



Field Guides Tour Report

Arizona: Birding the Border II 2019

May 18, 2019 to May 27, 2019

Cory Gregory

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Of all the rare and exciting specialties we crossed paths with on this spring tour, perhaps the best performing was this Five-striped Sparrow in the remote and well-known California Gulch! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

To so many birders, southeastern Arizona is well-known, soaked in lore with stories of Painted Redstarts flitting around sycamores, Elegant Trogons nesting in Cave Creek, Zone-tailed Hawks cruising over, and maybe, if you're lucky, a rare bird like the Five-striped Sparrow or Buff-collared Nightjar. I'm happy to say that we experienced all of this for ourselves on this spring tour! It was a fun trip loaded with repeated and fantastic looks at many of the classic species that make the Sky Islands of southeastern Arizona so famous.

We kicked things off by visiting the saguaro-dotted desert west of Tucson where our first targets came into view, like Gilded Flicker, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, and Rufous-winged Sparrow. We even got to enjoy the nesting Purple Martins using a cavity in a saguaro. That evening, Chase, the Burrowing Owl in Tucson, gave us a wink or two.

The following day took us east where we added Canvasback at the Benson ponds, Mississippi Kite in St. David, and the Willcox area that was loaded with a variety of ducks and shorebirds. We added the hard-to-find Spotted Owl that afternoon before winding our way down through the scenic Chiricahuas to Portal. Although our time in Portal was breezy and uncommonly chilly (we even saw snow!), we were very fortunate to cross paths with several iconic species like Elegant Trogon, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Arizona Woodpecker, and a fun variety of hummingbirds. We had a great selection of nightbirds as well, like Whiskered Screech-Owl, a family of Great Horned Owls, Elf Owl, Mexican Whip-poor-will, and some singing Flammulated Owls. Down in the lowlands around Portal, we added Crissal and Bendire's thrashers, and the "Lilian's" Eastern Meadowlark.

We spent time in the Huachucas as well, where we visited more well-known and birdy spots like Miller Canyon where we had an awesome experience with Northern Pygmy-Owl, Ash Canyon where we were lucky to watch Montezuma Quail, Carr Canyon and its wealth of Buff-breasted Flycatchers, and Hunter Canyon where a Rufous-capped Warbler gave us a great show! Additionally, the nearby San Pedro House yielded a day-roosting Western Screech-Owl which posed nicely for us. Meanwhile, the grasslands hosted Botteri's Sparrows which are always a tough (but great) treat to work on.

Around the corner, so to speak, we visited the birdy town of Patagonia where the Paton Center for Hummingbirds hosted a brazen Yellow-breasted Chat, a couple of sleepy Violet-crowned Hummingbirds, and a colorful variety of other southwestern species. Meanwhile, Gray Hawks soared over and Zone-tailed Hawks put in appearances, too. The state park at Patagonia Lake was very birdy one morning and we tallied the rare Black-capped Gnatcatchers, where a female was being kept busy with her nest and chasing away cowbirds. The nearby roadside rest yielded our first Varied Buntings while a nearby road hosted a couple of Indigo Buntings as well.

Towards the end of our tour, we made the afternoon venture out to California Gulch where Five-striped Sparrow was easily seen and, after dark, the very rare Buff-collared Nightjar flew into view a few times! Nearby, an Elf Owl kept watch over us while distant Common Poorwills kept to the

mountainside. Even our final day yielded some target specialties like the Rose-throated Becards in Tubac and the nesting Lucifer Hummingbird in Box Canyon. What a great conclusion to this species-packed trip!

All in all, this was a really fun tour and I want to thank all of you for making it such a good time. Thanks to Caroline for her help in the logistics, and thanks to the many birders we crossed paths with. Arizona is a wonderful, scenic, and dynamic destination and it's always fun sharing these moments with folks.

Until next time, thanks again and maybe we'll bird together someday. All the best!

-- Cory

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)

CINNAMON TEAL (*Spatula cyanoptera*) – This attractive dabbling duck was seen a couple of times at spots like Benson STP and Willcox.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*) – A handful of these big-billed ducks were spotted at Willcox.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Mareca americana*) – Both Benson and Willcox hosted this dabbling duck but those were the only spots with this species.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*) – We had a few sightings at the start of the tour at locations like Sweetwater Wetlands and Benson STP.

MEXICAN DUCK (*Anas diazi*) – Recently elevated to a full species status, this southern specialty was seen several times at Benson, Willcox, San Pedro River, Patagonia Lake State Park, and the Pesqueira Pit.

CANVASBACK (*Aythya valisineria*) – A rare species in this part of the state at this time of year! We tallied two of these diving ducks at the Benson STP on our 2nd day of birding.

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – A single bird at the Benson STP was our only sighting of this attractive diving duck.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – This stiff-tail was present at several of the ponds and lakes we visited throughout the trip.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – A pair of these "cottontops" were found at the Twin Lakes Golf Course in Willcox.

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*) – This ornate quail was fairly common throughout the trip. Bob Rodriguez' feeders in Portal had quite a swarm!

MONTEZUMA QUAIL (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – A somewhat mythical species that often finds itself on the target lists of birders. They can be notoriously difficult to find, as we found out for ourselves as we searched in the Chiricahuas. However, we eventually got crippling views of a couple attending the feeders at Ash Canyon in the Huachucas. Hooray!

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Not uncommon during our time in the Chiricahuas. At times, they even waltzed onto the grounds of the research station we were staying at.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – A tiny, diving species. These were seen at Benson STP and again at Patagonia Lake State Park.

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – Half a dozen of these attractive grebes were mixed in with the Ruddy Ducks at Benson STP on our 2nd day.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Common in urban areas. [I]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – We got scope views of this big pigeon as we birded around the town of Portal. Specifically, we got good looks along Cathedral Rock Road.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – This introduced species was fairly common throughout the trip. [I]

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – A tiny but relatively long-tailed species, these scaly-looking doves were seen in Portal, at the San Pedro House, and in Patagonia. The whistled song, which we heard many times, sounds like "No hope" or "Cold Coke".

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – A couple of these were spotted running on the ground along Golden Bell Road in St. David.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Abundant and tallied every day.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Very common, these were seen every day of the tour.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – We broke the ice with finding these big, ground-loving cuckoos at Willcox near the golf course. After that, we had sightings at a variety of spots including our hotel parking lot in Nogales!

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – Two of these repeatedly swooped through our headlights as we drove down Cave Creek one evening.

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – Our first sighting was really quick, a bird that flushed off the side of the road near Portal one night. We went on to hear them well, and eventually spotting the eyeshine, during our evening at the California Gulch confluence area.

BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR (*Antrostomus ridgwayi*) – The distribution of this very rare nightbird barely reaches US soil. Lucky for us, we knew right where that soil was! We had a great encounter with a singing nightjar near the California Gulch confluence. At one point, the bird flew right overhead! Fantastic!

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrastomus arizonae*) – Our first night excursion came on Day 2 and there, in the Chiricahuas, we had nearly half a dozen of these singing nightjars. They circled overhead once or twice but were overall tricky to get a good look at.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Fairly common high up around the rock spires and cliff walls in the Chiricahuas.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RIVOLI'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*) – This big hummer, formerly known as Magnificent Hummingbird, was seen nicely in Cave Creek, at the research station, Ash Canyon, and Miller Canyon in the Huachucas.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – We enjoyed a number of views of this big hummingbird in the Chiricahuas. One of the best spots was at the research station we were staying at.

LUCIFER HUMMINGBIRD (*Calothorax lucifer*) – It was pretty special to be able to see this rare species nesting! A female was present at a nest in Box Canyon on our final day. [N]

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*) – A common species, these were tallied nearly every day.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*) – The only spots we saw these were in the Huachucas: we saw a couple teed up in bushes and then another at the feeders in Ash Canyon.

COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte costae*) – A beautiful male was sitting atop a bush in Box Canyon on our final day.

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – A tiny montane species, these were often heard as they buzzed by us in the Chiricahuas.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – This fairly common red-billed species was seen throughout our time in the Chiricahuas and Huachucas.

VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia violiceps*) – The Paton Center for Hummingbirds lived up to its name and we tallied this gorgeous and range-restricted species there.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – One of these was heard cackling in the cattails at Sweetwater Wetlands on our first day. [*]

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Fairly common on the lakes and ponds we visited.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Black and white, and super lanky, these showy shorebirds were at Willcox on our visit there early in the tour.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – This is another tall, lanky shorebird we added in Willcox. They were even sporting some nice breeding colors!

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Benson STP, Willcox, and Patagonia Lake State Park were all spots hosting this big, noisy plover.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

MARBLED GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*) – This tall and uncommon shorebird was foraging in the wetland in Willcox.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – A couple of these nifty shorebirds were seen swimming in the wetland in Willcox. In this genus, the females are more brightly colored than the males.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – It was fun seeing this familiar species in breeding plumage and actually showing spots! These were common at Willcox.

WILLET (WESTERN) (*Tringa semipalmata inornata*) – We found a pair of these big *Tringa* foraging at the edge of the wetland in Willcox. This "shorebird" species nests in grasslands.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – More than a dozen of these small cormorants were scoped on Patagonia Lake during our visit to the state park.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – At least one of the cormorants at Patagonia Lake State Park was this familiar species. Through the scope, we could see the extensive orange facial skin.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

LEAST BITTERN (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – This is a rare bird in Arizona! We got to hear this tiny heron calling several times from the cattails along the edge of Patagonia Lake. Try as we might, the bird stayed hidden though. [*]

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – This big and familiar heron was seen at Patagonia Lake State Park.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – One of these small white egrets was walking around near the golf course in Willcox.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – Rather cryptic, this small heron was first seen at Sweetwater Wetlands and then again at Patagonia Lake State Park.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – We enjoyed good looks at Willcox on our 2nd day. We found another dozen at the Pesqueira Pit later in the tour.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – This short-tailed vulture species was seen well as several cruised overhead in Patagonia and again at Kino Springs.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Abundant, tallied every day.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – A specialty that breeds around St. David, this graceful raptor was glimpsed briefly as we birded along Golden Bell Road.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – A good-sized Accipiter, this bird-eating hawk was seen a couple of times in the Chiricahuas including at Bob Rodrigues' feeders where it flew by with prey.

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – We tracked down this long-legged and local species near Willcox on our 2nd day.

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – A gorgeous raptor, this species became rather common once we reached the Patagonia and Nogales area. Perhaps our best looks came when a pair circled over us along Blue Haven Road in Patagonia.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – A lot of our views of this sleek Buteo came as drive-bys. However, we had good looks near Willcox.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – It's always difficult to predict when/where this species is going to turn up. We had repeated looks though at spots near Sierra Vista and Tubac.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Our most common raptor, these were seen every day of tour. Most of them were probably of the southwestern subspecies "fuertesi".

Strigidae (Owls)

FLAMMULATED OWL (*Psiloscopus flammeolus*) – Well-known to be one of the most difficult owls to see, this little species proved that to us on multiple occasions. Although we heard them repeatedly and very well, they remained out of sight for us. [*]

WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops trichopsis*) – "Whiskey", as it was called, was reliable and photogenic as it sat in its hole on most of our visits in Cave Creek. We had nice looks at one at night as well near the research station.

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops kennicottii*) – Plan B came through and we found this species sitting in a hole during the day at the San Pedro House!

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – At least one adult was attending a nest in Portal that could barely contain the two fluffy youngsters. [N]

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – One of the highlights of the trip was getting to watch this day-hunting owl as it sat point blank in front of us in Miller Canyon! Most excellent!

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – As dusk set in in Cave Creek, we were ready and waiting. This tiny owl, the smallest owl species in the world, peeked out of its hole several times before interacting with a second one! Later in the tour, we saw this species again near the California Gulch confluence area. [N]

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – Our little friend at the Chase Bank in Tucson was most obliging!

SPOTTED OWL (*Strix occidentalis*) – We had a much better than average experience with this rare owl! The Chiricahuas pulled through and we couldn't have asked for better views!

Trogonidae (Trogons)

ELEGANT TROGON (*Trogon elegans*) – The South Fork of Cave Creek lived up to its birding reputation and yielded this beautiful species, a male in its striking plumage perched nearly at eye-level. Wowza!

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Not uncommon in the montane regions of the Chiricahuas and Huachucas. Places like Cave Creek, Portal, and Ash Canyon had a bunch of these striking and comical woodpeckers.

GILA WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – A common woodpecker in the lower elevations on tour. Tucson, San Pedro, and Patagonia all had a number of these.

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Dryobates scalaris*) – The "Desert Downy" as we started calling it, has an affinity for the dry southwest and we saw a number in a variety of locations.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates villosus*) – Our only sighting came from Rustler Park high in the Chiricahuas. In this part of Arizona, this medium-sized woodpecker prefers montane habitats.

ARIZONA WOODPECKER (*Dryobates arizonae*) – Formerly called Strickland's Woodpecker, this specialty was seen nicely in Cave Creek near the trogon spot.

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – A couple of these familiar woodpeckers were seen high in the Chiricahuas in the pine habitats. The males have a red moustachial stripe whereas the females lack it.

GILDED FLICKER (*Colaptes chrysoides*) – Right at the start of the tour, we visited the saguaro habitats west of Tucson where we had a brief look at this saguaro specialty.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – This small falcon was fairly common in open habitats and roadsides.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – This tiny species is the smallest flycatcher in the US! We heard one along Golden Bell Road in St. David but ended up with excellent views right in downtown Portal.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – Just in time! We spotted one of these big-headed flycatchers as we were driving down from Carr Canyon on our final day in the Huachucas.

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*) – We encountered this specialty a couple of times in pine forests including up Hunter Canyon in the Huachucas, Miller Canyon where one was singing nonstop, and Carr Canyon.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*) – A common sound throughout our time in the mountains. These flycatchers were tallied nearly every day.

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – Although we heard these greenish flycatchers more often than we saw them, we eventually got a few glimpses near Onion Saddle in the Chiricahuas.

BUFF-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) – This range-restricted specialty proved to be relatively easy to find this year. In fact, we saw them in two different mountain ranges: Pinery Canyon in the Chiricahuas, and Carr Canyon in the Huachucas.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – This phoebe was seen near the San Pedro River, hardly a surprising place for this water-loving species.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – A fairly common flycatcher throughout the trip. We even had some nesting on the grounds of the research station near Portal.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Ooh, what a stunner! This vibrant flycatcher turned out to be fairly common during our tour and we had repeated looks at a variety of spots.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – The mournful call of this montane species was commonplace during our time in the Chiricahuas and Huachucas.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – We tallied this pale-throated *Myiarchus* several times at spots like Cathedral Rock Road, Hunter Canyon, and Kino Springs.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – This *Myiarchus* has a big crest and a big bill. We found them in the desert west of Tucson, South Fork of Cave Creek, California Gulch, and Tubac.

SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) – Recently back on territory for the spring, these fancy flycatchers were fairly vocal in Cave Creek near the Sunny Flat Campground.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – For being such a tricky bird to find sometimes, we sure did well with this flycatcher. We encountered them at Willcox, Kino Springs, Rio Rico, and Tubac.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – With the darker gray head and bright white contrasting throat, this kingbird preferred the foothill habitats throughout our tour.

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – Although still quite a rare species in Portal, we did track down one of the long-staying birds there. We later saw another in Patagonia along Blue Haven Road.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – Fairly widespread in the wide open, dry country between the mountain ranges. Our first good looks came from Willcox where they were common around the golf course.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

ROSE-THROATED BECARD (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) – A very rare bird, and a species that doesn't breed in the US every year, this becard was a major target for us when we visited the Tubac area. Lucky for us, the wind didn't keep us away and we scored one of these as it came into the nest area.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – A couple of these "butcherbirds" were seen near the ponds at Willcox and then again along various roadsides.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*) – Easy to hear, hard to see! Still, we got good looks at this plain vireo several times including a whole bunch at Patagonia Lake State Park.

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – Our only sightings of this kinglet-look-alike came from the Huachucas. There, at spots like Hunter Canyon and Miller Canyon, we got to study the thick bill and listen to its repetitive song.

CASSIN'S VIREO (*Vireo cassinii*) – We picked up one of these late migrants near Onion Saddle in the Chiricahuas.

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – Common in the pine habitats up in the Chiricahuas. This bland gray species was once part of the Solitary Vireo complex until it was given full species status about 20 years ago.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) – Not very common for us on this tour. We managed quick looks at Hunter Canyon, Patagonia Lake State Park, and Tubac.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – We didn't have a ton of sightings of this big, flashy, western jay. Our only encounter was of one near the Onion Saddle.

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (WOODHOUSE'S) (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii woodhouseii*) – The road between Portal and Paradise is a good stretch for this local jay and we found several during our morning visit there. This species used to be part of "Western Scrub-Jay" before that species was split a couple of years ago.

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – Common at feeders throughout the Chiricahuas and Huachucas. Big roving flocks would pass through, streaming across the road as they found their way to their next meal.

CHIHUAHUA RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – Although rather difficult to tell them apart from Common Ravens without a proper look, we had a couple that looked to be this smaller species. They also sounded a lot different!

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Common and tallied daily.

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – Although the wind was really howling as we left Cave Creek, we still successfully found this lark huddled along the roadside out in the grasslands south of the Chiricahuas. One was even feeding young.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – A couple of these buff-breasted swallows were flying around at Benson and Willcox.

PURPLE MARTIN (HESPERIA) (*Progne subis hesperia*) – These big and dark swallows were seen at a nest hole in a saguaro west of Tucson. This range-restricted subspecies is limited to saguaro deserts. [N]

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – One of these blue-backed swallows was sitting on the fence at Benson STP. It was getting quite late for this species to be there and it's possible that the bird wasn't healthy.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – Some of these small, white-flanked swallows were seen overhead in Portal.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Not a common bird on this trip, this small swallow was seen at Benson STP on our 2nd day. This is the only swallow species we have with a dark brown breast band.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – This sleek, fork-tailed swallow was fairly common throughout, especially at spots like Benson, Willcox, Patagonia Lake State Park, and Amado WTP.

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – With the pale rump, some of these showed nicely as they were nesting under bridges and even under overhangs of our hotel!

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – It turns out that the couple we had in Pinery Canyon on one of our visits there would be some of the only ones we encountered.

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – What a fancy titmouse! These were seen mostly in Cave Creek and again in Miller Canyon where they preferred the riparian corridors.

JUNIPER TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*) – Although only a plain gray little guy, this species can be tough to find! We successfully found some along the road between Portal and Paradise.

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – With a pale yellow head, this desert-loving species was seen mostly in mesquite habitats. They were common though and they were even found around the hotel in Tucson.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (*Psaltiriparus minimus*) – A couple of lines of this small, twittering species swept between a couple of trees near Onion Saddle and again in Hunter Canyon.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*) – Fairly common between Portal and the higher elevation forests around Onion Saddle. The subspecies found here is in the "Interior West" group.

PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*) – This is a tiny but vocal nuthatch that we encountered a few times at Onion Saddle, Rustler Park, and Carr Canyon.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*) – Although not abundant, we did get a few glimpses of this bark-colored and bark-patterned species in Cave Creek as it crept up tree trunks.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – Our best looks came on our final day as we birded Box Canyon. However, our first was by the big mine near Bisbee.

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – The beautiful cascading song of this species was heard many times but the bird in Hunter Canyon sure showed the best.

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Fairly common in the mountains at spots like Onion Saddle in the Chiricahuas.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – A pair of these performed very nicely at the base of Hunter Canyon.

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – This big, desert-loving wren was fairly common throughout our tour. At times, we saw the nests tucked away in cacti as well. This is our largest wren in the US. [N]

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – We barely snagged this little guy as we were driving down Carr Canyon in the Huachuclas. The wheezy calls were a great giveaway to its presence.

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*) – Our only encounters with this desert-loving species was in the saguaro "forest" west of Tucson on our first afternoon.

BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila nigriceps*) – For being such a rare species in the US, this long-billed gnatcatcher sure gave us a great show at Patagonia Lake State Park. We enjoyed watching several aspects of its breeding ecology including it chasing away female Brown-headed Cowbirds! [N]

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – A couple of these handsome bluebirds were seen at higher elevations in the Chiricahuas, mostly between Onion Saddle and Barfoot Junction

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – Heard and then seen nicely in South Fork of Cave Creek. The song is beautiful and well-known.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*) – This familiar species was seen on a majority of our days but mostly up in the pine forests.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – An abundant thrasher species that we tallied on each of our days. We even got to watch them feeding young in Portal.

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – A tricky species of thrasher to find sometimes. We finally encountered a couple of these short-billed birds in the desert below Portal.

CRISSAL THRASHER (*Toxostoma crissale*) – This thrasher is one sneaky devil! We heard them several times and then finally had quick glimpses as one perched up near Bob Rodrigues' feeders.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – A common and familiar mimic. The white flash in the wings was often the first thing we noticed.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Seen only a few times including in Tubac. We weren't torn up about it. [I]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – A small flock of these frugivores flushed from a tree along Golden Bell Road in St. David on our 2nd day.

Ptiliognatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – What a beautiful, sleek species! We encountered these several times but perhaps no place was better than Patagonia Lake State Park where we tallied up to half a dozen.

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – Despite the common name, note that this pine specialist isn't really a wood-warbler at all! We encountered this species at Rustler Park high in the Chiricahuas.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – A common species throughout the trip, especially at feeders.

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – This small, streaked finch was seen on a couple of our days in and around Portal, especially at a few of the feeders.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – Common and widespread, this dark-backed finch was especially easy to see at feeders in Portal.

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows)

RUFIOUS-WINGED SPARROW (*Peucaea carpalis*) – Our only encounters with this range-restricted sparrow came on our first afternoon in the saguaro desert west of Tucson.

BOTTERI'S SPARROW (*Peucaea botterii*) – This is another specialty sparrow of the area and we ended up with nice looks in the grasslands south of Sierra Vista and again between Box Canyon and Madera Canyon.

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – Not abundant on this tour, only a couple of these small sparrows were tallied from Cave Creek.

BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW (*Spizella atrogularis*) – What a gorgeous and uncommon sparrow! This distinctive species was seen very nicely in Hunter Canyon on our hike down from the warbler spot.

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – Whoever says all sparrows are bland and boring clearly hasn't spent much time around this handsome, desert-loving species! We had excellent looks throughout the trip and especially at feeders in Portal.

FIVE-STRIPED SPARROW (*Amphispiza quinquestriata*) – Success! We visited the well-known (and very remote) California Gulch where this range-restricted specialty showed exceptionally well.

YELLOW-EYED JUNCO (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Although they always look mean with that glaring yellow eye, this specialty was still enjoyed by all of us in the pine habitats of the Chiricahuas and Huachucas.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (ORIANATHA) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – A few of these dark-lored sparrows were coming to the feeders at Bob Rodrigues' place in Portal.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*) – These familiar and classic sparrows were most common in the areas around the San Pedro River, Patagonia Lake State Park, and Tubac.

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – Although it wasn't abundant, this dry-country species was fairly common and we tallied them nearly every day. We had lots of good looks around Portal, Miller Canyon, San Pedro House, and the Paton Center for Hummingbirds.

ABERT'S TOWHEE (*Melospiza aberti*) – Maybe our best looks at this black-faced towhee came from Sweetwater Wetlands right in Tucson on our first day.

RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – A denizen of grassy, rocky slopes, this sparrow was seen in Hunter Canyon and then again in California Gulch.

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – This handsome towhee loves thick, mountainside shrubs. We heard, and then saw, many of these at spots like Onion Saddle, Hunter Canyon, Miller Canyon, and Carr Canyon. This species used to be called Rufous-sided Towhee back when it was lumped with Eastern Towhee.

Icteriidae (Yellow-breasted Chat)

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – Now in its own family, this handsome songster used to be lumped with warblers. We had several good looks which is always a treat because they can be skulky. We tallied these at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds, Patagonia Lake State Park, and Kino Springs.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S) (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – The road through the grasslands south of Sierra Vista, Three Canyons Road, had a few of these singing and flying around. This southwestern subspecies may be split in the coming years.

HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*) – Our best looks were along Cathedral Rock Road in Portal where a few perched up in the howling wind.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) – A couple of these western orioles attended the feeders at Bob Rodrigues' house. The bold orange eyebrow really stood out on the males.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*) – It may have taken a little while for these to cooperate but they eventually did! This black-and-yellow oriole is a great songster and is also a yucca specialist. We got looks in Portal, Ash Canyon, Hunter Canyon, and a few other spots.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – We saw these familiar blackbirds right off the bat at Sweetwater Wetlands on our first day.

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – This thick-necked and red-eyed cowbird was seen both in Portal and then again at Kino Springs where one was foraging on the golf course.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – A common species throughout and especially at the feeders in Portal.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – This long-tailed giant was tallied at Benson STP, Patagonia Lake State Park, and Amado WTP. This is the only grackle species normally found in Arizona.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – Only one of these somewhat bland warblers surfaced for us near E. Turkey Creek/Onion Saddle in the Chiricahuas.

LUCY'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis luciae*) – A fairly common bird in the mesquite habitats throughout the tour. Interestingly, this species of warbler nests in cavities.

VIRGINIA'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – This species, a gray warbler with a yellow rump and white eye-ring, was our main target at Carr Canyon. After a little work, one fell into place nicely during our short visit there.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Usually near bodies of water, this reed-loving species was seen a few times at spots like Sweetwater Wetlands, Patagonia Lake State Park, and the Rio Rico pond area.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – Our classic warbler through much of the country, this attractive and familiar species was probably our most commonly-encountered warbler throughout the tour.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – We encountered a couple of these nicely-plumaged birds between Onion Saddle and Barfoot Junction.

GRACE'S WARBLER (*Setophaga graciae*) – A pine specialist, this yellow-throated warbler was seen in both the Chiricahuas (near Onion Saddle) and Huachucas (Carr Canyon). At the latter location, we even got to watch as one dropped to the ground to gather nesting material!

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – The one we saw best was along the road in Cave Creek Canyon.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*) – Only one or two of these late migrants surfaced for us up around the Onion Saddle/Barfoot Junction area.

HERMIT WARBLER (*Setophaga occidentalis*) – This yellow-faced migrant species was tallied just once up by Onion Saddle.

RUFIOUS-CAPPED WARBLER (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – Our hike up Hunter Canyon resulted in one of the best encounters with this rarity that we could have hoped for. It was singing loudly upon our arrival! Shortly after, we found it in scopes and we all enjoyed this stunner at length. Fantastic!

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Fairly common throughout in a variety of habitats. This yellow species has that distinctive black cap.

RED-FACED WARBLER (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – A fantastic specialty, one of these beauts nearly landed on us near Pinery Canyon. Great views!

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – This charismatic warbler seems synonymous with the shady canyons of the Sky Islands. Thankfully, they were rather common up in the Chiricahuas at spots like Cave Creek and Pinery Canyon.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC TANAGER (*Piranga flava*) – Although a tanager by name, this species is actually more closely related to cardinals. This dull-red species was seen several times during our birding in the mountains.

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) – Completely red with a pale bill, this tanager was spotted at a variety of locations like Portal, Hunter Canyon, Patagonia Lake State Park, and California Gulch.

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – An abundant bird for us on this tour, this western species was tallied nearly every day. There was no shortage in St. David where we saw probably close to 100 amongst all the fruiting trees!

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – This deep red, gorgeous species was seen nicely at feeders and a variety of other habitats in the lowlands.

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – It was fun getting to compare this "desert cardinal" alongside the previous species at spots around Portal. We got to study them at length at Bob Rodrigues' feeders, for example.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – A common species for us through most of the tour. This is the western counterpart of Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*) – Although in the same genus as the following several buntings, this attractive species is much larger with a larger bill. For us, they were common and we saw more than a dozen of these at the San Pedro House alone.

LAZULI BUNTING (*Passerina amoena*) – Most of these had cleared out and migrated north before we arrived. Still, we managed to spot a female near the wash in Portal one evening.

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – A young pair of these looked to be on territory along Blue Haven Road in Patagonia during our visit there. They were sneaky though and didn't like coming out into the open.

VARIED BUNTING (*Passerina versicolor*) – The Patagonia Roadside Rest hosted a pair of these regional specialties. However, they spent most of their time chasing each other!

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Common and tallied daily. [I]

MAMMALS

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – This is the cottontail we saw at higher elevations in the Chiricahuas and Huachucas.

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – This species was common in the lower elevations including right in Tucson.

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*) – There were a couple bounding around near Stateline Road below Portal.

CLIFF CHIPMUNK (*Tamias dorsalis*) – An attractive little guy, these were seen around Portal on our third day.

HARRIS'S ANTELOPE SQUIRREL (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*) – Quite a number of these were scurrying around in Box Canyon on our final day of the tour.

SPOTTED GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus spilosoma*) – One of these cozied up with a fire hydrant near Willcox on our visit to the golf course.

ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – Fairly common on the ground, piles of rocks, and sometimes low fence posts.

ROUND-TAILED GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*) – These were seen at Sweetwater Wetlands on our first outing of the tour.

ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus arizonensis*) – This gray squirrel was seen on a couple of days in the mountains but only within the Huachucas.

BOTTAE'S POCKET GOPHER (*Thomomys bottae*) – One of these peeked out from inside a dirt mound which is about all you can expect to see from these fossorial critters.

GRAY FOX (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – Seen near Portal on our third day.

COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*) – One of these was spotted alongside a road as we left Cave Creek en route to Bisbee.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Abundant and tame around the research station we stayed at in the Chiricahuas.

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – This speedster was seen in the grasslands between Portal and Bisbee and then again later in the tour. Any day with pronghorn is a good day.

Herps

GOPHERSNAKE (*Pituophis catenifer*) – This big boy was working its way across a road in Patagonia.

SONORAN WHIPSNAKE (*Masticophis bilineatus*) – Just a couple of lucky folks in the front of the van spied one of these as it shot across the road on our second day.

AMERICAN BULLFROG (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) – We heard the low bellows of these at Patagonia Lake State Park. [I*]

CHIRICAHUA LEOPARD FROG (*Rana chiricahuensis*) – A rather rare and now threatened species, these were pointed out to us in Miller Canyon by Tom Beatty Jr.

POND SLIDER (*Trachemys scripta*) – This introduced species was seen a few times in various ponds. [I]

GREATER EARLESS LIZARD (*Cophosaurus texanus*) – One of these was seen at Sweetwater Wetlands on our first day as it scurried across the rocks.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 192 bird taxa and 14 mammal taxa