



Field Guides Tour Report

Arizona's Second Spring I 2018

Jul 14, 2018 to Jul 23, 2018

Chris Benesh

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



One of the main highlights of the trip was this wonderful Rufous-capped Warbler that showed so well in Miller Canyon. Photo by participant Henry Trombley.

Our 2018 Arizona Second Spring Tour was a big success. The monsoon season is a wonderful time to explore the varied habitats of southeast Arizona when wildlife responds quickly to the sudden arrival of rainfall to the area. Things got off to a good start with a brief visit with a Burrowing Owl on our way out to the Sonoran desert west of Tucson to track down Gilded Flicker. The rest of the trip was spent exploring areas south and east including the Huachuca Mountains, where we had our first views of Elegant Trogon, the spectacular Chiricahuas, a sampling of waterbirds around Willcox, a brief visit to the Santa Catalina Mountains (take that, Red-faced Warbler!), and the Patagonia-Nogales corridor and California Gulch and the Atascosa highlands.

There were so many wonderful sightings and experiences along the way, ranging from eye-popping views of Rufous-capped Warbler in Miller Canyon, the nesting Elegant Trogons in Cave Creek, our nighttime encounter with Buff-collared Nightjar in Warsaw Canyon, the not-a-cow Black Bear that Mary spotted in the Chiricahuas, the wonderful young Gray Fox we watched up near Rustler Park, the colorful Western Black-tailed Rattlesnake cruising the road below Portal, and all of the various invertebrates from scorpions, vinegaroons, and tarantulas to the terrifying giant Curve-faced Windscorpion.

The weather itself provided for a view spectacular settings like our time in Willcox watching thunderstorms develop around us in all directions. There were some other memorable microbursts observed in the Chiricahuas. Thankfully skies were clear at times, providing stunning planet gazing opportunities, such as our five planet sweep (Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and shortly thereafter Mars) panning from west to east. At other times, the clouds made for some spectacular sunrises and sunsets.

Thanks so much to all of you for making this tour such a success. It was a truly wonderful experience exploring around with you in wonderful Arizona. I hope to see all of you again on future trips and wish you all the best! — Chris

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 =

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Spatula discors*)

CINNAMON TEAL (*Spatula cyanoptera*)

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*)

GADWALL (*Mareca strepera*) – There was an unseasonal pair of these at Willcox.

MALLARD (NORTHERN) (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*)

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – We saw a fair number of these, especially at Patagonia Lake. Considered by some authorities as a full species separate from Mallard, now including eBird.

REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*) – One summering at Willcox.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Odontophoridae (New World Quail).

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – Some nice looks at these cotton tops in the grasslands east of the Chiricahuas.

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*)

MONTEZUMA QUAIL (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – Great views of a pair of birds visiting Mary Jo's feeders. Another pair was near the Chiricahuas visitors center one evening, and still more on our way through California Gulch.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies).

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Seen at Mary Jo's place and again at the Southwestern Research Station in the Chiricahuas.

Podicipedidae (Grebes).

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags).

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – This and the next species were at Patagonia Lake.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns).

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – At least 10 were at Willcox.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills).

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – There were four of these in Willcox.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures).

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites).

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – We tracked down a couple of these elegant raptors in St. David.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

NORTHERN GOSHAWK (*Accipiter gentilis*) – An amazing encounter with an adult bird flying around over Mary Jo's place. We also heard some young birds calling in Miller Canyon.

COMMON BLACK HAWK (*Buteo gallus anthracinus*) – A terrific addition at Patagonia Lake as we were preparing to leave.

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – This species has been patchy in recent years on this tour route. Thankfully we had a cooperative group of them in Willcox on our way through there.

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – Several good views of this species.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*)

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – It was a good trip for this species too.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots).

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets).

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*)

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings).

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) – There was a group of eighteen at Willcox.

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*)

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*Calidris bairdii*)

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*)
WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*)
LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)
WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*)
SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)
SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*)
GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)
LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*)

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – Seen in the Huachucas and Chiricahuas.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) [I]

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – Scarce in southern Arizona, we managed a single sighting at the Paton's.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – A few at Kino Springs and near Tumacacori.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*)

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – Several nice encounters with this iconic southwestern bird!

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus americanus*)

Strigidae (Owls)

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops kennicottii*) – We managed to track one down near our motel in Portal.

WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops trichopsis*) – A treat in lower Miller Canyon.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*)

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – The only one seen was one along East Turkey Creek in the Chiricahuas.

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – There were a couple of furtive birds along Silver Creek in the Chiricahuas.

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – One was hanging out at its usual spot in Tucson.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*)

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*)

BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR (*Antrostomus ridgwayi*) – A magical evening in Warsaw Canyon south of the confluence, we joined up with Melody Kehl and her group and enjoyed this species.

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrostomus arizonae arizonae*) – Well heard and seen a few times in flight in Cave Creek.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RIVOLI'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*) – Name changed as part of a recent split in the species.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – The Chiricahuas continues to be the stronghold for this species. Several seen well at SWRS.

LUCIFER HUMMINGBIRD (*Calothorax lucifer*) – Mary Jo's once again proved to be the place to see this scarce species. We had a few wonderful studies.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*)

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*)

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*)

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus rufus*)

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus calliope*) – Great looks at this tiny species at the George Walker House in Paradise. It got a couple of votes for trip favorite.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus latirostris*)

VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia violiceps*) – Our first one was at Beatty's in Miller Canyon. Also seen at Paton's and briefly the Roadside Rest.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

ELEGANT TROGON (*Trogon elegans*) – One of the most popular birds of the trip; we had a couple of nice encounters. Our first was in Huachuca Canyon, and later Dave Jasper directed us to a nest along South Fork in the Chiricahuas.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

GILA WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes uropygialis*)

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*)

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*)

ARIZONA WOODPECKER (*Picoides arizonae*)

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*)

GILDED FLICKER (*Colaptes chrysoides*) – We managed to track one down after a lot of searching on our first afternoon in the Tucson Mts.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras).

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers).

NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – We saw our first one in Portal, where this species has only recently become established. Another pair were along the Santa Cruz River while we were seeking becards.

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*) – We saw birds in Carr Canyon, high in the Chiricahuas, and on Mt. Lemmon.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*)

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*)

BUFF-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) – Quite a few of these were in upper Carr Canyon. One of the more distinctive Empidonax.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*)

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*)

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Seen a variety of places, this species is always a treat to see!

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*)

SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*)

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*)

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – We had several, including birds in Portal, the Roadside Rest, and Santa Gertrudis Lane. This species has expanded its foothold in the state recently.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies).

ROSE-THROATED BECARD (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) – Once we found the right spot to view the nest we had good looks at a pair of birds near Tumacacori. There are now apparently several pairs nesting along the Santa Cruz River.

Laniidae (Shrikes).

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

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

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*)

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*)

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*)

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*)

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies).

STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*) – We managed to find a single bird along the Paradise Road.

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*)

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*)

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows).

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – Seen in the Sonoran desert west of Tucson.

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice).

MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE (*Poecile gambeli*) – Seen on Mt. Lemmon during our visit there.

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – Good numbers of these were evident in the Chiricahuas, the only accessible range that this species occurs in the US.

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*)

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits).

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*)

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits).

BUSHTIT (INTERIOR) (*Psaltriparus minimus plumbeus*)

Sittidae (Nuthatches).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*) – Up high in the Chiricahuas and again on Mt. Lemmon.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*)

PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*)

Certhiidae (Treecreepers).

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens).

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – Our only one was at the Roadside Rest.

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*)

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*)

BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila nigriceps*) – We had two of these near the Florida Work Study area.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies).

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – We had one on our way out of Fort Huachuca.

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – We had two up high in the Chiricahuas.

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*)

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers).

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*)

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – Well seen along Stateline Road east of the Chiricahuas.

CRISSAL THRASHER (*Toxostoma crissale*) – Always a tough one this time of year, but we had several encounters.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Ptiliognatidae (Silky-flycatchers).

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*)

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler).

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – A few nice studies of this species that is in its own family.

Parulidae (New World Warblers).

LUCY'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis luciae*)

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*)

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (*Setophaga coronata*)

GRACE'S WARBLER (*Setophaga graciae*)

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*)

RUFOUS-CAPPED WARBLER (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – We had amazing views of one in Miller Canyon that was really responsive to my squeaking. This proved to be the most popular sighting of the trip for several.

RED-FACED WARBLER (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – This species proved elusive for us in both the Huachucas and Chiricahuas, but we were able to track down several on Mt. Lemmon! Whew!

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – Always a treat!

Passerellidae (New World Buntings and Sparrows).

RUFOUS-WINGED SPARROW (*Peucaea carpalis*)

BOTTERI'S SPARROW (*Peucaea botterii*)

CASSIN'S SPARROW (*Peucaea cassinii*)

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*)

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*)

BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW (*Spizella atrogularis*)

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*)

FIVE-STRIPED SPARROW (*Amphispiza quinquestriata*) – We saw a soggy one on our first morning in Box Canyon and then enjoyed another one while in Warsaw Canyon before our picnic dinner there. Quite a range restricted species in the US.

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*)

YELLOW-EYED JUNCO (*Junco phaeonotus*)

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*)

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*)

ABERT'S TOWHEE (*Melospiza aberti*)

RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*)

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*)

Icteriidae (Yellow-breasted Chat).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – Now in its own family.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies).

HEPATIC TANAGER (*Piranga flava*) – Several sightings in the mountains but also a pair of birds along the Santa Cruz River.

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*)
WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*)
NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*)
BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)
BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*)
LAZULI BUNTING (*Passerina amoena*)
INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – There were two territorial males at Beatty's in Miller Canyon.
VARIED BUNTING (*Passerina versicolor*) – This terrific species was seen in lower Florida Canyon and again at the Roadside Rest.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – A couple of these were in Willcox.
EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S) (*Sturnella magna lilianae*)
HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*)
BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*)
SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*)
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)
BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*)
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)
GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)
PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*)
LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows).

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [H]

MAMMALS

BRAZILIAN FREE-TAILED BAT (*Tadarida brasiliensis*)
EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)
DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)
BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*)
ANTELOPE JACKRABBIT (*Lepus alleni*)
CLIFF CHIPMUNK (*Tamias dorsalis*)
HARRIS'S ANTELOPE SQUIRREL (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*)
ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*)
ROUND-TAILED GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*)
MEXICAN FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus nayaritensis*)
ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus arizonensis*)
BOTTAE'S POCKET GOPHER (*Thomomys bottae*)
GRAY FOX (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – We had an amazing encounter with this species high up in the Chiricahuas where we came upon a young fox pup trying to keep up with mom.
BLACK BEAR (*Ursus americanus*) – "That's not a cow!" exclaimed Mary as she spotted a Black Bear walking along the hillside above Silver Creek on the Paradise Road.
STRIPED SKUNK (*Mephitis mephitis*)
COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*) – A couple of sightings in the Chiricahuas. Also known as Javalina.
MULE DEER (*Odocoileus hemionus*)
WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*)
PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

A few additional vertebrates:

Yarrow's (Mountain) Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus jarrovi*) Seen in various mountain ranges.

Western (Tiger) Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris marmoratus*) Seen the first afternoon in Tucson Mountain Park.

Western Black-tailed Rattlesnake (*Crotalus molossus*) One seen crossing the road near Portal.

Sonoran Desert Toad (*Incilius alvarius*) Seen near California Gulch.

We also had a nice assortment arthropods from tarantulas, whipscorpions, windscorpions, and scorpions.

Totals for the tour: 192 bird taxa and 19 mammal taxa