystery mate' - which could have been another Slate-throated or one of the male Painted Redstarts in the area. Still, it's the first documented nesting of this species within the U.S.! [N]

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*) – Conspicuous in the Patagonia area.

*Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)*

**RUFOUS-WINGED SPARROW** (*Peucaea carpalis*) – The bird we saw at the Portal feeders was much farther east than this one usually occurs.

**BOTTERI'S SPARROW** (*Peucaea botterii*) – Not terribly conspicuous at this season, but that'll change once the summer rains start.

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – We found one bird sitting up nicely for us at the southern end of the Las Cienegas NCA near Sonoita. The breeding race here, *A.s. ammolegus*, is quite localized and breeds only in S.E. Arizona and n.w. Mexico (Sonora).

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – Very local as a breeder in S.E. Arizona.

**BREWER'S SPARROW** (*Spizella breweri*) – One bird in Tucson while we were searching for the Burrowing Owl was the only one seen on the tour.

It's an abundant winterer here, but it doesn't stay to breed in the Southeast. [b]

**BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – Maybe the most stunning of the sparrows!

**FIVE-STRIPED SPARROW** (*Amphispiza quinquestriata*) – Max got us all onto this rare and local breeder as we headed to our picnic dinner spot at the bottom of California Gulch toward the end of the tour.

**LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*) – Another very attractive species.

**LARK BUNTING** (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) – A little searching in the grasslands near Sonoita produced a nice little flock of these late migrants, including a few adult males that were nearly in full breeding dress. [b]

**DARK-EYED JUNCO (GRAY-HEADED)** (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*) – One very late individual along the South Fork trail in the Chiricahuas.

**YELLOW-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Almost abundant in the highest reaches of the Chiricahuas and upper Carr Canyon. S.E. Arizona is the place for this one in the U.S.

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (ORIANATHA)** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – There were still a few of these hanging around the Portal area and elsewhere during the tour, but it was getting late. This is the race that breeds in the Rocky Mts. and occasionally in n. Arizona. [b]

**SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – A late migrant at Willcox on the first visit there. [b]

**SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*) – The very pale, rusty race *M. m. fallax* breeds here.

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (*Melospiza lincolni*) – A couple of late migrants in the Chiricahuas. [b]

**CANYON TOWHEE** (*Melospiza fusca*) – An almost daily occurrence.

**ABERT'S TOWHEE** (*Melospiza aberti*) – The one in Portal was unusual that far east, but the others in the Tucson and Patagonia areas were expected. This one is as close as Arizona gets to a true endemic - it's just found in the lower Colorado R. drainage.

**RUFUS-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – Great views late in the afternoon along Harshaw Rd. near Patagonia.

**GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – We managed just one lingering bird at the Paton's feeders in Patagonia. [b]

**SPOTTED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo maculatus*) – A very common voice in the dense scrub of the mountain slopes.

#### Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

**HEPATIC TANAGER** (*Piranga flava*) – Similar to the Summer Tanager, but it's more of a brick red color than the crimson of Summer. This one prefers the pine/oak woodland, too.

**SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – Strangely absent from the Portal area this trip.

**WESTERN TANAGER** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – Many of the birds (most?) were migrants still headed north.

**NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – The race here is *C.c. superbus* - and it is indeed superb!

**PYRRHULOXIA** (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – The Northern Cardinal gets all of the excitement, but I like this one better.

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – A stunning adult male in the Paton's yard in Patagonia was a treat - especially if you live in Arizona, where it's rare! [b]

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – Every single day of the trip!

**BLUE GROSBEAK** (*Passerina caerulea*) – This one was just starting to arrive in good numbers.

**LAZULI BUNTING** (*Passerina amoena*) – Very few migrants left at the feeders - they'll be breeding well to the north of here. [b]

**VARIED BUNTING** (*Passerina versicolor*) – These birds must have just arrived since they weren't really defending territories yet. We all caught up with a nice adult male in Florida Canyon near Madera on that last day.

#### Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

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

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S)** (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – The American Ornithologists Union just rejected a proposal to split this distinctive form from the true Eastern Meadowlark to the east and south, so it looks like it won't get split out anytime soon.

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – What a ridiculous tail!

**BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – A final catch-up bird along the Anza Trail near Tubac on that last morning.

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

**HOODED ORIOLE** (*Icterus cucullatus*) – The smallest of our 'regular' orioles. We had some super views at some of the local feeding stations.

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus bullockii*) – Arizona's most widespread oriole.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) – A subadult male at the feeders in Portal was a real rarity there. [b]

**SCOTT'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus parisorum*) – Incredible views of an adult male at the feeders in Ash Canyon in the Huachuclas.

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

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

**PURPLE FINCH** (*Haemorhous purpureus*) – A single female feeding on the ground with a couple of House Sparrows in Portal was a big surprise - but it didn't last long. This was one of the best years for this species in s. Arizona in decades (it's typically absent from the state). [b]

**RED CROSSBILL** (*Loxia curvirostra*) – The briefest of looks at a pair of these as we were trying to get a look at a male Montezuma Quail in the Chiricahuas.

**PINE SISKIN** (*Spinus pinus*) – We had surprising numbers of these lingering at feeders throughout the tour. This was a very good spring for this species in s.e. Arizona. [b]

**LESSER GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus psaltria*) – The 'default' goldfinch at any season in S.E. Arizona.

#### Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

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

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## MAMMALS

**EASTERN COTTONTAIL** (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – These were found in the pine and oak woodland of the mountains above the hot, flat desert below.

**DESERT COTTONTAIL** (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – The species that occupies the hot deserts.

- BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT** (*Lepus californicus*) – Black ear tips and a black tail separate this from the next species. Range is also useful - the Antelope Jackrabbit is only found in south-central Arizona.
- ANTELOPE JACKRABBIT** (*Lepus alleni*) – Our best looks were on the way out of California Gulch near the end of the tour. Only White-sided Jackrabbit in New Mexico is larger.
- CLIFF CHIPMUNK** (*Tamias dorsalis*) – The only species of chipmunk along our route.
- HARRIS'S ANTELOPE SQUIRREL** (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*) – Very chipmunk-like, but without the striped face.
- SPOTTED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus spilosoma*) – Rhea spotted this one at the Willcox golf course on our second visit. Similar to, and closely related to the Round-tailed Ground Squirrel.
- ROCK SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – Recorded daily and the most common and widespread of the bushy-tailed 'squirrels' in the state.
- ROUND-TAILED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*) – We had some incredibly cute family groups in the parking lot of Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson on Day 2.
- MEXICAN FOX SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) – Very local within the U.S. and only seen easily in the Chiricahuas.
- ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus arizonensis*) – Similar to the Eastern Gray Squirrel that many folks know well.
- ARIZONA COTTON RAT** (*Sigmodon arizonae*) – We had a couple of these at feeding stations (Chiricahuas and Patagonia).
- GRAY FOX** (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – A couple of decent looks at this small canid in the Chiricahuas.
- WHITE-NOSED COATI** (*Nasua narica*) – Crossing the road in front of our van high in Carr Canyon in the Huachucas.
- STRIPED SKUNK** (*Mephitis mephitis*) – At least one of the skunks that some of us saw in the Chiricahuas was this species - the other was likely a Hooded Skunk.
- BOBCAT** (*Lynx rufus*) – Max saw this one cross the road and we were able to relocate it sitting a short distance off of the pavement - just casually watching us! Beautiful!
- COLLARED PECCARY** (*Tayassu tajacu*) – We had a couple of encounters with this one, a.k.a the Javalina.
- MULE DEER** (*Odocoileus hemionus*) – Only a few of these big-eared deer with black tail tips (also called Black-tailed Deer)
- WHITE-TAILED DEER** (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Quite common, especially in the Chiricahuas. This form, known as Coues's White-tailed Deer, is the second smallest race of White-tailed Deer in N. America (Key Deer is smaller).
- Herps*
- AMERICAN BULLFROG** (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) [\*]
- CANYON TREEFROG** (*Hyla arenicolor*) – Heard only in Madera Canyon. [\*]
- CHIRICAHUA LEOPARD FROG** (*Rana chiricahuensis*) – The Beatty's had a nice collection of these in the small pond on their property in Miller Canyon.
- POND SLIDER** (*Trachemys scripta*) – A released pet in the ponds at Nogales on the final morning (they're found in most ponds in towns throughout s. Arizona, and all are non-native).
- COMMON LESSER EARLESS LIZARD** (*Holbrookia maculata*) – A fancy ground-lizard without any ear openings.
- ORNATE TREE LIZARD** (*Urosaurus ornatus*) – The common tree-lizard throughout s. Arizona.
- DESERT SPINY LIZARD** (*Sceloporus magister*) – We saw some incredibly ornate individuals at Sweetwater Wetlands on Day 2.
- CLARK'S SPINY LIZARD** (*Sceloporus clarkii*) – The literature says that this is one of the primary prey items of the Gray Hawk in Arizona.
- YARROW'S SPINY LIZARD** (*Sceloporus jarrovi*) – I'm surprised that we didn't see more of these in the mountain canyons on this trip.
- SONORAN SPOTTED WHIPTAIL** (*Aspidoscelis sonora*) – A couple of these only on the second half of the tour. Like most of the species in this genus, this one reproduces asexually and all of the individuals are female.
- TIGER WHIPTAIL** (*Aspidoscelis tigris*) – I think that this is one of the few exceptions to the all-female rule among members of this genus in Arizona.
- BLACK-TAILED RATTLESNAKE** (*Crotalus molossus*) – This was a very nice surprise in the middle of the road as we drove from Pinery Canyon to Portal on Day 2. One of the most 'mellow' members of the genus, this one doesn't ever seem to be at all aggressive.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 213 bird taxa and 19 mammal taxa**