



Field Guides Tour Report

Arizona Nightbirds & More II 2016

May 5, 2016 to May 9, 2016

Tom Johnson

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



A perfectly mottled Common Poorwill was the final nocturnal bird of our short tour, and it provided an incredibly good view for everyone in the group. Check out the long rictal bristles along the side of the bill and mouth! Photo by guide Tom Johnson.

Though the wind seemed like it might conspire against us, we had fantastic luck with nightbirds on this short loop through Southeastern Arizona, getting to see 9 species of owls and 4 species of nightjars in just four days! In addition to the nightbirds, we tracked down a hearty chunk of Southeastern Arizona's diurnal specialty birds, including some nice rarities.

The group met in Tucson on the afternoon of our first day, and we headed south to California Gulch to spend the evening along the border with Mexico. The strong wind that had kicked up during the day tapered off just before dusk, and we had a lovely flurry of activity that included Five-striped Sparrow and Black-capped Gnatcatchers. As darkness fell, we began to hear the incredible song of a male Buff-collared Nightjar, and we had him in the spotlight in short order for a solid study. On our drive out of the gulch, we stopped and saw a close Western Screech-Owl and several Antelope Jackrabbits. Then, at a border patrol checkpoint on the way back to Tucson, we pulled over and got out to admire a swarm of Lesser Nighthawks feeding on insects over the bright checkpoint floodlights.

We kicked off Day 2 with a pair of Burrowing Owls at a nest site near the Tucson airport. Then we headed south to the Huachucas, where we hiked up Miller Canyon to search for "Mexican" Spotted Owls. In a beautiful patch of mixed forest in Upper Miller Canyon, we found an adult owl perched out in the open, snoozing. On the way down, we had more time to enjoy Greater Pewees, Arizona Woodpeckers, and a decent show at the Beatty's hummingbird feeders. We stopped at a nice Italian lunch spot in Hereford and peered up at the nesting "Southwestern" Cliff Swallows above the front door. Next it was a long, dusty drive to the east. A Great Horned Owl peered at us from a hay shed, and we also enjoyed a family of Bendire's Thrashers during our drive in to the Chiricahuas at Portal, one of the prettiest towns in America. In the evening, after a filling meal at the Portal Peak Lodge, we set out and found an Elf Owl poking its head out of a sycamore along the main street through town. After we drove around and tried a few spots without any luck in the breezy canyons, a Whiskered Screech-Owl flew across through our headlights and stopped in a tree just off the side of the road. What luck! We got out and enjoyed this bird in my spotlight before heading back to town for some rest.

The next morning, we ate breakfast outside the Portal Peak Lodge and took a walk through town, picking up notable sightings including a Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, a pair of Montezuma Quail, and more than 100 Cedar Waxwings. A jaunt out on the State Line Road produced good views of Crissal Thrasher (and another Bendire's, too!) before we headed up into the conifer forests of the Chiricahua highlands. After a few stops turned up flocks of Mexican Chickadees and other songbirds, my whistling produced a double-tooting response from a "Mountain" Northern Pygmy-Owl. The owl flew in above us, and we got to see some agitated Pygmy Nuthatches, Mexican Chickadees, and warblers buzzing around the tiny owl as we watched in the scope. Nice experiences with Red-faced Warbler, Scott's Oriole, and Black-chinned Sparrow rounded out our excellent morning, and we fit in an afternoon siesta before our nightbirding session. John Coons was leading another Field Guides group in the Chiricahuas, and we had planned to meet up to try for Flammulated Owl and Mexican Whip-poor-will at a good spot along Cave Creek. Together, the two groups watched a fabulous Mexican Whip-poor-will (and another great Whiskered Screech-Owl) just after dusk, but the Flammulated Owl declined to show up, perhaps due to the noisy picnic going on along the creek! However, we tried farther up in the mountains, and at my next spot, we exited the vehicle to the deep, hollow "hoo-doo... Boop!" of a Flammulated Owl! After some struggle, we wrangled some views of this male by climbing up the slope above the road, but the bird didn't stick around for too long before moving its "hoo-doo... Boop!" show to another dense tree, well out of sight from us.

We arose early on our final day to head out into the desert east of Portal to look for Barn Owls. Fortunately, within just a few minutes of searching, we had a pair of these fine, monkey-faced owls in the spotlight, and were able to hang out and enjoy the calm, cool dawn in the grasslands in the company of a Great Horned Owl, Lark Buntings, Botteri's Sparrows, and Scaled Quail before heading back to Portal for breakfast. Band-tailed Pigeons, Elegant Trogons, and two Red-naped Sapsuckers awaited our hiking exploration of the South Fork of Cave Creek before we headed up and over the Chiricahuas and down to Willcox. The golf course ponds and a reclamation lake at Willcox provided a bounty of new waterbirds and shorebirds for us, including Cinnamon Teal, White-faced Ibis, Wilson's and Red-necked phalaropes, Baird's Sandpiper, and Franklin's Gull. We had time to make a swing down along the San Pedro River at St. David on the way back to Tucson, and this produced a pair of soaring adult Mississippi Kites after just a short wait near a traditional nesting area. Following an afternoon break at our hotel in Tucson, we ventured into Florida Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains for a roast chicken and salmon salad dinner, accompanied by our final nightbird, Common Poorwill! In dramatic fashion, a poorwill sat in the open on the road in front of us, allowing close approach and a wonderful study of this tiny nightjar's cryptic plumage. What a way to end the trip!

I was a bit nervous about the weather at the outset of this tour, but we ended up finding the full suite of nightbirds (including a nice bonus in Buff-collared Nightjar) and sharing a lot of great experiences in the desert, canyons, and highlands of Southeastern Arizona. A good portion of our success on this trip can be attributed to our fun and cooperative group dynamic -- I really appreciated that. Thanks for joining me on this short but oh-so-sweet adventure, and I hope to see you out in the field again soon!

Good birding,

-- Tom

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)

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – The only individuals for the trip were at Willcox.

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – These dark Mallards were in the golf course ponds at Willcox. We also saw some males that were apparently intergrades with green-headed "Northern" Mallards.

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*) – Three were in the golf course ponds at Willcox.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – 12 were with the teal at Willcox.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – We saw 23 of these stiff-tailed ducks sleeping on the main lake at Willcox.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – On the way back from our Barn Owl expedition, we found a few of these small, gray quail in desert grasslands along the Portal Road. One sat up on a fencepost and we were able to admire it at length.

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*) – Common in the desert, including around Portal.

MONTEZUMA QUAIL (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – A pair walked and dust-bathed in the streambed in Portal, though they stayed out of sight for much of the time. At times, a ladder would have been useful to help us see more than their nicely patterned heads!

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – One was at Barfoot Junction, and another gobbled at dusk while we were trying to hear Mexican Whip-poor-wills on the road to Herb Martyr.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – Three were on Lake Cochise in Willcox with the Ruddy Ducks.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – One foraged along the shores of Lake Cochise in Willcox.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – Fifteen of these dark ibis were at Willcox.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Common; seen each day.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – On our final day, we had time on our drive back to Tucson so we stopped in St. David to search a traditional kite nesting area. Two adults were soaring with ravens over the San Pedro River corridor.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) – One was a surprise as it soared over at California Gulch. Perhaps a northbound migrant?

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – This small Accipiter flew over quickly at Florida Canyon on our final evening. The species is rare as a breeder in SE Arizona, so this was probably a late migrant.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – This is one of the most common hawks in the desert, and we saw several on our tour, including in Portal.

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – We saw both of our Gray Hawks on the final day of the tour. One flew by while we were watching the kites in St. David. Another was perched up calling near the parking lot at Florida Canyon.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – Common and widespread in the lowlands.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – One coursed along the upper part of California Gulch, showing us the striped tail and hawk-like proportions that helped us to distinguish it from a Turkey Vulture at distance.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Common; seen every day.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – 20 paddled in the golf course ponds at Willcox.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Only one of these elegant shorebirds was in with the avocets at Willcox.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – 58 were at Lake Cochise in Willcox.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – Two of these long distance migrants were at Willcox.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – 11 at Willcox.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – 18 were bobbing along the edge of Lake Cochise at Willcox.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*Calidris bairdii*) – One was mixed in with Western Sandpipers at Willcox.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – We saw 17 of these droop-billed, Arctic-breeding shorebirds at Willcox.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – One was at Willcox with other shorebirds.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – Seven of these spinners were at Willcox.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – One at Lake Cochise in Willcox was set apart from the more common Wilson's Phalarope by its smaller, more compact size and shorter bill (in addition to plumage differences). This species is scarce during migration in the region.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) – A scruffy immature bird was flying around Lake Cochise at Willcox.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Common in towns and cities. [I]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – We saw a few of these large, long-tailed forest pigeons up high in the conifers of the Chiricahuas.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Very common around towns and agricultural areas. [I]

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – These small, scaly, long-tailed doves are common in and around Portal.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Abundant.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Very common.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – This iconic cuckoo is quite common in desert and canyon habitats; seen every day of the trip.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*) – On our final morning in the Chiricahuas, we headed out along the State Line Road and dipped a toe into New Mexico where we found a pair of Barn Owls and enjoyed excellent views in the spotlight beam.

Strigidae (Owls)

FLAMMULATED OWL (*Psiloscopus flammeolus*) – This was the night bird that put up the biggest struggle on our trip. On our final night in the Chiricahuas, we found one singing near a creek drainage. Though we could hear it singing fairly loudly from the road, we couldn't actually see the bird. Some of us climbed up the hillside and managed to get the spotlight on the bird for a view after quite a bit of searching.

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops kennicottii*) – We stopped in some mesquites on the drive out from California Gulch and whistled up one of these common screech-owls. Ours flew in and sang back from just a few feet above the ground. Check out audio recording of this individual - it's embedded in the trip list down in the "Woodpeckers" section.

WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops trichopsis*) – Two showed off very nicely in the Chiricahuas. The first flew in front of our van as we were driving down from East Turkey Creek - we stopped and I was able to find it sitting off the side of the road with the spotlight. The second began singing spontaneously during our Mexican Whip-poor-will search near the Southwestern Research Station.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – One perched in a hay shed near Rodeo, New Mexico; it stared at us fiercely when we stopped to admire it. Others hooted (adults) and screeched (youngsters) at us from the streamside forests in Portal.

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – We found two of these small owls up high in the Chiricahuas. The first one responded strongly to whistling, and the commotion ended up attracting a mobbing flock of Mexican Chickadees, and Pygmy Nuthatches. These were of the "Mountain" subspecies of Northern Pygmy-Owl, and both sang a doubled "toot" call typical of this taxon.

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – This tiny owl was poking its head out of a tree cavity in "downtown" Portal just before dusk. We had a nice scope look at this smallest of the North American owls.

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cucularia*) – On our second swing past a known burrow near the airport in Tucson, two of these handsome, long-legged owls were standing in the open.

SPOTTED OWL (*Strix occidentalis*) – Our hike up the delightfully shaded Miller Canyon led us to a roosting adult "Mexican" Spotted Owl that posed perfectly in the open for us at close range.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – On the drive back to Tucson from California Gulch on our first evening, we arrived at a Border Patrol checkpoint amidst a feeding frenzy of Lesser Nighthawks. I asked a friendly border patrol officer if we could get out to watch the birds and he said "Sure!" We stood along the roadside and pondered this odd intersection of birds and border geopolitics as the nighthawks swarmed the checkpoint's floodlights.

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – This was our final new bird of the trip. We took a picnic dinner to Florida Canyon specifically to look for this species, and we were just wrapping up our day's checklist when a few Poorwills started calling from the surrounding hillsides. A short while later, one came in to the parking lot and sat on the ground just a few meters away while we admired its subtly patterned camouflage. The tour finished with a very nice flourish!

BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR (*Antrastomus ridgwayi*) – We got off to a fast start with this species down near the Mexican border at California Gulch. At dusk, a male Buff-collared Nightjar began singing almost right in front of us, and after a minor readjustment of our positioning, we had the bird in the spotlight for some close views as it perched in the thornscrub. Click on the media player embedded in the trip list (down near the "Wrens" section) to hear a recording I made of this nightjar's amazing song.

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrastomus arizonae arizonae*) – A responsive male flew over us a few times near the Southwestern Research Station above Portal. We were collaborating with John Coons and his tour group for this bird, and everyone was able to see this male's big white tail flashes as he flew across the clearing.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Our best views were of birds flying and screaming overhead in Miller Canyon during our Spotted Owl hike.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*) – Fairly common in mountain canyons - our best views were certainly at the feeders in Miller Canyon.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – Just a few of these huge hummingbirds were along Cave Creek in Portal. One sat on a fence below eye level and we got to see its large white tail spots.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*) – Common and widespread.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*) – A stop at Desert Meadows Park in Green Valley helped us find several of these rosy-helmeted urban hummingbirds attending feeders.

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – Common in montane forest. We heard the zinging sound of males' primary feathers frequently as they zoomed overhead.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – Quite a few fed at close range at the feeders at Beatty's Ranch in Miller Canyon. We also saw this colorful hummer several times along Cave Creek near Portal.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

ELEGANT TROGON (*Trogon elegans*) – A male/ female pair in South Fork was rather squirrely during our hikes there, but we were able to see them briefly a few times.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Common in the oak zone in mountain canyons. We even saw a huge acorn granary tree in the middle of Portal.

GILA WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – Common in the desert, especially west of the Chiricahuas.

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) – Two were along South Fork near the bridge by the cabins. These lingering winterers were exploiting a fruit tree here and one stuck around for some great, close views.

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – We heard a few of these small, desert woodpeckers before we caught up to one visually at Willcox.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*) – Fairly common in forests up high in the Chiricahuas.

ARIZONA WOODPECKER (*Picoides arizonae*) – These local oak specialists showed off very nicely in Miller and Cave Creek Canyons. We observed a pair along the Miller Canyon trail at length.

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – Common in montane forest - we found them in Miller Canyon and at several places in the Chiricahuas.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – Common in the lowlands.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – One sang its loud song along the street in downtown Portal, where the species is fairly rare.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – Nice views of these stocky, dark-vested flycatchers in Miller Canyon and Portal.

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*) – Three were in Miller Canyon; also, singles at Barfoot Junction and Florida Canyon.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*) – Common in montane forest.

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondii*) – These migrant Empids were fairly common throughout our tour route, with at least 10 in Miller Canyon alone. Great views!

GRAY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax wrightii*) – One showed briefly, dipping its tail, in the juniper scrub in the Chiricahuas above the town of Paradise.

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – One showed at eye level along the road through Pinery Canyon.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – This contrasty tail-dipper was seen several times along Cave Creek.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – Two were along the edge of the golf course at Willcox.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – These stubby, bright tyrants gleaned insects from low perches at California Gulch, Willcox, and Desert Meadows Park in Green Valley.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – We found these slim Myiarchus in mixed forest in Miller Canyon and Cave Creek Canyon in the Chiricahuas.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – Just a few of these pale flycatchers appeared for us in desert habitats near California Gulch and below Florida Canyon.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – These rambunctious, large-billed insectivores were along the main street through Portal.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – This was the most common kingbird of the tour - seen and heard frequently in canyons as well as out in the lowlands.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – We found them in lower and drier habitats than Cassin's Kingbirds, but there were a few times when we had opportunities to compare the two species. Particularly memorable was the pre-roosting group perched up in California Gulch just before it got fully dark.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – One was along the edge of the ponds at Willcox.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*) – Our first evening, we heard one in California Gulch. Later, we saw one well in Portal.

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – Quite common in Miller Canyon and in the forests of the Chiricahuas. This is the breeding "Solitary Vireo" of the region.

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – We found these kinglet-esque vireos nicely in both Miller and Cave Creek canyons.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) – Migrants were in Miller Canyon and Portal.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – These large, crested jays were in Miller Canyon and also up high in the Chiricahuas.

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – Quite common in canyon forests. These long-tailed jays were loud and conspicuous at many canyon sites along our route, especially in Miller Canyon on this trip.

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – A few of these small, crow-like ravens were in grasslands east of the Chiricahuas. We saw many more unidentified ravens in the lowlands as well - these guys are tough!

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – The ravens we saw in the mountains were all Commons; in lower areas, this species mixes with Chihuahuan Ravens, and identification can be fraught with peril!

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – A few were walking in the Arivaca Road on our first afternoon, and we had great looks from inside the van. On the final day, several were in the grasslands around Lake Cochise at Willcox as well.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – These pale-faced swallows with white "saddlebags" were common in the mountains.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Roughly 20 were circling over the ponds and lake at Willcox with other swallows.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Seen widely; the largest flock included 30 mixed with other swallows at Willcox.

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – Seen just a few times - at least one with a dark forehead ("Southwestern" Cliff Swallow) was tending a nest above the front door to our lunch stop in Hereford. Six were also flying around Lake Cochise in Willcox with other swallows.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – We had an easy time finding these montane specialties in the vicinity of Barfoot Junction in the Chiricahuas. Several songbird flocks included family groups of these chickadees, and a few even mobbed a Northern Pygmy-Owl.

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – Fairly common in canyons. One perched out in the open for us at close range in the burn in Pinery Canyon.

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – Common in desert habitats.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (*Psaltriparus minimus*) – A few noisy flocks bounced by us in Miller Canyon and up high in the Chiricahuas.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – Common in Miller Canyon and especially in the Chiricahuas.

PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*) – A small party of these tiny nuthatches arrived to mob a Northern Pygmy-Owl that came in to whistling near Barfoot Junction.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (ALBESCENS/ALTICOLA) (*Certhia americana albescens*) – These cryptic songbirds were climbing trees in mixed forest near Barfoot Junction and also in Miller Canyon.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – One was exploring the rocks of the streambed at Beatty's Ranch in Miller Canyon. We heard the repetitive songs of others at a few places in the Chiricahuas, too.

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – Common in canyon country. The song is certainly one of the daytime highlights of birding in the southwest.

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Common in Miller Canyon and in the Chiricahuas.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – Common in Miller Canyon and in the Portal area.

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – A few of these huge, noisy wrens climbed around low vegetation near the lodge in Portal.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – Common in Cave Creek Canyon.

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*) – One showed well at our first stop near the top of California Gulch. We were able to compare the dark undertail of this species to the largely white, graduated undertail pattern of Black-capped Gnatcatcher.

BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila nigriceps*) – One showed poorly at the top of California Gulch, but it was overshadowed by great looks at two calling birds that put on a quick but excellent show near our picnic site shortly thereafter. This Mexican species has become established at a number of locations in southeastern Arizona recently.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – We found a few near Barfoot Junction and South Fork in the Chiricahuas.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – A small group of these colorful thrushes appeared in a mixed flock in pine forest at Barfoot Junction.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH (*Catharus ustulatus*) – One let us study its buffy spectacles and olive tones just above the cabins along the South Fork of Cave Creek.

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – Common in forest in the Chiricahuas. We were able to study a few individuals at close range in South Fork.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*) – Fairly common in the Chiricahuas.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – Common in desert habitats. The birds east of the Chiricahuas are allied with the eastern subspecies group, while those found west of the Sulphur Springs Valley (including the Tucson area) are of the western subspecies group.

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – When we pulled over on State Line Rd. near Rodeo, New Mexico to examine a Great Horned Owl, two fledgling Bendire's Thrashers were being fed by an adult under a small roadside tree. On our return visit, we found another adult that perched up and even sang a bit.

CRISSAL THRASHER (*Toxostoma crissale*) – One of these large thrashers was very cooperative in scrub along State Line Rd. near Rodeo, New Mexico.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Surprisingly, we only saw a couple. One was in Willcox, and another was at the small park in Green Valley with the hummingbird feeders.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – We saw a few in Green Valley. This species is not widespread away from cities in the region. [I]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Portal was loaded with these crested trillers. One morning, we saw 110 of them in the treetops around our lodge.

Ptiliognatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – One put in a brief appearance in California Gulch on our first evening. Another showed up above the roof of the Portal Peak Lodge one morning before breakfast.

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – We heard one in forest up high in the Chiricahuas, but it wouldn't come in for a look. [*]

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

LUCY'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis luciae*) – About 5 of these early-breeding, cavity-nesting warblers were in the mesquites at the confluence of California Gulch and Warsaw Canyon on our first evening.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Three were along the margin of the golf course ponds at Willcox, and another was at Desert Meadows Park in Green Valley.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – Small numbers of these western "Yellow-rumps" were mixed in with flocks of warblers, chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches in the Chiricahuas, from Portal all the way up to Rustler Park.

GRACE'S WARBLER (*Setophaga graciae*) – Common in canyons with tall pines. We saw these Yellow-throated Warbler look-alikes in Miller Canyon and at several places in the Chiricahuas from South Fork up to Rustler Park.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – Abundant in montane forest in the Chiricahuas, especially in the oak-juniper interface zone.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*) – We found just a couple of these Pacific Coast breeders as migrants in the Chiricahuas.

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*) – A fairly common migrant, especially in riparian areas with lots of understory.

RED-FACED WARBLER (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – The bird that appeared near the bathrooms at Rustler Park danced around above our heads for a few minutes - what a stunning little warbler!

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – These flashy warblers serenaded us and wagged their open wings and tails for us in Miller Canyon and South Fork.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – One was singing along Cave Creek below Portal during pre-breakfast explorations one morning.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

BOTTERI'S SPARROW (*Peucaea botterii*) – One of our outings to State Line Rd. east of Portal produced some excellent fence-perching views of this grassland species.

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – Common in the Chiricahuas.

BREWER'S SPARROW (*Spizella breweri*) – Three of these small, subtly patterned sparrows lingered for us in the desert scrub near the golf course at Willcox.

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – Common in desert habitats; seen each day of the tour.

FIVE-STRIPED SPARROW (*Amphispiza quinquestriata*) – I had almost given up hope on this large, beautiful Mexican sparrow due to the windy conditions on our first evening... but then one appeared on the hillside in front of us! We had ample opportunity to study this extremely handsome bird below California Gulch just before the last rays of light faded and we prepared to look for nocturnal species.

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*) – These large, flashy sparrows were foraging in flocks on the ground at Beatty's Ranch in Miller Canyon, Willcox, and Desert Meadows Park in Green Valley.

LARK BUNTING (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) – As we were enjoying the morning changing of the guard on our final sunrise together in Rodeo, NM, a flock of these stocky sparrows zipped past us out of the desert grasslands.

YELLOW-EYED JUNCO (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Quite common at higher elevations in the Chiricahuas.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) – We saw about ten at distance as they foraged on the golf course at Willcox.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) – Singles were at Portal and along the edge of the golf course ponds at Willcox.

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – These plain brown towhees were in Miller Canyon and around Portal.

RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – Heard more often than seen. We found these rock-loving sparrows on the ground in Miller Canyon and along the scrubby slopes in the Chiricahuas above Portal.

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – Common in tangly thickets in the mountains, both in Miller Canyon and the Chiricahuas.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC TANAGER (*Piranga flava*) – Nice views, including a red male, during our hike in South Fork.

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) – Two were in California Gulch, and others were near our lodge in Portal and at Desert Meadows Park in Green Valley.

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – Common in songbird flocks in mountain canyons. In the mornings in Portal, we also saw several flying overhead - perhaps migrants re-orienting in "morning flight".

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Common in washes and lush desert habitats. Seen each day of the tour.

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – We found just a couple of these stub-billed, desert cardinals in desert washes below Portal.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – Common and easily seen in canyon forests including Miller Canyon and South Fork.

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*) – Nice views of a blue male in Desert Meadows Park in Green Valley.

LAZULI BUNTING (*Passerina amoena*) – Several, including some lovely buff-and-blue males, were in Portal and at Florida Canyon.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – One was in the marsh at the golf course at Willcox.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S) (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – At least 2 of this distinctive subspecies of Eastern Meadowlark were in the desert grasslands along the edge of the drive at Lake Cochise in Willcox.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Common in urban zones in the desert including the Tucson metro area.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – Several were in Portal and Willcox. We didn't see any Bronzed Cowbirds on this trip.

HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*) – A few pairs were active around the Portal Peak Lodge where we saw them daily.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) – A couple males and females flew back and forth between the big sycamores in "downtown" Portal.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*) – We had a great encounter with a sharp black-and-yellow male in the juniper zone above Paradise in the Chiricahuas.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – Abundant.

RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*) – We heard a few as they flew over in Pinery Canyon on our final morning in the Chiricahuas.

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – About 15 attended feeders and perched in treetops at the Portal Peak Lodge.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – Common and widespread.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Common around human-inhabited areas like Portal, Willcox, and Tucson. [H]

MAMMALS

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – These were the bunnies we saw at night in the oak forest above the Southwestern Research Station in the Chiricahuas.

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – This is the common lowland bunny of the region, and we saw many each day.

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*) – A few fled from the roadsides in lowland desert habitats.

ANTELOPE JACKRABBIT (*Lepus alleni*) – An impressive SIX showed nicely for us during our journey into and out of California Gulch. One somewhat tame individual was waiting for us at our evening picnic spot.

CLIFF CHIPMUNK (*Tamias dorsalis*) – This is the only chipmunk found in the region.

SPOTTED GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus spilosoma*) – A few were along the driveway at the Willcox golf course.

ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – Common on rocky slopes.

MEXICAN FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) – A few of these big, rusty squirrels were near the cabins in South Fork Cave Creek Canyon.

GRAY FOX (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – One crossed the road in front of us at night in the Chiricahuas.

COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*) – A small group lounged in the Cave Creek streambed just upstream from Portal.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – The small deer we saw up in mountain canyons were of the local "Coue's" subspecies.

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – A small herd was out in the desert grasslands near the New Mexico state line during our drive from Douglas to Rodeo.

Herps

GOPHERSNAKE (*Pituophis catenifer*) – One of these nicely patterned snakes was along the side of the road near Rodeo, New Mexico.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 169 bird taxa and 12 mammal taxa