

Trip Report — Arizona Nightbirds & More II 2025

May 17-21, 2025 with Micah Riegner



We were having our picnic lunch up in the Chiricahuas when we heard a Spotted Owl vocalize in broad daylight. We marched upslope toward it and found it roosting high in a conifer. Scroll down and you'll see the view we had of it! Photo by guide Micah Riegner.

We crammed a lot of birding into this short 4-day tour. Our first afternoon we went straight to day roosting Flammulated Owl that Andrew Core, a local Tucson birder, had shown me in the morning. Thank goodness it was still there, tucked away in the fork of a Tamarisk. Leaving the owl, we headed straight to Box Canyon, where we saw Five-striped Sparrow and Golden Eagle, then we drove to Madera Canyon for a picnic dinner. Some Dusky-capped Flycatchers came in while we were eating. After dinner we were entertained by Mexican Whip-poor-will that looped around us, some low

flying Lesser Nighthawks and a couple of close Elf Owls—not a bad start to the tour!



Here it is, the Spotted Owl we saw in the Chiricahuas! This was actually the second individual we saw on the tour. The first one we saw at Miller Canyon. Photo by tour participant Gary Yoder.

Excitement continued the next morning at Miller Canyon in the foothills of the Huachucas. We walked up the main trail finding Arizona Woodpecker, Greater Pewee, Grace's Warbler, an eye-level Red-faced Warbler, numerous hummingbirds, and the main target of the day: Spotted Owl tucked away in an oak. On our way back down, we found the female Flame-colored Tanager that had been reported from the canyon. We had lunch at a nice Mexican restaurant in Sierra Vista, then took the southern route through Douglas into Portal, finding Scaled Quail and Swainson's Hawks along State Line Road in the late afternoon. We checked into our rooms in Portal Peak, had dinner, then went to John Coons' property at dusk. A Poorwill called from the dry

wash, but it didn't show. Later, we did find Poorwill on the Paradise Road. Working our way towards South Fork we encountered both Western and Whiskered Screech-owls that were not far apart from one another, a nice way to conclude a full day of birding.



We picked up Whiskered Screech-owl near Portal. Photo by guide Micah Riegner.

The following morning, we birded South Fork for our main target: Northern Pygmy-owl, which we eventually found, sitting in the gorgeous Arizona Sycamores. We then birded the Sunny Flat Campground where there were loads of migrant Wilson's, Townsend's and Hermit Warblers at eye level in the mesquites. In the afternoon we visited the Portal feeders seeing huge numbers of migrating Western Tanagers, Scott's and Bullock's Orioles and a sneaky Crissal Thrasher that came in for a drink. We birded State Line Road again, this time finding a pair of Bendire's Thrashers in the Soaptree Yuccas. Our final day of birding we climbed way up into the mixed conifer forest of Rustler Park. Here, we saw a couple Olive Warblers, some Mexican

Chickadees, close Steller's Jays and an Eastern Patch-nosed Snake, a lifer herp for me. From there, we drove to Barfoot finding Virginia's Warbler on the way. We decided to do our picnic lunch at Pinery and, while I was setting things up, a Spotted Owl vocalized from up the hill. We found it and had great views of it roosting in the shade. After lunch we found a pair of Buff-breasted Flycatchers, then we made our way down the mountain and over to Willcox. Lake Cochise was full of birds, including a number of interesting shorebirds like Snowy Plover, American Golden Plover, Baird's Sandpiper, and Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes. On our way out we saw a line-up of several Bank Swallows: an uncommon migrant in Arizona. Before reaching the interstate, we stopped to see a flock of Chihuahuan Ravens picking up saltine crackers in someone's yard. We had great scope looks at them and could even see their white neck feathers when the wind blew just right.



Tour participant Gary Yoder photographed this handsome Red-faced Warbler on our hike up Miller Canyon. We saw this species in the Chiricahuas as well.

We reached Tucson, had our final dinner, then got some much-needed sleep before our flights the next day. I'd like to thank Caroline in our office for making the arrangements for this tour, Andrew Core for showing me the day-roosting Flammulated Owl in Tucson, and you all for joining me on this short, but productive tour. I look forward to seeing you again soon!



One of my personal highlights was watching a flock of Chihuahuan Ravens near Willcox, Arizona. We got to study the subtle details that separate them from Common Raven like their longer nasal bristles, and their flat-topped blocky heads. Photo by guide Micah Riegner.

Mammals

Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) We saw one outside Portal.

Black-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*) Seen crouched in shade of a bush at Lake Cochise.

Cliff Chipmunk (*Neotamias dorsalis*) Highly abundant in the Chiricahuas.

Harris's Antelope Squirrel (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*) These were at Dave

Jasper's feeders.

Common Rock Squirrel (*Otospermophilus variegatus*) Another common species in the Chiricahuas.

Mexican Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) Also known as Chiricahua Fox Squirrel; these gorgeous squirrels were running about at South Fork.

Northern Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) We saw one run by at night in Portal.

Northern Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) Also seen in Portal.

Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)

Collared Peccary (*Dicotyles tajacu*) We saw some along State Line Road outside of Portal.

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) Highly abundant. Seen every day of the tour.

Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) We saw a few on our drive from Sierra Vista to Portal.



Greater Pewee is another iconic Arizona bird we saw on our way up Miller Canyon. Note the bright orange lower mandible. Photo by guide Micah Riegner.

Reptiles

Eastern Patch-nosed Snake (*Salvadora grahamiae*) We came across one on the road to Onion Saddle in the Chiricahuas--a rare find!

Ornate Tree Lizard (*Urosaurus ornatus*) One was on the rocks at the Beatty's.

Yarrow's Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus jarrovi*) A couple were seen at Miller Canyon.

Tiger Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris*) Seen near State Line Road.

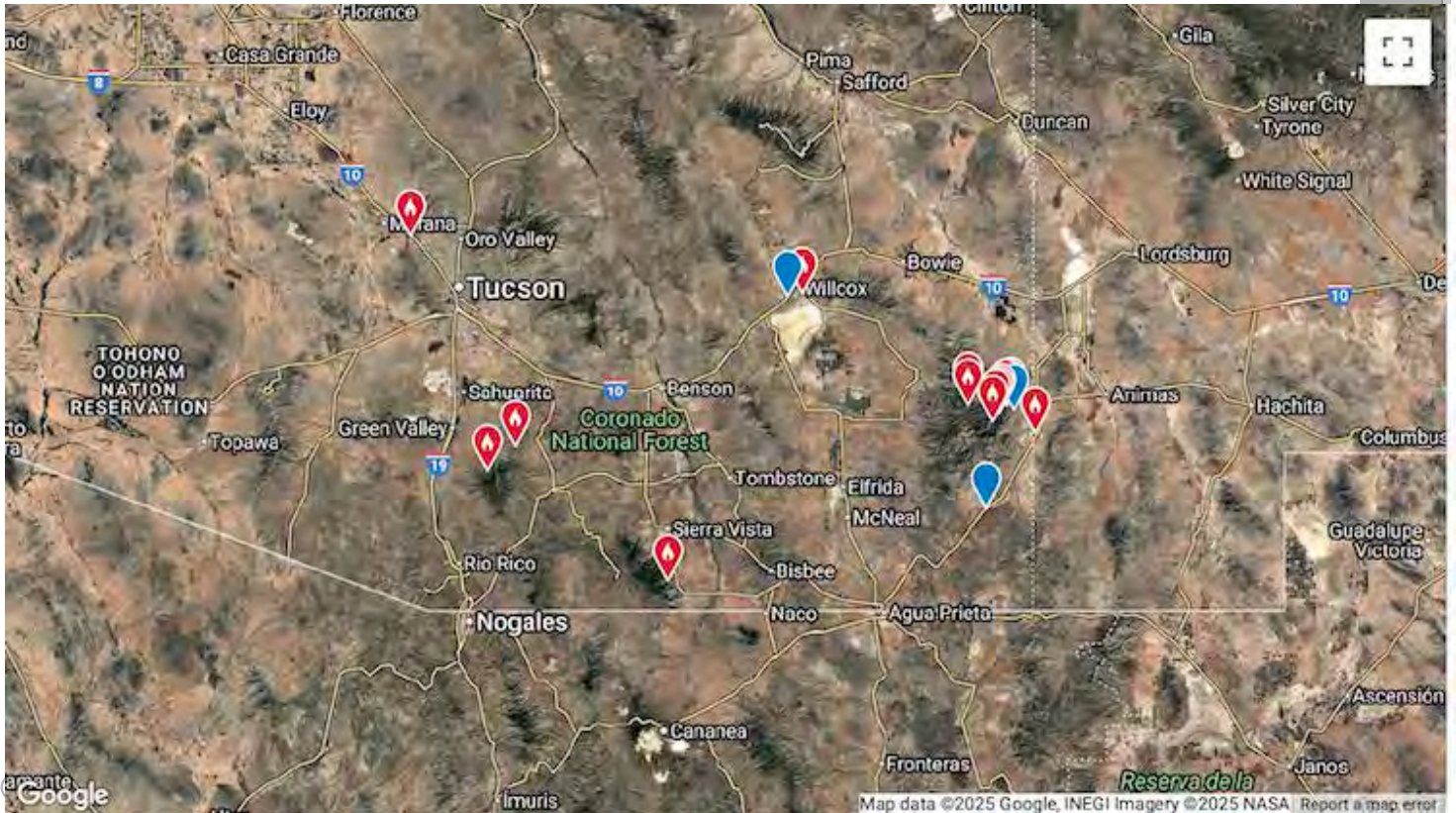

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/375302>

Micah

Field Guides Birding Tours--Arizona Nightbirds & More II (with Micah Riegner)

17 – 20 May 2025 (4 days) Link-only

 United StatesArizona | New Mexico Subregions Micah Riegner































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



























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[Species Observed](#)[Checklists](#)[Species with Photos](#)LIFERS  3 


























Species Observed
























[Show all details](#)

3	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Spatula discors</i>	  1
4	Cinnamon Teal	<i>Spatula cyanoptera</i>	  1
1	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	  1
2	American Wigeon	<i>Mareca americana</i>	  1
1	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	  1
5	Mexican Duck	<i>Anas diazi</i>	  1
2	Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	  1
15	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	  1
5	Scaled Quail	<i>Callipepla squamata</i>	  1
10	Gambel's Quail	<i>Callipepla gambelii</i>	  3
1	Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	  1
1	Band-tailed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>	  1
1	Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	  1
1	Inca Dove	<i>Columbina inca</i>	  1
6	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	  2
1	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	  1
4	Lesser Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i>	  2
3	Common Poorwill	<i>Phalaenoptilus nuttallii</i>	  2
2	Mexican Whip-poor-will	<i>Antrostomus arizonae</i>	  2
6	White-throated Swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>	  3
5	Rivoli's Hummingbird	<i>Eugenes fulgens</i>	  2
















2	Blue-throated Mountain-gem	<i>Lampornis clemenciae</i>	▶  2
8	Black-chinned Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>	▶  4
2	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	▶  2
1	Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>	▶  1
5	Broad-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus platycercus</i>	▶  2
9	Broad-billed Hummingbird	<i>Cynanthus latirostris</i>	▶  3
3	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	▶  2
2	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	▶  1
15	American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	▶  1
1	American Golden-Plover	<i>Pluvialis dominica</i>	▶  1
5	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	▶  1
1	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	▶  1
1	Snowy Plover	<i>Anarhynchus nivosus</i>	▶  1
3	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	▶  1
11	Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	▶  1
1	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	▶  1
4	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	▶  1
1	Baird's Sandpiper	<i>Calidris bairdii</i> 	▶  1  1
4	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	▶  1
4	Franklin's Gull	<i>Leucophaeus pipixcan</i>	▶  1
3	Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum brasilianum</i>	▶  1
10	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>	▶  1
1	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	▶  1
4	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	▶  4

1	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	▶  1
1	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Astur cooperii</i>	▶  1
3	Swainson's Hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	▶  3
4	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	▶  3
1	Flammulated Owl	<i>Psilosops flammeolus</i>	▶  1  1
2	Whiskered Screech-Owl	<i>Megascops trichopsis</i> 	▶  1  2
1	Western Screech-Owl	<i>Megascops kennicottii</i>	▶  1
2	Northern Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium gnoma</i>	▶  1
2	Elf Owl	<i>Micrathene whitneyi</i>	▶  1
1	Red-naped Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus nuchalis</i>	▶  1
14	Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	▶  5
1	Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>	▶  1
3	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates scalaris</i>	▶  2
1	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates villosus</i>	▶  1
1	Arizona Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates arizonae</i>	▶  1
1	Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	▶  1
1	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	▶  1
2	Greater Pewee	<i>Contopus pertinax</i>	▶  2
4	Western Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>	▶  4
3	Hammond's Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax hammondii</i>	▶  3
8	Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax oberholseri</i>	▶  4
1	Western Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis</i>	▶  1
2	Buff-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax fulvifrons</i>	▶  1

1	Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>	▶  1
2	Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>	▶  2
2	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	▶  2
2	Brown-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>	▶  2
2	Cassin's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	▶  1
5	Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	▶  2
3	Hutton's Vireo	<i>Vireo huttoni</i>	▶  2
5	Plumbeous Vireo	<i>Vireo plumbeus</i>	▶  4
1	Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	▶  1
1	Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	▶  1
4	Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	▶  1
2	Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	<i>Aphelocoma woodhouseii</i>	▶  2
17	Mexican Jay	<i>Aphelocoma wollweberi</i>	▶  3
12	Chihuahuan Raven	<i>Corvus cryptoleucus</i> 	▶  5  1
2	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	▶  2
4	Mexican Chickadee	<i>Poecile sclateri</i>	▶  1
4	Bridled Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus wollweberi</i>	▶  2
1	Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>	▶  1
3	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	▶  1
8	Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	▶  1
24	Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	▶  3
1	Purple Martin	<i>Progne subis</i>	▶  1
2	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	▶  1

9	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	▶  1
4	Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	▶  1
9	Bushtit	<i>Psaltiriparus minimus</i>	▶  3
3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Corthylio calendula</i>	▶  2
3	White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	▶  2
4	Pygmy Nuthatch	<i>Sitta pygmaea</i>	▶  1
3	Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>	▶  3
4	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	▶  2
1	Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila melanura</i>	▶  1
2	Northern House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	▶  1
1	Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	▶  1
2	Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>	▶  1
2	Curve-billed Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>	▶  1
2	Bendire's Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma bendirei</i>	▶  1
2	Crissal Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma crissale</i>	▶  2
2	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	▶  2
1	Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	▶  1
2	Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>	▶  2
10	Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	▶  1
3	American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	▶  2
2	Olive Warbler	<i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>	▶  1
2	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i> *	▶  1
10	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	▶  4

1	Pine Siskin	<i>Spinus pinus</i>	▶  1
7	Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	▶  2
1	Five-striped Sparrow	<i>Amphispizopsis quinquestriata</i>	▶  1  1
2	Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>	▶  2
1	Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	▶  1
10	Yellow-eyed Junco	<i>Junco phaeonotus</i>	▶  1
2	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	▶  1
1	Vesper Sparrow	<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>	▶  1
7	Canyon Towhee	<i>Melospiza fusca</i>	▶  4
1	Abert's Towhee	<i>Melospiza aberti</i>	▶  1
2	Green-tailed Towhee	<i>Pipilo chlorurus</i>	▶  2
2	Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	▶  2
1	Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>	▶  1
4	Bullock's Oriole	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>	▶  2
12	Scott's Oriole	<i>Icterus parisorum</i>	▶  6
7	Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	▶  1
1	Bronzed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	▶  1
2	Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	▶  2
2	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	▶  1
1	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis celata</i>	▶  1
2	Lucy's Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis luciae</i>	▶  1
1	Virginia's Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis virginiae</i>	▶  1
3	MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Geothlypis tolmiei</i>	▶  3

1	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	▶  1
2	Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>	▶  2
24	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	▶  5
6	Grace's Warbler	<i>Setophaga graciae</i>	▶  4
12	Black-throated Gray Warbler	<i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>	▶  5
8	Townsend's Warbler	<i>Setophaga townsendi</i>	▶  2
3	Hermit Warbler	<i>Setophaga occidentalis</i>	▶  3
21	Wilson's Warbler	<i>Cardellina pusilla</i>	▶  4
4	Red-faced Warbler	<i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>	▶  2  3
7	Painted Redstart	<i>Myioborus pictus</i>	▶  4
5	Hepatic Tanager	<i>Piranga flava</i>	▶  4
1	Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>	▶  1
63	Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	▶  9
1	Flame-colored Tanager	<i>Piranga bidentata</i>	▶  1
5	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	▶  3
4	Pyrrhuloxia	<i>Cardinalis sinuatus</i>	▶  2
11	Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	▶  7
3	Lazuli Bunting	<i>Passerina amoena</i>	▶  2