

Trip Report — Arizona's Second Spring I 2025

July 19-28, 2025 with Chris Benesh & Alex Sundvall



We had fabulous looks at this territorial Five-striped Sparrow in Box Canyon. Photo by Chris Benesh.

Our Arizona Second Spring tour is designed to fall right in the middle of the monsoon season, typically with convective afternoon thunderstorms bringing much needed rain to the region and triggering some bird species to begin nesting. This year's monsoon was patchy and sporadic. During the first three days of the tour, the monsoon was on and we witnessed some decent rains and even a heavy downpour. But as we left the Chiricahuas behind, the monsoon shut down for the remainder of the tour. As a result, a few species were uncharacteristically absent or undetectable in the drier conditions. It was remarkable to see so few grassland sparrows, but I feel fortunate that we managed a Cassin's, a species missed by many this season.

Our tour began in Tucson with an afternoon visit to the Tucson Mountains where we tracked down the saguaro nesting Gilded Flicker. We then headed to Desert Meadows Park for a few desert species and our first hummingbirds. After dinner we headed into Box Canyon where we managed to hear Buff-collared Nightjar and Common Poorwill and black light a few scorpions while we listened.



This adult Mexican Spotted Owl was an exciting discovery high in the Chiricahuas. Photo by Alex Sundvall.

The next morning, we headed back to Box Canyon, sighting a nice Varied Bunting along the way as well as a Botteri's Sparrow. Birding in a light rain, we managed nice looks at a Five-striped Sparrow and others. We then headed east to Willcox, stopping to view our first Chihuahuan Ravens. After lunch we birded Lake Cochise and the Twin Lakes Golf Course. We tallied 35 species in this small inland sea, including a couple of Stilt Sandpipers, Baird's Sandpipers, and a Chihuahuan Meadowlark. Then it was on to Portal, our destination for the next three nights. We decided to take advantage of the

weather and do some owling our first night. We were rewarded with great Whiskered Screech-Owl and Mexican Whip-poor-will. We then spotted Western Screech-Owl right in Portal before calling it a night.



One of the quail birds of North America; we lucked into a pair of Montezuma Quail in the Chiricahuas. Photo by Alex Sundvall.

The next morning, we headed out into the desert east of Portal and were rewarded with a Scaled Quail perched. Then we had a nice encounter with a Bendire's Thrasher near Four Bar Cottages. Later that morning we headed into Cave Creek Canyon and up South Fork where we were super fortunate to connect with a pair of Elegant (soon to be Coppery-tailed again) Trogons at the end of the road. Activity was good with some 32 species recorded here. We watched hummingbirds at the Southwestern Research Station and then headed to Bob Rodrigues's yard to watch feeders before lunch. The afternoon included a trip to the George Walker House in Paradise where a male White-eared Hummingbird, Calliope Hummingbird, and a Juniper Titmouse kept us entertained. We returned to SWRS where a Berylline

Hummingbird joined the ranks of hummers. And on our way back to the lodge, we connected with a pair of Montezuma Quail!



The Chiricahuas are also home to a population of Mexican Chickadees, the only accessible range in the United States for this species. Photo by Chris Benesh.

Tuesday included a trip into the high country of the Chiricahuas. Our destination was Pinery Canyon and two Mexican Spotted Owls (parent and fledgling) softened the hassle of dealing with a flat tire thanks to a recent road grading. The active monsoon soon drove us out of the high country, quite a downpour for so early in the day. That afternoon we paid a visit to the Chiricahua Desert Museum shop, and then headed to Bob Rodriguez's yard once again. This time we were rewarded with great views of a young Crissal Thrasher. We then tracked down a Thick-billed Kingbird in nearby Portal to finish off the day.

Still missing some high elevation species, we headed back up into the high country the following morning. We connected with Mexican Chickadee,

Greater Pewee, Western Flycatcher, Grace's Warbler, Black-chinned Sparrow, and Olive Warbler (whew!). Then it was time to leave the Chiricahuas and make our way to Sierra Vista and the Huachucas. This started with an afternoon visit to the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. A male Lucifer Hummingbird put in an appearance.



This male Varied Bunting was a welcome treat in the foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains. Photo by Alex Sundvall.

Thursday morning was spent up in Miller Canyon. We connected with a Red-faced Warbler at last, and finally had good looks at the Flame-colored Tanager pair present there. Watching feeders at Beatty's, we were surprised to see a Berylline Hummingbird put in an appearance, the first of the year for this location. A Violet-crowned Hummingbird was also present off and on. That afternoon we headed to the San Pedro House where we spent some time watching hummingbird banding being carried out by Sheri Williamson, Tom Wood and others. A great experience. We then walked out to the San

Pedro River for a bit of birding. After dinner that night we headed back to Miller Canyon for a bit of nightbirding. We had a terrific Elf Owl here.



One of the Flame-colored Tanagers we connected with in Miller Canyon. Photo by Chris Benesh.

We decided to head up to Carr Canyon on Friday morning, still needing Buff-breasted Flycatcher. They provided, with as many as seven seen. Grace's and Black-throated Gray warblers were among the other highlights. Then we left the Huachucas for Patagonia. Our first destination was up Harshaw Canyon where we connected with a pair of Rose-throated Becards that were nesting in the area. Gray Hawks were an added treat, as well as an apparent Big Brown Bat. We then headed to the Paton's Center for Hummingbirds for much of the remainder of the afternoon.

We started the weekend birding along the Anza Trail near Tubac. Here we had Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Gray Hawk, a family of Zone-tailed Hawks, our first Tropical Kingbirds, and more. Then off to Santa Gertrudis Lane for a nice

mix of birds including Rufous-winged Sparrow. That afternoon, we headed back into the Patagonia Mountains and managed to track down Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet. Back in Patagonia we found the Mississippi Kite pair and had great views of them.



We had good luck with thrashers on this trip with this Bendire's Thrasher putting on a show at the Four Bar Cottages. Photo by Alex Sundvall.

Our final morning found us doing a bit of cleanup. We stopped in at the Amado Ponds for Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and Neotropic Cormorant. We visited the grasslands below Madera Canyon and managed to track down a single Cassin's Sparrow. A stop at the historic Canoa Ranch provided a Double-crested Cormorant and Pied-billed Grebe. We decided to head to the hotel to escape the heat for a bit before heading out to Sweetwater Wetlands that afternoon, where we had a nice Greater Roadrunner and Common Gallinule. Our final activity of the tour was a nighttime visit to the Gilbert Ray Campground where we enjoyed the spectacle of several Lesser Nighthawks foraging around the lights there.



And this young Crissal Thrasher showed well for us at Bob Rodrigues's feeders near Portal.
Photo by Chris Benesh.

Some of the other critters seen on the tour:

- Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)
- Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)
- Antelope Jackrabbit (*Lepus alleni*)
- Cliff Chipmunk (*Neotamias dorsalis*)
- Harris's Antelope Squirrel (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*)
- Common Rock Squirrel (*Otospermophilus variegatus*)
- Round-tailed Ground Squirrel (*Zerospermophilus tereticaudus*)
- Mexican Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus nayaritensis*)
- Arizona Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus arizonensis*)
- Coyote (*Canis latrans*)
- Collared Peccary (*Dicotyles tajacu*)
- White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

Northern Black-tailed Rattlesnake (*Crotalus molossus molossus*)
Ornate Tree Lizard (*Urosaurus ornatus*)
Desert Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus magister*)
Clark's Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus clarkii*)
Yarrow's Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus jarrovi*)
Chihuahuan Spotted Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis exanguis*)
Sonoran Spotted Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis sonora*)
Zebra-tailed Lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides*)

Sonoran Desert Toad (*Incilius alvarius*)
American Bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*)

Desert Blonde Tarantula (*Aphonopelma chalcodes*)
Arizona Bark Scorpion (*Centruroides sculpturatus*)
Stripe-tailed Scorpion (*Paravaejovis spinigerus*)
Cash's Scorpion (*Vaejovis cashi*)
Apache Scorpion (*Pseudouroctonus apacheanus*)

Thanks to all of you for coming along on our southeast Arizona adventure, and special thanks to Alex who flew out last minute to drive a second vehicle for us once we learned of the Ford Transit recall. We wish the best to all of you and hope to meet up again on some future adventure. Good birding!

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/425315>

Chris (and Alex)



Field Guides Birding Tours -- ARIZONA'S SECOND SPRING, 2025 (with guides Chris Benesh & Alex Sundvall)



19 – 27 Jul 2025 (9 days) Link-only



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United States

Arizona | New Mexico Subregions

Chris Benesh, Alex Sundvall, fgi Triplists



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

DATA FOR: [Group \(all people\)](#) ▾

178

Species Observed

52

Checklists

2

Species with Photos

Species Observed

[Show all details](#)

4	Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>	▶  1
5	Cinnamon Teal	<i>Spatula cyanoptera</i>	▶  1
3	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	▶  2
8	Mexican Duck	<i>Anas diazi</i>	▶  3
5	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	▶  1
1	Scaled Quail	<i>Callipepla squamata</i>	▶  1
53	Gambel's Quail	<i>Callipepla gambelii</i>	▶  10
2	Montezuma Quail	<i>Cyrtonyx montezumae</i>	▶  1
8	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i> *	▶  3
4	Band-tailed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>	▶  3
23	Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	▶  11
5	Inca Dove	<i>Columbina inca</i>	▶  4
7	Common Ground Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>	▶  5
161	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	▶  27
35	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	▶  19
1	Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>	▶  1
5	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	▶  3
17	Lesser Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i>	▶  2
6	Common Poorwill	<i>Phalaenoptilus nuttallii</i>	▶  1
1	Buff-collared Nightjar	<i>Antrostomus ridgwayi</i>	▶  1

4	Mexican Whip-poor-will	<i>Antrostomus arizonae</i>	▶  1
6	White-throated Swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>	▶  1
12	Rivoli's Hummingbird	<i>Eugenes fulgens</i>	▶  5
11	Blue-throated Mountain-gem	<i>Lampornis clemenciae</i>	▶  3
1	Lucifer Hummingbird	<i>Calothorax lucifer</i>	▶  1
99	Black-chinned Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>	▶  15
13	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	▶  6
2	Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>	▶  1
1	Calliope Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus calliope</i>	▶  1
34	Rufous Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>	▶  11
16	Broad-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus platycercus</i>	▶  8
65	Broad-billed Hummingbird	<i>Cynanthus latirostris</i>	▶  16
1	White-eared Hummingbird	<i>Basilinna leucotis</i>	▶  1
4	Violet-crowned Hummingbird	<i>Ramosomyia violiceps</i>	▶  4
2	Berylline Hummingbird	<i>Saucerottia beryllina</i>	▶  1  2
1	Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>	▶  1
1	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	▶  1
3	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	▶  1
75	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	▶  1
125	American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	▶  1
4	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	▶  2
15	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	▶  1
1	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	▶  1

200	Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	▶  1
4	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	▶  1
3	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	▶  1
3	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	▶  1
2	Stilt Sandpiper	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>	▶  1
25	Baird's Sandpiper	<i>Calidris bairdii</i>	▶  1
5	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	▶  1
10	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>	▶  1
1	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	▶  1
1	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>	▶  1
1	Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum brasilianum</i>	▶  1
25	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>	▶  1
1	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	▶  1
1	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	▶  1
4	Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	▶  2
89	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	▶  31
3	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Astur cooperii</i>	▶  3
3	Mississippi Kite	<i>Ictinia mississippiensis</i>	▶  2
8	Gray Hawk	<i>Buteo plagiatus</i>	▶  5
5	Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>	▶  3
7	Swainson's Hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	▶  6
7	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	▶  7
3	Whiskered Screech-Owl	<i>Megascops trichopsis</i>	▶  1

1	Western Screech-Owl	<i>Megascops kennicottii</i>	▶  1
1	Elf Owl	<i>Micrathene whitneyi</i>	▶  1
2	Spotted Owl	<i>Strix occidentalis</i> Sensitive	▶  1
2	Coppery-tailed Trogon	<i>Trogon ambiguus</i>	▶  1
57	Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	▶  13
20	Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>	▶  11
17	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates scalaris</i>	▶  14
3	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Leuconotopicus villosus</i>	▶  3
2	Arizona Woodpecker	<i>Leuconotopicus arizonae</i>	▶  2
6	Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	▶  4
1	Gilded Flicker	<i>Colaptes chrysoides</i>	▶  1
1	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	▶  1
2	Rose-throated Becard	<i>Pachyramphus aglaiae</i>	▶  1
1	Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma imberbe</i>	▶  1
5	Greater Pewee	<i>Contopus pertinax</i>	▶  5
39	Western Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>	▶  14
15	Western Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis</i>	▶  8
7	Buff-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax fulvifrons</i>	▶  1
8	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	▶  8
2	Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>	▶  2
13	Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	▶  6
25	Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>	▶  8
4	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	▶  2

16	Brown-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>	▶  12
7	Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Myiodynastes luteiventris</i>	▶  5
4	Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	▶  2
17	Cassin's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	▶  9
4	Thick-billed Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus crassirostris</i>	▶  2
15	Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	▶  8
23	Bell's Vireo	<i>Vireo bellii</i>	▶  12
12	Hutton's Vireo	<i>Vireo huttoni</i>	▶  8
6	Plumbeous Vireo	<i>Vireo plumbeus</i>	▶  5
1	Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	▶  1
5	Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	▶  5
1	Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	<i>Aphelocoma woodhouseii</i>	▶  1
53	Mexican Jay	<i>Aphelocoma wollweberi</i>	▶  11
3	Chihuahuan Raven	<i>Corvus cryptoleucus</i>	▶  1
18	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	▶  12
6	Mexican Chickadee	<i>Poecile sclateri</i>	▶  4
13	Bridled Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus wollweberi</i>	▶  4
1	Juniper Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus ridgwayi</i>	▶  1
23	Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>	▶  12
4	Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	▶  1
75	Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	▶  1
1	Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	▶  1
5	Purple Martin	<i>Progne subis</i>	▶  1

2	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	▶  2
24	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	▶  7
18	Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	▶  4
6	Bushtit	<i>Psaltirparus minimus</i>	▶  1
12	White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	▶  11
22	Pygmy Nuthatch	<i>Sitta pygmaea</i>	▶  3
10	Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>	▶  5
3	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>	▶  2
2	Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliophtila melanura</i>	▶  1
3	Rock Wren	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>	▶  1
14	Northern House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	▶  6
11	Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	▶  8
7	Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>	▶  3
3	European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> *	▶  2
20	Curve-billed Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>	▶  11
1	Bendire's Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma bendirei</i>	▶  1
1	Crissal Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma crissale</i>	▶  1
3	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	▶  3
9	Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	▶  2
2	Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	▶  1
15	American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	▶  7
27	Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>	▶  5
1	Olive Warbler	<i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>	▶  1

49	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	*	▶  9
126	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>		▶  23
115	Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>		▶  23
2	Rufous-winged Sparrow	<i>Peucaea carpalis</i>		▶  1
1	Botteri's Sparrow	<i>Peucaea botterii</i>		▶  1
1	Cassin's Sparrow	<i>Peucaea cassinii</i>		▶  1
4	Black-chinned Sparrow	<i>Spizella atrogularis</i>		▶  3
1	Five-striped Sparrow	<i>Amphispizopsis quinquestriata</i>		▶  1
31	Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>		▶  8
3	Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>		▶  2
24	Yellow-eyed Junco	<i>Junco phaeonotus</i>		▶  5
15	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>		▶  5
12	Canyon Towhee	<i>Melospiza fusca</i>		▶  8
15	Abert's Towhee	<i>Melospiza aberti</i>		▶  8
2	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	<i>Aimophila ruficeps</i>		▶  2
32	Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>		▶  11
22	Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>		▶  6
1	Yellow-headed Blackbird	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>		▶  1
2	Chihuahuan Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella lilianae</i>		▶  2
11	Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>		▶  7
5	Bullock's Oriole	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>		▶  3
7	Scott's Oriole	<i>Icterus parisorum</i>		▶  6
4	Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>		▶  2

5	Bronzed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	▶  3
71	Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	▶  10
20	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	▶  4
8	Lucy's Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis luciae</i>	▶  5
6	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	▶  3
14	Northern Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga aestiva</i>	▶  9
1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	▶  1
3	Grace's Warbler	<i>Setophaga graciae</i>	▶  2
3	Black-throated Gray Warbler	<i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>	▶  2
1	Red-faced Warbler	<i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>	▶  1
14	Painted Redstart	<i>Myioborus pictus</i>	▶  6
8	Hepatic Tanager	<i>Piranga flava</i>	▶  6
15	Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>	▶  7
9	Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	▶  5
2	Flame-colored Tanager	<i>Piranga bidentata</i>	▶  2  1
26	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	▶  11
10	Pyrrhuloxia	<i>Cardinalis sinuatus</i>	▶  5
25	Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	▶  15
28	Blue Grosbeak	<i>Passerina caerulea</i>	▶  9
5	Varied Bunting	<i>Passerina versicolor</i>	▶  4

HYBRIDS

8	Mallard x Mexican Duck (hybrid)	<i>Anas platyrhynchos x diazi</i>	▶  1
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ADDITIONAL TAXA

1	Mallard/Mexican Duck	<i>Anas platyrhynchos/diazi</i>	▶  1
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16

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird

Selasphorus rufus/sasin

5