

# Trip Report — Arizona: Birding the Border I 2024

May 11-20, 2024 with Chris Benesh



One of the fantastic rock formations in Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahua Mountains. Photo by Chris Benesh

Southeast Arizona is a must see for any birder or naturalist living in the United States. Biological diversity and richness abound. And Spring is a marvelous time to witness this richness. Our tour made the most of it, visiting several of the sky islands in search of specialty birds and other wildlife. We started off in Tucson on a warm afternoon with a visit to the saguaro rich Sonoran Desert. Our main quest here was Gilded Flicker, a desert specialty. With a bit of searching, we connected with three. We then went on to Sweetwater Wetlands, where we spent a bit of time. After dinner, at dusk we visited the Santa Cruz River where we saw a good flight of Lesser Nighthawks.



Gray Hawk is one of the iconic raptor species of southeast Arizona. This one was photographed by Chris Benesh.

The following morning, we made a brief stop at a Harris's Hawk nest before continuing on to our first sky island, the Santa Catalinas. We stopped at Molino Basin to seek a pair of Gray Vireos that had been found there recently. Then we headed back down the mountain with a short visit to SHARP (Costa's Hummingbird) and then on to Willcox. We birded at Lake Cochise before continuing on the Chiricahua Mountains, a crown jewel among the sky islands. A pair of Golden Eagles on the drive in to Portal was a nice treat. That evening we participated in a short owl census.

The following day we headed up into the high country for such goodies as Mexican Chickadee, Red-faced Warbler, and Olive Warbler, going as far as Pinery Canyon and Barfoot Park. That afternoon we visited the South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon and had our first encounter with Elegant Trogon. We spent some time over the next couple of days visiting feeders scattered around Portal and visiting State Line Road. We also shot up to the George Walker House soon after hearing word of a White-eared Hummingbird visiting feeders there. Ultimately, it was time to leave the lovely Chiricahuas and head to Sierra Vista and our next sky island, the Huachuca Mountains.



One of the pair of Montezuma Quail that appeared for us along the Paradise Road in the Chiricahuas.  
Photo by Chris Benesh.

Our first afternoon in the Huachucas was spent at the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary where we had good looks at a male Lucifer Hummingbird late in the afternoon. The next morning we visited Ramsey Canyon, which was great with nesting Berylline Hummingbird, Northern Pygmy-Owl, noisy Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, and nesting Plumbeous Vireo. That evening we went owling for Common Poorwill. The following day, we visited Miller Canyon, including Beatty's feeders and the trail up into the high country. After lunch, we left the Huachucas for our next destination, Patagonia.



The wonderful male Elegant Trogon from the South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon. Photo by Chris Benesh.

Our first stop in Patagonia was the Paton Center for Hummingbirds. There were hummers and so much more. Our short visit yielded 30 species. Among the highlights was a nesting Costa's Hummingbird, the Violet-crowned Hummingbird, and Yellow-breasted Chats. We then headed on to the hotel in Nogales to check in before some late afternoon birding along the Santa Cruz River. Here we had a great scope look at Green Kingfisher as well as our first Tropical Kingbirds and a nice Gray Hawk.

The next day we started off by visiting Montosa Canyon on the west side of the Santa Ritas. This spot has been fairly reliable for Five-striped Sparrow in recent years. As of the time of our tour, this was particularly true. We did manage to scope one there and also had a nice Varied Bunting and Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet among the highlights. A few migrants included Townsend's and Wilson's warblers. We then backtracked back to Patagonia to do some more birding in that area. We finally connected with Mississippi Kite there. After dinner we did a short owling excursion along the Rudy Road where we tracked down Western Screech-Owl and Elf Owl. Our final day of the tour was spent birding a few sites along the Santa Cruz River drainage and into Madera Canyon. In Madera we saw another Berylline Hummingbird. In Green Valley we had better views of Costa's Hummingbird. We had a little time to walk

some of the Anza Trail in search of Rose-throated Becards, but the best we could do was a recent nest. They did return later in the season.



The male White-eared Hummingbird from the George Walker House in Paradise. Photo by Chris Benesh.

This trip was a real success because of our wonderfully cohesive and enthusiastic group. I want to thank each of you for making this trip so much fun. I look forward to birding with each of you on future trips. Until then, good birding!

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/267161>

Cheers, Chris Benesh

# Field Guides Birding Tours -- ARIZONA BIRDING THE BORDERS I, 2024 (with Chris Benesh)



11 - 20 May 2024 (10 days) Link-only



United States

Arizona | New Mexico | Subregions

Chris Benesh, fgi Triplists



For a narrative summary of this tour, including a Field Guides photo gallery and additional media for this trip...

DATA FOR: Group (all people) ▾

191

Species Observed

89

Checklists

6

Species with Photos

6

Species with Audio

## Species Observed

























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17	<b>Black-bellied Whistling-Duck</b> <i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>	▶  2
4	<b>Cinnamon Teal</b> <i>Spatula cyanoptera</i>	▶  1
1	<b>American Wigeon</b> <i>Mareca americana</i>	▶  1
9	<b>Mexican Duck</b> <i>Anas diazi</i>	▶  5
3	<b>Green-winged Teal</b> <i>Anas crecca</i>	▶  1
15	<b>Ruddy Duck</b> <i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	▶  2
2	<b>Scaled Quail</b> <i>Callipepla squamata</i>	▶  1
113	<b>Gambel's Quail</b> <i>Callipepla gambelii</i>	▶  20
2	<b>Montezuma Quail</b> <i>Cyrtonyx montezumae</i>	▶  1  1
9	<b>Wild Turkey</b> <i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	▶  4
4	<b>Eared Grebe</b> <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	▶  1
5	<b>Rock Pigeon</b> <i>Columba livia</i> *	▶  2
17	<b>Band-tailed Pigeon</b> <i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>	▶  3
26	<b>Eurasian Collared-Dove</b> <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	▶  6
26	<b>Inca Dove</b> <i>Columbina inca</i>	▶  7
4	<b>Common Ground Dove</b> <i>Columbina passerina</i>	▶  2
167	<b>White-winged Dove</b> <i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	▶  26
95	<b>Mourning Dove</b> <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	▶  25
9	<b>Greater Roadrunner</b> <i>Geococcyx californianus</i>	▶  8
16	<b>Lesser Nighthawk</b> <i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i>	▶  1


























- 3 **Common Poorwill** *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 4 **Mexican Whip-poor-will** *Antrostomus arizonae* ▶ 🗑️ 3
- 8 **White-throated Swift** *Aeronautes saxatalis* ▶ 🗑️ 3
- 10 **Rivoli's Hummingbird** *Eugenes fulgens* ▶ 🗑️ 5
- 3 **Blue-throated Mountain-gem** *Lampornis clemenciae* ▶ 🗑️ 2
- 1 **Lucifer Hummingbird** *Calothorax lucifer* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 13 **Black-chinned Hummingbird** *Archilochus alexandri* ▶ 🗑️ 7
- 11 **Anna's Hummingbird** *Calypte anna* ▶ 🗑️ 4
- 4 **Costa's Hummingbird** *Calypte costae* ▶ 🗑️ 3
- 9 **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** *Selasphorus platycercus* ▶ 🗑️ 5
- 38 **Broad-billed Hummingbird** *Cynanthus latirostris* ▶ 🗑️ 20
- 1 **White-eared Hummingbird** *Basilinna leucotis* ▶ 🗑️ 1 🗑️ 1
- 2 **Violet-crowned Hummingbird** *Ramosomyia violiceps* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 2 **Berylline Hummingbird** *Saucerottia beryllina* ▶ 🗑️ 2
- 17 **American Coot** *Fulica americana* ▶ 🗑️ 4
- 9 **Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 34 **American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 6 **Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus* ▶ 🗑️ 2
- 9 **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 30 **Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 5 **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius* ▶ 🗑️ 3
- 1 **Willet** *Tringa semipalmata* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 1 **Western Sandpiper** *Calidris mauri* ▶ 🗑️ 1




























- 2 **Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 6 **Neotropic Cormorant** *Nannopterum brasilianum* ▶ 🗑️ 2
- 1 **Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 1 **Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 1 **Great Egret** *Ardea alba* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 2 **Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 25 **White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis chihi* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 4 **Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus* ▶ 🗑️ 3
- 51 **Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura* ▶ 🗑️ 19
- 2 **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* ▶ 🖼️ 1 🗑️ 1
- 2 **Mississippi Kite** *Ictinia mississippiensis* ▶ 🖼️ 1 🗑️ 1
- 6 **Cooper's Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii* ▶ 🗑️ 5
- 2 **American Goshawk** *Accipiter atricapillus* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 6 **Harris's Hawk** *Parabuteo unicinctus* ▶ 🗑️ 3
- 8 **Gray Hawk** *Buteo plagiatus* ▶ 🗑️ 6
- 4 **Swainson's Hawk** *Buteo swainsoni* ▶ 🗑️ 3
- 4 **Zone-tailed Hawk** *Buteo albonotatus* ▶ 🗑️ 4
- 9 **Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis* ▶ 🗑️ 9
- 3 **Whiskered Screech-Owl** *Megascops trichopsis* ▶ 🗑️ 3
- 2 **Western Screech-Owl** *Megascops kennicottii* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 2 **Northern Pygmy-Owl** *Glaucidium gnoma* ▶ 🗑️ 2
- 5 **Elf Owl** *Micrathene whitneyi* ▶ 🗑️ 4
- 1 **Northern Saw-whet Owl** *Aegolius acadicus* ▶ 🗑️ 1

3	<b>Elegant Trogon</b> <i>Trogon elegans</i>	▶  1  3
1	<b>Green Kingfisher</b> <i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	▶  1
49	<b>Acorn Woodpecker</b> <i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	▶  15
43	<b>Gila Woodpecker</b> <i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>	▶  12
14	<b>Ladder-backed Woodpecker</b> <i>Dryobates scalaris</i>	▶  9
1	<b>Hairy Woodpecker</b> <i>Dryobates villosus</i>	▶  1
3	<b>Arizona Woodpecker</b> <i>Dryobates arizonae</i>	▶  2
4	<b>Northern Flicker</b> <i>Colaptes auratus</i>	▶  4
3	<b>Gilded Flicker</b> <i>Colaptes chrysoides</i>	▶  2
1	<b>American Kestrel</b> <i>Falco sparverius</i>	▶  1
4	<b>Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet</b> <i>Camptostoma imberbe</i>	▶  2
1	<b>Greater Pewee</b> <i>Contopus pertinax</i>	▶  1
13	<b>Western Wood-Pewee</b> <i>Contopus sordidulus</i>	▶  10
1	<b>Hammond's Flycatcher</b> <i>Empidonax hammondii</i>	▶  1
2	<b>Gray Flycatcher</b> <i>Empidonax wrightii</i>	▶  2
5	<b>Western Flycatcher</b> <i>Empidonax difficilis</i>	▶  5
4	<b>Buff-breasted Flycatcher</b> <i>Empidonax fulvifrons</i>	▶  3
3	<b>Black Phoebe</b> <i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	▶  3
3	<b>Say's Phoebe</b> <i>Sayornis saya</i>	▶  3
16	<b>Vermilion Flycatcher</b> <i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	▶  7
16	<b>Dusky-capped Flycatcher</b> <i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>	▶  7
14	<b>Ash-throated Flycatcher</b> <i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	▶  11
31	<b>Brown-crested Flycatcher</b> <i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>	▶  17

- 5 **Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher** *Myiodynastes luteiventris* ▶  2
- 3 **Tropical Kingbird** *Tyrannus melancholicus* ▶  2
- 16 **Cassin's Kingbird** *Tyrannus vociferans* ▶  11
- 1 **Thick-billed Kingbird** *Tyrannus crassirostris* ▶  1  1
- 10 **Western Kingbird** *Tyrannus verticalis* ▶  6
- 17 **Bell's Vireo** *Vireo bellii* ▶  8
- 2 **Gray Vireo** *Vireo vicinior* ▶  1  1
- 12 **Hutton's Vireo** *Vireo huttoni* ▶  7
- 1 **Cassin's Vireo** *Vireo cassinii* ▶  1
- 19 **Plumbeous Vireo** *Vireo plumbeus* ▶  10
- 8 **Warbling Vireo** *Vireo gilvus* ▶  5
- 3 **Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus* ▶  3
- 6 **Steller's Jay** *Cyanocitta stelleri* ▶  3
- 3 **Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay** *Aphelocoma woodhouseii* ▶  3
- 34 **Mexican Jay** *Aphelocoma wollweberi* ▶  14
- 7 **Chihuahuan Raven** *Corvus cryptoleucus* ▶  3
- 23 **Common Raven** *Corvus corax* ▶  14
- 8 **Mexican Chickadee** *Poecile sclateri* ▶  3
- 26 **Bridled Titmouse** *Baeolophus wollweberi* ▶  8
- 1 **Juniper Titmouse** *Baeolophus ridgwayi* ▶  1
- 18 **Verdin** *Auriparus flaviceps* ▶  11
- 4 **Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris* ▶  2
- 30 **Violet-green Swallow** *Tachycineta thalassina* ▶  5

- 2 **Purple Martin** *Progne subis* ▶  1
- 4 **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* ▶  2
- 11 **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* ▶  7
- 35 **Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* ▶  2
- 3 **Bushtit** *Psaltriparus minimus* ▶  3
- 1 **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Corthylio calendula* ▶  1
- 19 **White-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta carolinensis* ▶  12
- 2 **Pygmy Nuthatch** *Sitta pygmaea* ▶  1
- 1 **Red-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta canadensis* ▶  1
- 4 **Brown Creeper** *Certhia americana* ▶   1  2
- 4 **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea* ▶  2
- 1 **Black-tailed Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila melanura* ▶  1
- 1 **Rock Wren** *Salpinctes obsoletus* ▶  1
- 2 **Canyon Wren** *Catherpes mexicanus* ▶  2
- 5 **House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon* ▶  3
- 15 **Bewick's Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii* ▶  9
- 13 **Cactus Wren** *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* ▶  6
- 3 **European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* \* ▶  3
- 30 **Curve-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma curvirostre* ▶  16
- 4 **Bendire's Thrasher** *Toxostoma bendirei* ▶  3
- 2 **Crissal Thrasher** *Toxostoma crissale* ▶  2
- 12 **Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos* ▶  8
- 3 **Western Bluebird** *Sialia mexicana* ▶  1

3	<b>Hermit Thrush</b> <i>Catharus guttatus</i>	▶  2
26	<b>American Robin</b> <i>Turdus migratorius</i>	▶  9
2	<b>Cedar Waxwing</b> <i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	▶  1
30	<b>Phainopepla</b> <i>Phainopepla nitens</i>	▶  9
2	<b>Olive Warbler</b> <i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>	▶  1
54	<b>House Sparrow</b> <i>Passer domesticus</i> *	▶  9
82	<b>House Finch</b> <i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	▶  21
18	<b>Red Crossbill</b> <i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	▶  1  2
39	<b>Pine Siskin</b> <i>Spinus pinus</i>	▶  6
96	<b>Lesser Goldfinch</b> <i>Spinus psaltria</i>	▶  18
5	<b>Rufous-winged Sparrow</b> <i>Peucaea carpalis</i>	▶  1  3
1	<b>Botteri's Sparrow</b> <i>Peucaea botterii</i>	▶  1
2	<b>Brewer's Sparrow</b> <i>Spizella breweri</i>	▶  1
1	<b>Five-striped Sparrow</b> <i>Amphispizopsis quinquestriata</i>	▶  1
23	<b>Black-throated Sparrow</b> <i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>	▶  12
24	<b>Lark Sparrow</b> <i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	▶  6
29	<b>Yellow-eyed Junco</b> <i>Junco phaeonotus</i>	▶  7
13	<b>White-crowned Sparrow</b> <i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	▶  7
16	<b>Song Sparrow</b> <i>Melospiza melodia</i>	▶  6
18	<b>Canyon Towhee</b> <i>Melozone fusca</i>	▶  13
11	<b>Abert's Towhee</b> <i>Melozone aberti</i>	▶  7
2	<b>Green-tailed Towhee</b> <i>Pipilo chlorurus</i>	▶  2
10	<b>Spotted Towhee</b> <i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	▶  4

- 8 **Yellow-breasted Chat** *Icteria virens* ▶ 📄 5
- 3 **Yellow-headed Blackbird** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus* ▶ 📄 1
- 3 **Chihuahuan Meadowlark** *Sturnella liliana* ▶ 📄 2
- 11 **Hooded Oriole** *Icterus cucullatus* ▶ 📄 9
- 19 **Bullock's Oriole** *Icterus bullockii* ▶ 📄 12
- 18 **Scott's Oriole** *Icterus parisorum* ▶ 📄 12
- 18 **Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus* ▶ 📄 7
- 8 **Bronzed Cowbird** *Molothrus aeneus* ▶ 📄 6
- 54 **Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater* ▶ 📄 17
- 34 **Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus* ▶ 📄 8
- 1 **Orange-crowned Warbler** *Leiothlypis celata* ▶ 📄 1
- 21 **Lucy's Warbler** *Leiothlypis luciae* ▶ 📄 12
- 3 **Virginia's Warbler** *Leiothlypis virginiae* ▶ 📄 1 📄 2
- 4 **Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas* ▶ 📄 2
- 1 **Northern Parula** *Setophaga americana* ▶ 📄 1 📄 1
- 28 **Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga petechia* ▶ 📄 14
- 7 **Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata* ▶ 📄 2
- 7 **Grace's Warbler** *Setophaga graciae* ▶ 📄 2
- 10 **Black-throated Gray Warbler** *Setophaga nigrescens* ▶ 📄 5
- 2 **Townsend's Warbler** *Setophaga townsendi* ▶ 📄 2
- 5 **Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla* ▶ 📄 5
- 5 **Red-faced Warbler** *Cardellina rubrifrons* ▶ 📄 2
- 15 **Painted Redstart** *Myioborus pictus* ▶ 📄 6

- 12 **Hepatic Tanager** *Piranga flava* ▶ 📄 9
- 17 **Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra* ▶ 📄 11
- 38 **Western Tanager** *Piranga ludoviciana* ▶ 📄 15
- 26 **Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis* ▶ 📄 16
- 14 **Pyrrhuloxia** *Cardinalis sinuatus* ▶ 📄 11
- 2 **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** *Pheucticus ludovicianus* ▶ 📄 1
- 69 **Black-headed Grosbeak** *Pheucticus melanocephalus* ▶ 📄 22
- 5 **Blue Grosbeak** *Passerina caerulea* ▶ 📄 4
- 5 **Lazuli Bunting** *Passerina amoena* ▶ 📄 5
- 2 **Varied Bunting** *Passerina versicolor* ▶ 📄 2

#### EXOTIC: ESCAPEE

- 12 **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* 🌟 ▶ 📄 3

#### HYBRIDS

- 1 Mallard x Mexican Duck (hybrid) *Anas platyrhynchos x diazi* ▶ 📄 1

#### ADDITIONAL TAXA

- 1 Accipiter sp. *Accipiter sp.* ▶ 📄 1
- 1 hawk sp. *Accipitridae sp. (hawk sp.)* ▶ 📄 1
- 2 raven sp. *Corvus sp. (raven sp.)* ▶ 📄 1

## **Other critters seen on the tour:**

Gray Four-eyed Opossum (*Philander opossum*)  
Common Opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*)  
Proboscis Bat (*Rhynchonycteris naso*)  
Greater Bulldog Bat (*Noctilio leporinus*)  
Yucatan Black Howler Monkey (*Alouatta pigra*)  
Central American Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*)  
Yucatan Squirrel (*Sciurus yucatanensis*)  
Deppe's Squirrel (*Sciurus deppei*)  
Mexican Hairy Dwarf Porcupine (*Coendou mexicanus*)  
Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*)  
White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*)

Giant Toad (*Rhinella horribilis*)  
Central American Gulf Coast Toad (*Incilius valliceps*)  
Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*)  
Black Spiny-tailed Iguana (*Ctenosaura similis*)  
Brown (Striped) Basilisk (*Basiliscus vittatus*)  
Asian House Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*)  
Morelet's Crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*)  
Central American River Turtle (*Dermatemys mawii*)  
Central American Boa (*Boa imperator*)

Slender Brown Scorpion (*Centruroides gracilis*)