



Field Guides Tour Report

Arizona: Birding the Border II 2017

May 12, 2017 to May 21, 2017

Dave Stejskal

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



We saw this gorgeous Red-faced Warbler in the Chiricahuas. One of the specialties of Arizona, and always a favorite! Photo by guide Dave Stejskal.

Every spring Arizona tour is different. Weather plays a big part in how it all turns out, and ours turned out pretty darned well! Wind played a very minor role in our birding, and that was mostly felt in the Chiricahuas. Temperature can vary widely at this season, but our temps were nearly idyllic. One late storm system off of the Pacific can make it downright cold in the mountains - and can sometimes even produce snow in May at high elevations - or a stubborn high pressure can heat up the region into the 100's. I'm glad we got the weather that we got!

We really started this tour off right with a visit that first afternoon and evening to nearby Madera Canyon to the south of Tucson. It was a little quiet at first, but then we got into the canyon itself and were treated to a big helping of owls to whet our appetites for what was to come later. Northern Pygmy-Owl, Elf Owl, Whiskered and Western screech-owls, and Lesser Nighthawk all cooperated for us to make our first day together one that will be remembered for quite a while!

Some local birding in the morning to follow was productive, too, adding Burrowing Owl to our growing list as well as such Southwestern specialties as Gilded Flicker, Greater Roadrunner, Vermilion Flycatcher and Abert's Towhee. After we left Tucson, we really started adding to our list with the likes of Mississippi Kite, Harris's Hawk, Scaled Quail, a nice variety of waterbirds at Willcox, Chihuahuan Raven, and many more. That delicious Mexican lunch in Willcox stands as a highlight of the day, too! After arriving in the Chiricahuas, we had a nice dinner at the Portal Peak Lodge, caught our breath and rested up for more excitement to come!

Our two days in the Chiricahuas were incredible! High on the list of special birds were our confiding Elegant Trogon, five species of beautiful hummingbirds, our first looks at all of those local mountain warblers (Red-faced, Olive, Grace's, and Painted Redstart), that fantastic vagrant Slate-throated Redstart, fabulous Spotted Owl and Mexican Whip-poor-will, a cooperative Common Poorwill in the road, yet another Northern Pygmy-Owl, Mexican Chickadee, Bendire's Thrasher, and so many others.

Next was our stay the Sierra Vista area, our base for birding the lofty Huachuca Mountains. We began our stay with a bang by tallying a stunning male Lucifer Hummingbird that first afternoon at the delightful feeding station at Ash Canyon B&B. Then it was off to the high mountains themselves the following day. A drive to the top of Carr Canyon was both scenic and incredibly productive for us with highlights such as Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Zone-tailed Hawk, Virginia's Warbler, Arizona Woodpecker, and our only male Olive Warbler of the tour, among a number of old friends that we first encountered in the Chiricahuas. The next day brought us looks of Botteri's Sparrow, the first Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers to arrive in the state this spring, and our first 'whiff' of Montezuma Quail before we made our way west to Patagonia.

The Patagonia/Nogales area boasts some of the best birding in the entire state, and we weren't disappointed with our haul of avian bounty. With birds like Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Thick-billed Kingbird, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Gray Hawk, Montezuma Quail, you simply can't go wrong! We culminated our stay here with an afternoon/evening visit to California Gulch to the west of Nogales and nestled among the very scenic Pajarito and Atascosa mountains. It was here that we were rewarded with incredible looks at a rare trio of birds: Five-striped Sparrow, Varied Bunting, and Buff-collared Nightjar.

We still had some work to do on our final day together, and those efforts produced gratifying views of a rare Rose-throated Becard along the Santa Cruz River and then an adult and fledgling of the gorgeous and super-rare Rufous-capped Warbler in Florida Canyon. What a way to close out this trip!

Thank you all so much for joining me on one of my favorite tours - to my 'back yard' of Southeast Arizona! I always hope for a great group of enthusiastic and congenial birders to join me for this one, and this group was all of that and more. I hope we all have a chance to bird together again somewhere soon! Cheers and good birding – Dave

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*) – We put up a decent-sized flock at the edge of the road in Rio Rico.

MALLARD (NORTHERN) (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*) – The typical green-headed birds are outnumbered by the resident 'Mexican' Mallards at this season, but a few of these may remain to breed. [b]

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – You need to carefully check the head color and the tail color of these birds to determine if they're 'pure' or if they've got any 'Northern' Mallard blood in them (they interbreed frequently here). This hen-plumaged form may actually be more closely related to the Mottled Duck of the southeastern U.S. than it is to Mallard.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – A few of these lingered at Willcox on our first stop there on the way to the Chiricahuas. [b]

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*) – Primarily a Western duck and a common migrant/winterer in s. Arizona. [b]

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – Two lingering males at Willcox on both visits. [b]

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (*Anas crecca*) – A dozen or more at Patagonia Lake SP on the 19th were quite late. [b]

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – A single male at the Benson sewage ponds was tardy as a migrant. [b]

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – Including a few really vibrant breeding-plumaged males at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson on our first full morning together.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – Our best looks at this one were right along the road just outside of Portal on our last morning in the Chiricahuas.

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*) – We had quite a few encounters with this one, including seeing a pair cross the road in front of our van with a bunch of newly-hatched chicks! [N]

MONTEZUMA QUAIL (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – Patagonia Lake is a new spot for this one for me, and I'm sure glad we were able to pull out a couple of fancy males! I was getting a little worried that we weren't going to see it this year!

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – This species was pretty much wiped out by hunting pressures in the state many years ago, and the birds that we saw are the products of a reintroduction program started in s.e. Arizona in the early 80's. They're doing very well now. [I]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Several at Patagonia Lake and at the Palo Duro ponds in Nogales.

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – A single basic-plumaged bird at Willcox was up on the shoreline there, but we did see a dozen or more breeding-plumaged birds at Patagonia Lake SP. [b]

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) – A single distant bird at the dam at Patagonia Lake SP was a late migrant there. Even at that distance, bill color is a good mark to separate this one from the very similar Clark's Grebe. [b]

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – This species is never very common in s.e. Arizona, but it breeds by the 1000's up in the Phoenix area now. This species used to be on the rarity review list for the Arizona Bird Records Committee about 30 years ago - so things have changed!

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – One or two hanging out with the above Neotropics at Patagonia Lake. [b]

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Not many herons on this trip, but this one is usually the most common.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – Some nice looks at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – We got this one on our second pass through Willcox.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – Mostly at Willcox on this trip. We now have to check these thoroughly for the odd Glossy Ibis since there are now several records of that one in the state. [b]

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Only in the Patagonia area on this tour. This species is oddly local in the state, but it's common as dirt just south of the border in Sonora.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – That one adult that we found in St. David was difficult to spot in the bright sky as it drifted higher and farther away from our spot on the road. Another very local breeder in the state.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – This beautiful adult was just about where I had expected it to be in Willcox. A very local bird in s.e. Arizona from Tucson eastward.

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – Formerly confined to mature riparian woodland in s.e. Arizona, this species has expanded greatly throughout s. Arizona in recent years, even breeding n.e. of Phoenix now in the center of the state. We had some super views of it in flight on this tour.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – Quite a few sightings east of Tucson. Nearly all of the breeding pairs that I've seen here are light-morph birds.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – Excellent looks in flight down at California Gulch. Extremely similar to Turkey Vulture in flight, especially when looking at it naked-eye.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Most of our birds were the very pale fuertes race. [N]

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – A couple of birds at Sweetwater Wetlands only.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) [N]

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – The numbers of this one had really increased by our second visit to Willcox.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Exquisite!

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) [N]

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) – One late migrant on our second visit to Willcox. [b]

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Numbers of this species had really dropped off since I was last at Willcox on the previous Sunday. [b]

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*) – A single bird at Willcox was unusual. Quite rare as a migrant in the state, and especially so in the spring. [b]

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – Numbers continued to dwindle at Willcox by the time we made our second visit. [b]

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – A couple of birds all month long at Willcox, where it's rare in spring. [b]

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – The first half of May is the migration peak for this one in s. Arizona. [b]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – A couple of sub-adults at Willcox on our first visit there, with one remaining for our return. [b]

CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*) – One imm. bird was seen in flight at Willcox, but we couldn't find it perched anywhere. [b]

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – We saw these fly by the Portal Peak parking lot each morning, but we never really nailed it for the group.

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

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – Now an uncommon to rare and local species in this part of the state. It used to be an abundant bird in the Tucson area, but they've vanished for unknown reasons.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – Fleeting looks.

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

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – Seemingly more common this year than most, we ended up with several very memorable looks at this charismatic species.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*) – Nice looks in flight after it flushed from a hidden roost site.

Strigidae (Owls)

FLAMMULATED OWL (*Psiloscops flammeolus*) – A few folks saw this one briefly in flight when it flew from a song perch, but this was a mostly frustrating experience in the wind.

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops kennicottii*) – Fantastic views of a very close bird near Madera Canyon - after we saved the forest and put out the unattended campfire!

WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops trichopsis*) – This was, remarkably, our third species of owl for the day on that first afternoon and evening of the tour in Madera Canyon. It was good to see this and the above Western in such a short time, giving us a chance to note the differences in the bill color and overall pattern between the two.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – Nesting right outside of our rooms in Portal! [N]

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – This turned out to be the first of four owl species for the day on the first day of the tour, and the first of nine seen species of owls on the entire trip! We found another, purely by chance, as we drove back over Onion Saddle in the Chiricahuas after

seeing the vagrant Slate-throated Redstart in Pinery Canyon.

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – Our first post-picnic dinner owl species on the first evening in Madera Canyon. This tiny owl is found in nearly every habitat in s. Arizona - as long as there's a tree with a nesting cavity to use.

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – This reliable stake-out bird was easily seen from the Circle K parking lot west of the airport in Tucson that first full morning of the tour.

SPOTTED OWL (*Strix occidentalis*) – It was quite a thrill to hear this one call close by – and then to see it fly overhead and perch in the open! – in the Chiricahua Mts. Most of my experience with this protected species is at day roost sites in the Huachuca Mts., so it was really nice to see it 'doing it's thing' at night – the way an owl should be seen!

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL (*Aegolius acadicus*) – This one wouldn't respond – but it's good to know that this one is still in the Chiricahuas after that devastating 2011 fire! [∗]

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – Exceptional views of several birds feeding under the lights at night in Green Valley on our way back to the hotel that first night.

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – I thought that we were going to have to be content with seeing this one distantly in the beam of my light near Portal, but we lucked out and found a bird perched in the road in front of the van on our way back to the lodge. Great looks!

BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR (*Antrostomus ridgwayi*) – WOWWW!!! We actually missed seeing this bird fly past us, but he continued to sing, allowing us to track him down and find his song/feeding perch. After we found him, the looks were absolutely wonderful as he darted skyward to catch an insect, and soon fluttered down to the same perch. A wonderful experience!

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrostomus arizonae*) – We watched a male on a feeding perch as the light faded for a bit and then got a light on him as he flew past us, giving all a good look at this recent split from the familiar Eastern Whip-poor-will.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Mostly distant views of this distinctive swift.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*) – Including a couple of males with brilliant purple crowns and green gorgets. This northern form is likely to be split from the birds of the Costa Rican/w. Panama highlands.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – Including two nearly full-grown chicks on a nest along the South Fork road in the Chiricahuas. The U.S.'s largest breeding hummingbird species. [N]

LUCIFER HUMMINGBIRD (*Calothorax lucifer*) – It took all of five minutes wait to see this one come to the feeders in Ash Canyon! Great looks of this Mexican species!

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*) – Very common at all of the feeding stations on the tour. This is the Western replacement species of the Eastern Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*) – Almost unknown in the state before the 1960's.

COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte costae*) – A brief look at a feeding female at Florida Canyon for some on the last day of the trip.

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – There were plenty of these in the mountains, and we heard them flying by at a number of lowland sites as well (the latter were migrants heading north).

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – One of the most common and widespread hummers at all of the lowland sites. This one is increasing in numbers and expanding its range within Arizona.

VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia violiceps*) – It didn't take long before this one was spotted at the feeders in Patagonia. This site is the most reliable spot in the U.S. to see this primarily Mexican bird.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

ELEGANT TROGON (*Trogon elegans*) – He led us on a merry chase up the South Fork trail, only to reward us with unparalleled views at close range and only a foot or two off the ground on our return hike! One of the most iconic species to be found in s.e. Arizona and a 'must see' on any trip to s.e. Arizona.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Wherever there are oak trees.

GILA WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – The common woodpecker of Tucson and low desert habitats. [N]

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – Good views at the feeders in Ash Canyon.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*) – This species really increased in numbers in the Chiricahuas after the 2011 fire there.

ARIZONA WOODPECKER (*Picoides arizonae*) – Excellent studies along the road in upper Carr Canyon in the Huachuclas. Formerly called the Strickland's Woodpecker.

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – All of the flickers in the mountains of s.e. Arizona are this form.

GILDED FLICKER (*Colaptes chrysoides*) – It took a little bit of patience, but we finally lured one of these Saguaro specialists into view west of Tucson on our first full day of the tour. Once lumped with the Northern Flicker.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – Very few encounters with this one on the tour.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – We had a couple of looks at this tiny Neotropical flycatcher, but the best was along the trail into Florida Canyon on the last day.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – Several sightings of the "All-excited" Flycatcher. [b]

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*) – We heard it singing 'Jose Maria' in a couple of mountain locations on the tour.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*) – Daily on this tour, though most were still heading north to breed elsewhere.

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*) – Most of our birds – all late migrants – were in the Chiricahuas. [b]

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – The one bird that we got a look at was at Sweetwater Wetlands, rather surprisingly. [b]

PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax difficilis*) – This bird migrates below where Cordilleran Flycatcher breeds, in general. [b]

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – This species, which breeds here in the mountains throughout the state, has a more distinctly two-parted call note when compared to the analogous call of Pacific-slope Flycatcher (but there is a bit of overlap). I actually wouldn't be opposed to someone re-lumping these two forms back into the old "Western Flycatcher"!

BUFF-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) – Plenty of these in the right habitat in the Huachuca Mts. One of the few distinctive *Empidonax*.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Eastern Phoebe is the closest relative of this one.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – This one breeds as far north as the Arctic Circle, and beyond, in Alaska.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Always a thrill to see this one – even after you've seen a million of them!

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – Another flycatcher with a huge range. Even though it barely gets into the U.S. in s.e. Arizona, it ranges southward all of the way to c. Argentina.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – All of these *Myiarchus* flycatchers are cavity nesting species and their habitat ranges overlap broadly in Arizona, though this one seems to prefer drier habitats.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – The largest of the *Myiarchus* in N. America (at least the race here is).

SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) – These birds must have just arrived a couple of days prior to our arrival in the Huachucas. Another cavity-nesting species that winters in the n. Andes and w. Amazonia.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – We actually had to work a little to find this one at Rio Rico, but we ended up with good looks. Another recent arrival from the wintering grounds to the south.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – Easily our most common and widespread species of kingbird on this tour.

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – We blundered upon one of these sitting up next to the road behind the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve and wound up with incredible looks at this confiding bird. I suspect that there are only about 30-35 pairs of this one nesting within the U.S.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – Much paler overall than the similar Cassin's Kingbird and favoring more open, drier habitats.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

ROSE-THROATED BECARD (*Pachyrhamphus aglaiae*) – It's good to build in a little flexibility into these itineraries in order to be able to chase birds like this one that happen to pop up on the internet! This species has become quite rare in the state (it was never 'common'), so it was a great one to see on our final day.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – I'll never forget that bird at Willcox eating that lizard – piece by delicious piece! [N]

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*) – Great looks at this one eventually at Patagonia Lake SP.

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – Not very evident this year.

CASSIN'S VIREO (*Vireo cassinii*) – One late bird in Madera Canyon the first afternoon and then another high in the Chiricahuas a few days later. A habitual wing-flicker, unlike the Plumbeous Vireo. [b]

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – The only Arizona breeding member of the old 'Solitary' Vireo complex. [N]

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) – Not many of these at all moving through this year. [b]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – High in the Chiricahuas and Huachucas only on this tour.

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (WOODHOUSE'S) (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii woodhouseii*) – Recently split from the California Scrub-Jay to the West, we saw this one very well in the pinyon pine/juniper habitat between Portal and Paradise.

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – The most commonly seen 'blue' jay on this tour.

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – We managed to get some really good looks of a perched bird near Willcox on our way to the Chiricahuas – long nasal bristles and all.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – It was pretty apparent that when the adult came in to feed the nestlings, the birds we were looking at were Common Ravens. [N]

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – Good numbers of adult birds along the lake margins at Willcox when we went through there the first time.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – A brief bird on a wire on the west side of Tucson as we drove up the Tucson Mountains to look for Gilded Flicker.

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – At least one adult with some Violet-green Swallows near Willow Tank s.e. of Portal. [b]

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – A close relative of Tree Swallow and also a tree cavity nesting species.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – A few with the numerous Barn Swallows at Willcox. [b]

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – It was really interesting to see the race *melanogaster* nesting on the walls of our Nogales hotel and to see the range of color on the foreheads – from pale buff to deep chestnut. [N]

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – Very nice views of this Chiricahua Mts. specialty on our way up to Rustler Park.

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

JUNIPER TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*) – We had to try a few places, but we eventually tracked one down for good looks. This is just about as far south as this one gets – there's is one spot in Sonora where it also occurs.

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – One of the most widespread small passerines in the hot, low desert.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (*Psaltriparus minimus*) – The two racial groups of this one (West Coast vs. Interior) are probably different enough that they might get split into two species in the future.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*) – All of our birds are the interior race *nelsoni*, which might be part of a three-way split of this species soon.

PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*) – Some of us finally caught up with this one at our picnic lunch at Barfoot Park.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*) – Another species ripe for a split is this one, with ours falling into the *albescens/alticola* group.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – We caught up nicely with this one on the final day in Florida Canyon, with a bird coming in very close for a look at us.

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – A very common voice in the oak woodland and the riparian areas.

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – Arizona's State Bird!

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*) – Excellent views of a male on the first afternoon of the tour before we got into Madera Canyon.

BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila nigriceps*) – I had a few spots lined up to look for this one, but it was great to get it at Patagonia Lake SP. We found two adult birds being followed closely by at least three recently fledged youngsters in a perfect setting for this species. There are now about 20 or so known breeding spots for this on in the state – but it was unknown in the U.S. before 1971! [N]

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – Only one lingering migrant this year high in the Chiricahuas. [b]

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – Much paler than birds in e. North America, this subspecies group extends southward all of the way to Nicaragua. It will be interesting to see if the two very different subspecies in N. America interbreed, or if they sort themselves when they come into contact either in Arizona or n. Mexico.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH (*Catharus ustulatus*) – A brief look for a few of us along Proctor Rd. below Madera Canyon on the first afternoon. [b]

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – These birds were singing much more than when I was in the Chiricahuas a week earlier.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – Reliably seen in the parking lot in Portal each morning.

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – The strong winds east of Portal really hampered us on that final morning there, but we still managed to find one of these local thrashers lurking under a mesquite from inside the van!

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Seen in flight only at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson on the first morning. [b]

Ptiliognatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – We really didn't get into numbers of these on the tour until we arrived in Patagonia.

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – We had some great looks at a couple of female birds in the Chiricahuas, and finally got an adult male up in upper Carr Canyon while we searched for the Tufted Flycatcher. Now that this one is placed in its own family, interest in seeing it has gone up!

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – One late migrant along the Portal-Paradise Road. [b]

LUCY'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis luciae*) – Everyone finally caught up with this desert warbler in the mesquite thickets at Patagonia Lake SP.

VIRGINIA'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – We found a very cooperative singing male in upper Carr Canyon. This is a very close relative of the Nashville Warbler and of the Colima Warbler.

MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – A single late migrant was briefly seen at Patagonia Lake SP by some of us. [b]

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – The breeding race here (*G.t. chryseola*) is completely yellow below.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – All of our birds were the western "Audubon's" Warbler, which will soon be split out again from the eastern and northern "Myrtle" Warbler.

GRACE'S WARBLER (*Setophaga graciae*) – That close bird gathering nesting material on the ground along the South Fork road in the Chiricahuas was really something!

- BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – The most common warbler in the pine/oak/juniper woodland in s.e. Arizona.
- TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – Just a few migrants were detected still moving northward during the tour. [b]
- RUFIOUS-CAPPED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – YESSSS!!!! It took a bit of hiking, but our quarry was singing when we arrived at the spot. Not only did we find a beautiful adult bird – a real rarity in the U.S. – but we found a fledgling sitting quietly in the brush nearby! How cool is that?! [N]
- WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Numbers had really dropped off since my last tour here a few days earlier. [b]
- RED-FACED WARBLER** (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – Stunning views of a responsive bird on the side of the road on our return drive from seeing the Slate-throated Redstart. One of my all-time favorites in s.e. Arizona.
- PAINTED REDSTART** (*Myioborus pictus*) – Many memorable looks at this beauty. It's tough for me to choose a favorite Arizona warbler, but this is right up there with Red-faced.
- SLATE-THROATED REDSTART** (*Myioborus miniatus*) – WOO HOO!!! This vagrant from Mexico is back for its second year in this very spot, but we had to work this time to get it up that steep draw. Gorgeous!
- YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*) – Unrecorded on the tour until we got to the Patagonia area. Probably deserving of its own family, I'm anxious to see if there's any taxonomic decision on this one in the upcoming American Ornithologists Union publication this summer in the Auk.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

- RUFIOUS-WINGED SPARROW** (*Peucaea carpalis*) – Great views at our first Eastern Bluebird spot near Patagonia. Twenty years ago, I never would have seen this bird at this spot – it's really expanded its range since then!
- BOTTERI'S SPARROW** (*Peucaea botterii*) – Good looks out of the windows of the van on our way into Garden Canyon on Ft. Huachuca.
- CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – I think that the birds we saw on the golf course at Willcox were our only ones of the trip!
- BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW** (*Spizella atrogularis*) – We encountered a very responsive male on our way back down the Hunter Canyon trail in the Huachucas after searching for Rufous-capped Warbler (to be found later in the tour). Great views!
- BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – One of the most beautiful of all of the sparrows in N. America.
- FIVE-STRIPED SPARROW** (*Amphispiza quinquestriata*) – It took a little more searching than I thought that it would, but we eventually got great views of a responsive bird in California Gulch before our picnic dinner there and our Buff-collared Nightjar attempt. One of the most local of all breeding birds in the U.S.
- YELLOW-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Plenty up in the pines of both the Chiricahuas and the Huachucas.
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (ORIANTHA)** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – Several still hanging on at the feeders near Portal. This is the race that breeds in the Rocky Mountains and is the last of the migrant races in Arizona to pass through in the spring. [b]
- SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – One very late individual at Willcox on our first pass through the area. [b]
- SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*) – These pale breeding birds are probably unrecognizable to some visiting birders from the East.
- CANYON TOWHEE** (*Melospiza fusca*) – Numbers of these throughout the region had dropped off in the past several years, but they seem to be rebounding well.
- ABERT'S TOWHEE** (*Melospiza aberti*) – Excellent views of this very local species at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson. The world range is pretty much just the lower Colorado R. drainage in s. Arizona.
- RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – We caught up with this one on the last half of the tour.
- GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – A single bird at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson was a bit of a surprise there for the date. [b]
- SPOTTED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo maculatus*) – Really common in the 'chaparral' on the lower slopes of the mountains on this tour. That single bird that we saw at Bob Rodrigues' feeders near Portal was likely a late migrant headed north.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

- HEPATIC TANAGER** (*Piranga flava*) – 'Hepatic' refers to the liver-colored plumage of the male.
- SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – Numerous in the willow stands at Patagonia Lake SP. The race here (*P.r. cooperi*) has a much bigger bill than do the birds in the East.
- WESTERN TANAGER** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – Every single day of the tour! Most of our birds were migrants in the lowlands heading north to breed, but it breeds commonly in the mountains of s.e. Arizona.
- NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Folks from the East usually leave s.e. Arizona with a case of 'Cardinal envy'. The race here is brighter red with a longer crest and tail. [N]
- PYRRHULOXIA** (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – Never to be outdone by any Northern Cardinal, this one certainly holds its own in the 'looks' department.
- BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – Seem almost daily on this tour. This is the Western replacement species for the familiar Rose-breasted Grosbeak of the East.
- BLUE GROSBEAK** (*Passerina caerulea*) – This species had just arrived in the state and wasn't very common or widespread as of yet, but we did have five gorgeous males on the ground below the feeders in Madera Canyon on the last day.
- LAZULI BUNTING** (*Passerina amoena*) – The numbers of this one at the feeders around Portal had really dwindled since my last visit a few days earlier. [b]
- VARIED BUNTING** (*Passerina versicolor*) – We found one flighty male that had just arrived in the area on our penultimate day in the field. A couple of weeks later, they'd be singing all over the dry hillsides here.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

- RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)
- EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S)** (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – Strange as it seems, the Eastern Meadowlark is the common resident bird here in this part of Arizona, not the Western.
- GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – The only expected grackle species here.
- BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – We ran into our first at the feeders in Ash Canyon. This species tends to specialize on parasitizing the Hooded Oriole.
- BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*)
- HOODED ORIOLE** (*Icterus cucullatus*) – The only ones that we ran into on the tour were at the feeders in Portal.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) – Most of the birds that we saw were still moving northward to breed elsewhere, but some of those birds will stay to nest locally.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*) – Fabulous looks at a couple of cracking males at the feeders near Portal.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – Just a few were still lingering at the feeders in Portal. This one rarely ever breeds in the mountains of s.e. Arizona. [b]

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – The default goldfinch here at any season.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [I]

MAMMALS

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – The cottontails that we saw in the pine/oak/juniper woodland above the dry desert flats were this species.

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – These were the cottontails that we saw commonly in the hot desert flats.

ANTELOPE JACKRABBIT (*Lepus alleni*) – These impressive hares were only seen on our drive into and out of California Gulch. Those huge ears are an adaptation for the hot climate, enabling the animal to displace more heat more efficiently.

CLIFF CHIPMUNK (*Tamias dorsalis*) – The only real chipmunk in this region.

HARRIS'S ANTELOPE SQUIRREL (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*) – A couple of these cuties were hanging around Dave Jasper's feeders in Portal.

ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – *Sciurus*-like in form, but it makes burrows in the ground like the next species.

ROUND-TAILED GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*) – These were only seen in the Tucson area.

MEXICAN FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) – It was quite a sight to see five or six of these colorful squirrels chasing each other among the trunks next to the South Fork road! The Chiricahuas are the only mountain range in the US where you can see this one.

ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus arizonensis*) – Quite similar to Eastern Gray Squirrel, but this one is only found in Arizona.

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – It was fascinating to see an active den at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson!

NORTHERN RACCOON (*Procyon lotor*) – We had this one on the run in Cave Creek Canyon on our way back to our rooms from owling one night. Common as it is, I hardly ever see this one on tours.

STRIPED SKUNK (*Mephitis mephitis*) – Really fine looks next to the road in the Chiricahuas.

BOBCAT (*Lynx rufus*) – That spot where we saw this one was such a super setting for it! We watched it walk away up through the fissure in the rocks after it tired of our presence.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – I think that all of the deer that we saw on the tour were indeed this species. This race here, Coues' White-tailed Deer, is the second-smallest race in US (only 'Key' Deer is smaller).

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – Distinctive even at that distance.

Herps

AMERICAN BULLFROG (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) – Impressive numbers at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson and a real threat to the native frog populations in the state. [I]

CANYON TREEFROG (*Hyla arenicolor*) – Sounding more like a sheep than a frog, those who went down to the stream in Madera Canyon that first afternoon were rewarded with some great looks at this one!

POND SLIDER (*Trachemys scripta*) – All of these are the result of released pets at Sweetwater. [I]

COMMON LESSER EARLESS LIZARD (*Holbrookia maculata*) – Fantastic looks of a close individual at Patagonia Lake SP.

ORNATE TREE LIZARD (*Urosaurus ornatus*) – If we had checked more tree limbs at Patagonia Lake SP, we would have found this one to be quite common.

DESERT SPINY LIZARD (*Sceloporus magister*) – Several big, colorful males at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson.

CLARK'S SPINY LIZARD (*Sceloporus clarkii*) – Unlike his cousin the Desert Spiny Lizard, this one spends all of its time in trees.

SONORAN SPOTTED WHIPTAIL (*Aspidoscelis sonorae*) – This was the common whiptail seen in both the Chiricahuas and the Huachucas.

DESERT GRASSLAND WHIPTAIL (*Aspidoscelis uniparens*) – We had one of these spotless whiptails near Patagonia. Almost all of the whiptail species in Arizona are all-female species, reproducing asexually.

GOPHERSNAKE (*Pituophis catenifer*) – I'm not sure how I avoided hitting this one, but I'm glad I didn't hit it! Really beautiful!

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 204 bird taxa and 15 mammal taxa