



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Arizona Nightbirds & More II 2021**

May 6, 2021 to May 10, 2021

Cory Gregory

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



*As dusk settled in near Portal, a quaint town tucked in at the base the Chiricahuas, this is when we got to work. Although this quick tour focused on searching for a variety of nightbirds, we were lucky to enjoy some gorgeous scenery and a fun selection of other species as well. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.*

Southeastern Arizona has always had that draw to birders, a draw to its desert flats, the oak and sycamore ravines, and the montane conifer forests. No matter the season or how long you can spend there, there is always something interesting to see and you'll almost certainly encounter something you haven't seen before. Such was the case with our nightbirds tour. Although recent droughts have noticeably changed the avifauna, things have a way of working out and we ended up having some really amazing experiences while tallying more than 150 species. Whether it was having multiple Zone-tailed Hawks buzz by, having a tame Montezuma Quail at our fingertips, or even one of the rarest nightjars fly right overhead, there were certainly a lot of highlights!

This nightbirds tour is a quick one and so we wasted no time in getting out after some specialties. Our first evening together we ventured far out into the wilderness to some very remote canyons near the Mexican border. It was a beautiful evening as dusk set in and it was made even better by singing Western Screech-Owls and the chuckling, diminutive Elf Owl. The highlight, however, was not only hearing but also seeing the rare Buff-collared Nightjar swoop right overhead!

With optics in hand, we made our way east the following morning towards the dusty town of Willcox. The lake and cattail marsh provided a wealth of new birds including our only Burrowing Owl, a nice assortment of ducks and shorebirds, and even the spiffy Scaled Quail. We spent lunch high up in the Chiricahuas alongside Red-faced Warblers, Townsend's Warblers, and a variety of tanagers, grosbeaks, and flycatchers. That evening, after we had settled into the town of Portal, we had our first taste of nightbirding in the Chiricahuas. Although the nightbirding around Portal proved to be difficult this year due to the continuing drought, some of the species behaved exceptionally well! I'll never forget the amazing Mexican Whip-poor-will encounter, the high-pitched chuckling of Elf Owls right in town, and our very own face-to-face visit with a Whiskered Screech-Owl.

Over the next couple of days, we ventured out from Portal in search of many of the species that make the Chiricahuas interesting. We enjoyed multiple species of orioles, including Hooded and Scott's, Curve-billed and Bendire's thrashers in the flats below Portal, and even more regional specialties like Bridled Titmouse, Arizona Woodpecker, Yellow-eyed Junco, and Red-faced Warbler. We encountered a gaudy mix of hummingbirds as well, including the big Rivoli's and the flashy Broad-billed, while Broad-tailed and Black-chinneds were abundant. We had the chance to identify the many flycatcher and kingbirds, snap some photos of the gorgeous Lazuli Buntings, and spend some time with some of the many sparrows, including Brewer's, Lark, White-crowned, Chipping, Black-throated, and others. And, just in the nick of time, finally a Greater Roadrunner!

In seemingly no time, we were headed back to Tucson. After it was all said and done, many thanks to the folks in the Austin office who helped make this trip happen. But of course, I want to thank you for joining me on this nightbirds adventure. Although conditions were tough, we certainly made some good memories of some really special birds in some really special places. It felt great to travel again after we lost 2020. I hope you felt the same. I hope to see you guys on future trips and until then, bird safely!

-- Cory (aka Curlew)

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## KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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## BIRDS

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Spatula discors*) – A few of these small dabblers, including some sharp-looking males, were seen at the Willcox ponds on our first full day.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Spatula clypeata*) – This dabbler, with its distinctive bill, was seen at the Willcox ponds during our one visit there.

**GADWALL** (*Mareca strepera*) – This is another dabbling duck that we scoped out on the water at Willcox. Just a couple of these were mixed in with the Ruddies.

**AMERICAN WIGEON** (*Mareca americana*) – Fairly numerous at Willcox and we even got to see a close, fly-by flock there, showing the distinctive white in the wings.

**MEXICAN DUCK** (*Anas diazi*) – Although similar in size and shape to the Mallard, this species is darker-bodied, similar to American Black Duck or Mottled. We saw a couple of these on the backside of the Willcox pond.

**CANVASBACK** (*Aythya valisineria*) – One of these diving ducks swimming at Willcox took me by surprise. It's a pretty rare species for this tour.

**RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Aythya collaris*) – We don't typically find this diver on this tour, but sure enough, a female was scoped at the Willcox pond.

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – This "stifftail" was the most numerous duck at Willcox.

### Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

**SCALED QUAIL** (*Callipepla squamata*) – Ooh, this is one of my favorites! We caught up to a "cottontop" in the dry scrub near the Willcox ponds.

**GAMBEL'S QUAIL** (*Callipepla gambelii*) – This fancy-looking quail was fairly common in and around Willcox and Portal and we tallied them on each of our days except the first evening.

**MONTEZUMA QUAIL** (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – Every tour has one of those "woah!" moments and our encounter with this skulker might have taken top honor! We were cruising uphill after dinner one evening when we spotted three of these lumps along the road near E. Turkey Creek. They froze in their tracks and so we enjoyed watching them from a distance. However, it soon became evident that they were NOT going to move... our van crept forward until one male was hunkered down on the right side of the van, and another hunkered on the other side, just mere feet from us! I can safely say I've never taken better pictures with my phone of this amazing and tough quail. This experience made the Top 3 for Chris and John, and for good reason!

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

**WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Seen (and heard!) many times in the Chiricahuas including at Pinery Canyon where a tom was displaying right next to our picnic spot!

### Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Seen a couple of times in urban settings. [I]

**BAND-TAILED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – We were visiting some private feeders in Portal on our final morning when a whole flock of these landed nearby. This species is surprisingly widespread, found from Alaska south all the way to Argentina.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Fairly common around Portal where we saw them each of our days there. [I]

**INCA DOVE** (*Columbina inca*) – This tiny, scaly-looking dove was spotted near our lodge in Portal. The song, which sounds like "no hope!" to some, was a common sound during our breakfasts there.

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

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaida macroura*) – Like the previous species, this pointy-tailed dove was very common and tallied each day.

### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**GREATER ROADRUNNER** (*Geococcyx californianus*) – The current severe drought in Arizona really changed the dynamics of birding there this spring and one of the most noticeable changes was the apparent lack of roadrunners! In fact, we only tallied one and that was spotted by Marion on our very final afternoon. Whew! It wouldn't be a birding trip in Arizona without that one!

### Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**LESSER NIGHTHAWK** (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – With their snappy flight, a few of these nightjars were seen at dusk near a desert wash downhill from Portal. Although they may not be the flashiest of species, I have good memories of watching these on the wing during a beautiful sunset with you guys.

**COMMON POORWILL** (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – It was a tough spring for poorwills too, the only detection we managed were a couple of chirps in Cave Creek one evening. [\*]

**BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR** (*Antrostomus ridgwayi*) – Our plans got rearranged when one of these rarities from Mexico became reliable near California Gulch! We ventured out into the wilderness on our first evening and enjoyed a stunning sunset, a picnic dinner, and getting to listen as this nightjar started firing up. In fact, we even saw it fly directly overhead. Complete with the amazing starry sky, it was a great experience that I hope sticks with everyone. I'm really happy we got to start the trip with such a great find.

**MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL** (*Antrostomus arizonae arizonae*) – We heard one our first full day but it wasn't until our third evening that we had a fun experience with one in the Chiricahuas. Overall, these seemed to be more quiet than usual and so I'm happy we managed to connect with one.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**RIVOLI'S HUMMINGBIRD** (*Eugenes fulgens*) – This big hummingbird species swooped into Bob's feeders a couple of times in Paradise. A couple of years ago Magnificent Hummingbird was split into two species: Rivoli's and Talamanca. Rivoli's is the species in the US.

**BLUE-THROATED MOUNTAIN-GEM** (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – Formerly known as Blue-throated Hummingbird, this is another big species we saw at some private feeders in Portal.

**BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus alexandri*) – We had great looks at this western species coming to the feeders in Paradise.

**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – This magenta-throated hummingbird was the common hummer at Bob's feeders in Paradise. There were several males that preferred certain lookout vantages to defend the feeders from other males. It was a feisty place!

**RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus rufus*) – A female came to Bob's feeders in Paradise and although, technically, we can't 100% rule out Allen's, it was probably a Rufous.

**BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – A fairly common hummingbird throughout our short tour. At times, they even came to the feeders outside of our rooms in Portal.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*) – We found these poking around in the water at Willcox during our visit.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – This black-and-white, lanky shorebird was spotted at the Willcox pond.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Always a highlight, these tall and graceful shorebirds were seen striding around in the shallows at Willcox.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*) – This widespread plover was seen at Willcox.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – A tiny shorebird, the smallest shorebird species in the world in fact, was seen poking along the edge of the water as we were rounding the pond at Willcox.

**WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*) – This was the most numerous "peep" at the Willcox pond and, at this season, they were looking pretty sharp with rufous on their heads.

**LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – A number of these long-billed shorebirds were seen probing in the shallows at Willcox.

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – You would think all the spinning these birds do would make them dizzy! We got to enjoy several of these at Willcox on our 2nd day.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – A few of these were seen along the edge of the Willcox pond, bobbing as they went.

**WILET (WESTERN)** (*Tringa semipalmata inornata*) – This large and uncommon shorebird was seen at Willcox. This Tringa is closely related to yellowlegs.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

**RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*) – A couple of these gulls were roosting out on some islands at Willcox. Since this was the only water around, this was the only spot we had a chance at seeing any gulls.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – One of these spiffy and sneaky herons was seen at the cattail pond at Willcox.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – A few folks saw a trio of these soaring high overhead from the confluence during our picnic dinner.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – A common and widespread species throughout the trip.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**COOPER'S HAWK** (*Accipiter cooperii*) – One of these Accipiters shot overhead on our final morning in Portal.

**GRAY HAWK** (*Buteo plagiatus*) – Two or three of these were seen soaring over Portal. Such a spiffy regional specialty!

**SWAINSON'S HAWK** (*Buteo swainsoni*) – A flying bird was first spotted distantly at Willcox. This Buteo is very slender-winged with distinctively pointed wingtips.

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) – It was a great trip for this uncommon and hard-to-find Buteo! The first one bombed right by us as we were driving up the Chiricahuas and we spotted another at Bob's feeders in Paradise.

**RED-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Fairly common throughout but especially in the open country around Willcox and during our drives to/from Tucson.

Strigidae (Owls)

**FLAMMULATED OWL** (*Psiloscops flammeolus*) – It was VERY distant downhill but a few people did hear a couple of toots from this tough species during some nightbirding near Pinery Canyon. Unfortunately this species, and many of the other owls, seemed much harder to find this year, perhaps due to the severe drought. [\*]

**WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops trichopsis*) – We had smashing looks at this regional specialty near Herb Martyr. We ended up hearing a couple more at various spots in the Chiricahuas as well.

**WESTERN SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops kennicottii*) – Although very close (and very vocal!), the couple we heard never came into view. Our first called from the confluence area and then again in the town of Portal. [\*]

**NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (MOUNTAIN)** (*Glaucidium gnoma gnoma*) – We were hiking in the South Fork of Cave Creek when we were surprised to hear this small owl tooting distantly! [\*]

**ELF OWL** (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – This tiny owl, the smallest owl species in the world, was heard on three of our days starting with our very first outing; a couple were calling away in the confluence but they managed to stay out of sight. We later heard another along the Portal-Paradise Road, and another right in Portal the following night. [\*]

**BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*) – It was surprising how this species has become very hard to find this year. Thankfully we managed to see a bird at Willcox. It was the "short stump" out in the heat shimmer that turned its head!

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**ACORN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – This is a flashy and rambunctious species we encountered daily up in the Chiricahuas.

**GILA WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – A couple of us found this desert species near the confluence on our first evening and that was the only time we were around their preferred habitat.

**LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER** (*Dryobates scalaris*) – We had a nice look at one of these coming into the feeders at Dave Jasper's. Turns out, that would be our only encounter of the trip.

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Dryobates villosus*) – Fairly common but only in the Chiricahuas. We encountered them most often higher up around Pinery and the like.

**ARIZONA WOODPECKER** (*Dryobates arizonae*) – It was super fun to watch this regional specialty interacting with a Hairy Woodpecker in South Fork! It's not often you get to compare them side-by-side so well.

**NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED)** (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – This "red-shafted" subspecies has a western distribution and is not likely to be seen much farther east than Texas. We encountered a couple, mostly at higher elevations.

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*) – We paused to take a quick glance at this small, widespread falcon as we were approaching the Chiricahuas. Turns out, that would be our only sighting.

*Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)*

**NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET** (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – This drab flycatcher was pretty vocal by our picnic breakfast a couple of days. They can be fairly local and so it was great to snag it there.

**OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Contopus cooperi*) – Surely a migrant, this big flycatcher was seen at the golf course in Willcox! This species is in the *Contopus* genus which is the same as the pewees.

**WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus sordidulus*) – It was shocking how few pewees we heard. We managed a couple up in the Chiricahuas, like at South Fork and higher up around Pinery, but they seemed to be quite uncommon.

**HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax hammondi*) – This Empid was spotted quite a few times during our forest birding in Cave Creek.

**DUSKY FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – Very similar to the previous species, this tiny flycatcher tends to forage at lower heights, has a more rounded head, and shorter wing-projections. We encountered one in Cave Creek.

**CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – This is a very greenish Empid that breeds in big conifer stands in the Chiricahuas. We heard and saw a couple around Pinery.

**BLACK PHOEBE** (*Sayornis nigricans*) – A water-loving flycatcher, one of these distinctive phoebes was hanging out by the cattail pond at Willcox.

**SAY'S PHOEBE** (*Sayornis saya*) – It didn't take us long to find this buffy phoebe; we spotted it at our first rest area stop as we headed east.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – A welcome splash of color in an otherwise parched landscape, this vividly-red flycatcher was spotted in Willcox on our first full day.

**DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – A regional specialty, a couple of these were making a racket in Pinery Canyon on one of our visits. We heard a few more on our final morning in South Fork as well.

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – This was a common, open-country species on our first evening as we headed down towards the confluence. Of all the *Myiarchus* flycatchers we encountered, this one has the palest yellow on the belly.

**BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – A larger and beefier version of the previous species, this flycatcher prefers riparian corridors. We encountered them a number of times around Portal.

**CASSIN'S KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – This was the kingbird with a darker gray head and throat contrasting with a pale malar. We saw these in hillier habitat compared to the Westerns.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – A common kingbird for us, they were abundant around Willcox and the golf course.

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

**BELL'S VIREO (ARIZONA)** (*Vireo bellii arizonae*) – The up-and-down wheezy, scratchy song of this sneaky vireo was fairly common although I'm not sure we ever got eyes on one as a group. [\*]

**HUTTON'S VIREO (INTERIOR)** (*Vireo huttoni stephensi*) – It didn't stick around for the entire group but this vireo, which looks like a Ruby-crowned Kinglet on steroids, was singing in South Fork. We unloaded but the bird departed before everyone got eyes on it.

**CASSIN'S VIREO** (*Vireo cassinii*) – We had a brief look at one of these western vireos in South Fork near the bridge. Unlike the Plumbeous, this species has a bit of color on the flanks.

**PLUMBEOUS VIREO** (*Vireo plumbeus*) – This all-gray vireo with bold "spectacles" was abundant for us in the Chiricahuas. In fact, the burry song was a mainstay of the soundscape.

**WARBLING VIREO** (*Vireo gilvus*) – Although never common for us, we bumped into a couple of these at spots like Pinery Canyon. However, in thinking back, I don't think we ever even heard one singing.

*Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – One of these black and gray predators was spotted on the fence at Willcox and then we found another in the flats below Portal.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**STELLER'S JAY** (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – We only heard this one up by Pinery Canyon. [\*]

**WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY** (*Aphelocoma woodhousei*) – Bob's feeders in Paradise ended up being a great place to study this species and how it differs from the following species. A couple of years ago Western Scrub-Jay was split into California Scrub-Jay, which is coastal, and Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay which is found inland.

**MEXICAN JAY** (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – This was the common jay for us on this tour. We even found one on a nest in South Fork. [N]

**CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN** (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – We were happy to pick up this southwestern specialty in some of the arid grasslands near Willcox.

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) – Tallied daily, this classic Corvid was common in most habitats.

*Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**BRIDLED TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – It's hard to find a more fancy-plumaged bird in this family! We found these in the riparian zones in Cave Creek a couple of times.

*Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)*

**VERDIN** (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – This is a rather dull-plumaged desert-dweller with a pale yellow head. One of these came into Dave Jasper's feeders.

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris*) – Our only sightings of this lark, which fancies wide open spaces, were around the lake at Willcox.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – The interesting call notes of these alerted us to them at Willcox where a couple were seen flying around the cattail pond.

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – With calls that sound like a sizzling power line, these were seen overhead numerous times in Cave Creek.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – This distinctive and smooth-flying swallow zipped by a couple of times at Willcox and then again around Portal.

*Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)*

**BUSHTIT (INTERIOR)** (*Psaltriparus minimus plumbeus*) – Although we heard the high twittering of these in South Fork, we never got eyes on them. [\*]

*Regulidae (Kinglets)*

**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus calendula*) – This tiny, dull-olive species was seen most of our days around Portal and at higher elevations.

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST)** (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – The higher elevation forests in the Chiricahuas were good places for this species, especially around Pinery Canyon.

**PYGMY NUTHATCH** (*Sitta pygmaea*) – Several of these came down to get a closer look at us around Pinery Canyon on our visits there.

*Certhiidae (Treecreepers)*

**BROWN CREEPER (ALBESCENS/ALTICOLA)** (*Certhia americana albescens*) – If your eyes caught movement of what looked like a moving piece of bark, this was the culprit. We ended up spending a bit of time around several in South Fork where we watched one gathering nesting material.

*Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)*

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – Only one or two popped into view for us on this trip, one being in the South Fork of Cave Creek.

*Troglodytidae (Wrens)*

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*) – We heard (and then saw) some of these rather plain, brown wrens around Pinery Canyon high in the Chiricahuas. The ones there are part of the "Brown-throated" complex.

**BEWICK'S WREN (MEXICANUS GROUP)** (*Thryomanes bewickii eremophilus*) – We heard these several times singing in Cave Creek but never actually got eyes on them. Sneaky dudes! [\*]

**CACTUS WREN** (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – This big wren species, the largest in the US, was seen coming to feeders in Portal and then again in the flats near Gin Road.

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Seen once or twice in urban settings. [I]

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**CURVE-BILLED THRASHER** (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – This sandy-colored thrasher was the most common of the thrashers on our trip. We even saw one attending a nest near Willcox. [N]

**BENDIRE'S THRASHER** (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – We could all see the shorter bills of the two thrashers down near Gin Road. That is the best fieldmark distinguishing these from the previous species.

**NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus polyglottos*) – This mostly-gray mimic was spotted several times on tour in a variety of habitats. The white wing-patches always stand out when they fly.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*) – Abundant in the higher elevations, especially around Pinery Canyon in the Chiricahuas.

**AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*) – Fairly common on our trip although not the grass lawn variety! These were more wary mountain-dwellers.

*Bombycillidae (Waxwings)*

**CEDAR WAXWING** (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – A few of these were spied atop a tree during one of our breakfasts in Portal.

*Ptiliognatidae (Silky-flycatchers)*

**PHAINOPEPLA** (*Phainopepla nitens*) – The only member of the silky-flycatchers in the US, this glossy black species was seen flying through Portal on our final morning.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Seen a number of times around urban areas and feeder set-ups. [II]

*Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)*

**HOUSE FINCH** (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – Seen daily.

**CASSIN'S FINCH** (*Haemorhous cassinii*) – This isn't a species we typically see on this tour but sure enough, one was seen at Dave Jasper's feeders in Portal. More of these spent this last winter in the Portal area and more have been lingering later than normal.

**PINE SISKIN** (*Spinus pinus*) – Hoards of these tiny finches had amassed at Bob's feeders in Paradise and also at the Dave Jasper feeders in Portal.

**LESSER GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus psaltria*) – Not very common for us, only one or two showed up at feeders in Portal during our visit.

#### *Passerellidae (New World Sparrows)*

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – This small, ruddy-capped sparrow ended up being fairly common for us; we tallied them daily.

**BREWER'S SPARROW** (*Spizella breweri*) – Similar to Chipping in size and shape, this species lacks the ruddy cap and white supercilium. We hit migration for this species and found a swarm of them on the golf course in Willcox. We later saw another at Bob's feeders.

**BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – I'm not sure we have a more handsome sparrow species in the US. This desert-dweller made appearances a couple of times, the best being at Dave Jasper's feeders.

**LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*) – This is another handsome species of sparrow that we enjoyed at various feeders. When this sparrow flushes off the side of the road, the white corners of the tail are a great ID mark.

**DARK-EYED JUNCO (GRAY-HEADED)** (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*) – This subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco has a lot going on! It's actually quite similar to the following species but with a dark eye. We saw a couple of these near the bridge in the South Fork of Cave Creek.

**YELLOW-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco phaeonotus*) – This range-restricted species is a specialty of southeastern Arizona and New Mexico. We found them to be quite common around Pinery and other locations lower in Cave Creek.

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (ORIANTHA)** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – This is the dark-lored subspecies found in Arizona at some seasons. A couple of these were seen at various feeder setups in Paradise and Portal.

**SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*) – Some folks saw one of these attending the stream in the South Fork of Cave Creek.

**CANYON TOWHEE** (*Melospiza fusca*) – This is an all-brown southwestern species with a chestnut undertail. One of these came into the feeders at Dave Jasper's.

**GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – We spotted one of these at the rest area along the interstate and ever after, we didn't seem to be far from them. We tallied them daily and from a variety of locations, often at feeders.

**SPOTTED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo maculatus*) – More of a montane species for us, we only caught a few glimpses along the road near Pinery Canyon. Way back when, this was part of the old Rufous-sided Towhee species complex.

#### *Icteriidae (Yellow-breasted Chat)*

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*) – Ever since it was split out from the wood-warblers, this is now the only member in the Icteriidae family. This bright splash of color came into Dave Jasper's feeders a few times.

#### *Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)*

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S)** (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – Stay tuned, this subspecies, which is well isolated from the others, could very well be given species status someday. We saw a bunch around Willcox.

**HOODED ORIOLE** (*Icterus cucullatus*) – Our very first evening together, down in the confluence, a couple of these were chattering as we ate our picnic dinner. We would end up seeing them again, quite often right by our lodging in Portal.

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus bullockii*) – Our best looks were from Dave Jasper's feeders. Eventually we spotted an adult male in the tree there which was nice to see after a bunch of young birds and females.

**SCOTT'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus parisorum*) – We were more than happy to welcome this black-and-yellow oriole to Bob's feeders in Paradise. That was our only encounter of this yucca-loving southwestern oriole.

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Fairly common around the cattail pond at Willcox.

**BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – We watched as a big, puffy-necked male strutted around the ground at Dave Jasper's. This red-eyed cowbird has a thick neck and glossy black wings.

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*) – Like the previous species, our best looks came from the feeders at Dave Jasper's place in Portal.

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Our only sighting of this large grackle came from the golf course in Willcox.

#### *Parulidae (New World Warblers)*

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – This uncommon migrant warbler was spotted bobbing around the stagnant water below the bridge in South Fork. We managed some photos which allowed us to study it and come around to the correct ID.

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Leiothlypis celata*) – This is another species of warbler that we found coming to the water in South Fork. Good luck if you actually want to see the orange crown though!

**COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*) – This is a marsh-loving warbler we found in the cattails at Willcox.

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – This classic warbler was spotted near the cattail marsh at Willcox and that sighting ended up being our only one.

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S)** (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – Very common throughout the trip and in a variety of habitats, from the golf course in Willcox to the upper reaches of Pinery Canyon.

**GRACE'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga graciae*) – We were graced to find this conifer-loving species on our very final visit to Pinery Canyon on the last day.

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – This western warbler was fairly common although never abundant. Most of our looks came from Pinery Canyon and other forested habitats in Cave Creek.

**TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – Like the previous species, these were seen in the upper reaches of the Chiricahuas. This is another western specialty we're not likely to see back east.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – This black-capped warbler was one of the most common migrant warblers throughout our trip, especially down in the lower habitats.

**RED-FACED WARBLER** (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – This stunner is truly one of the highlights of any birding trip to Arizona. Thankfully, we caught up to one or two around Pinery Canyon on our 2nd day. Note that this has the same genus as Wilson's Warbler.

**PAINTED REDSTART** (*Myioborus pictus*) – This tail-wagging beauty resides in the shady mountain canyons in southeastern Arizona. A gaudy bird and always a treat to see flitting about, most of these were spotted in the South Fork of Cave Creek.

### Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

**HEPATIC Tanager** (*Piranga flava*) – This mountain-loving tanager was spied only a couple of times and always in the higher reaches of the Chiricahuas.

**SUMMER Tanager** (*Piranga rubra*) – As dusk settled in around us in the confluence, one of these started calling. But due to the light level and our other priorities, we never actually saw it. [\*]

**WESTERN Tanager** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – This red-headed tanager was a rather common species for us, especially in the conifer forests in the Chiricahuas.

**NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – The bright red plumage of these birds really popped in the dry, brown veg around Portal.

**PYRRHULOXIA** (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – Some of the dry washes we checked out near Portal had this "desert cardinal" in the mesquite. A close relative of the previous species, the songs were very similar indeed.

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – Quite an uncommon bird to see in Arizona. Luckily our visit was timed just right to see one of these attending Bob's feeders in Paradise.

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – Unlike the previous species, this western grosbeak was very common throughout the trip, especially in the Chiricahuas.

**LAZULI BUNTING** (*Passerina amoena*) – Our visit to Arizona came right during the migration of these attractive buntings and we ended up seeing quite a few.

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## MAMMALS

**DESERT COTTONTAIL** (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – This was the common cottontail we saw at lower elevations.

**BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT** (*Lepus californicus*) – We spotted a couple of these big guys near dusk around Portal.

**ANTELOPE JACKRABBIT** (*Lepus alleni*) – We were driving back from the confluence on our first evening when we spotted a couple of these. This big jackrabbit is always a treat to see; they're very range-restricted in the US, found only in southern Arizona around the I-19 corridor.

**CLIFF CHIPMUNK** (*Tamias dorsalis*) – A medium-sized chipmunk, these were spotted a couple of times in Cave Creek.

**HARRIS'S ANTELOPE SQUIRREL** (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*) – Visiting the feeders at Dave Jasper's place. Their tendency to hold their tail up and over their back is rather distinctive.

**SPOTTED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus spilosoma*) – We spotted a couple of these in Cave Creek, some near feeding stations.

**ROCK SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – A common squirrel throughout the Chiricahuas.

**MEXICAN FOX SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) – Within the US, this range-restricted species is found only in the Chiricahuas! We saw a couple of these buffy, golden-bellied tree squirrels.

**ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus arizonensis*) – This is another range-restricted squirrel but this one is found farther north into Arizona and east into New Mexico.

**COYOTE** (*Canis latrans*) – We briefly saw some kind of canine in the remote country approaching California Gulch... some thought it looked like a dog, some thought a Coyote. For where we were, I admit that a Coyote seems a lot more likely.

**NORTHERN RACCOON** (*Procyon lotor*) – On our drives after dark, nightbirding sometimes turned into "nightmammaling". We spotted this familiar species in the road at least once.

**WHITE-NOSED COATI** (*Nasua narica*) – Our first one came out from a culvert at Pinery Canyon. It was good to keep an eye on it though; it didn't look well at all. We later saw some others including Bob's friend, George, who apparently made a mess of Bob's kitchen.

**STRIPED SKUNK** (*Mephitis mephitis*) – One of our nightbirding adventures turned up one of these in Portal. This is the most-expected species of skunk locally.

**COLLARED PECCARY** (*Tayassu tajacu*) – Some of these, which are in the New World pig family, were seen a couple of the mornings in Portal not far from our breakfast area.

**WHITE-TAILED DEER** (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Abundant in Cave Creek.

### Herps

**SONORAN WHIPSNAKE** (*Masticophis bilineatus*) – A beautiful, and quite long, snake crossed the road in front of us as we drove up the west slope of the Chiricahuas. Turns out it was this species, one that is never abundant and is easily missed on trips to this area.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 153 bird taxa and 15 mammal taxa**