



Field Guides Tour Report

Texas' Big Bend & Hill Country 2018

Apr 21, 2018 to Apr 30, 2018

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



The Big Bend and Hill Country tour puts you right in the middle of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher country! Here's one from our first day of tour, shortly after leaving San Antonio. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

Amazing vistas, gorgeous sunsets, a number of specialty birds, and an impressive selection of other critters... all of those things make the Big Bend & Hill Country of Texas fascinating places to visit. Whether it's the Colima Warbler or Black-capped Vireo, the Gray Vireo or the Lucifer Hummingbird, this tour really does hold a number of gems.

We started out in San Antonio but it didn't take long to start seeing interesting birds. Whether it was the Scissor-tailed Flycatchers at the rest area, or the Harris's Hawks alongside the highway, the trip was off to a good start. We ended in Del Rio where a trick candle plagued a birthday cake and Lesser Nighthawks danced across the dusk sky.

Our first full day of birding started right in Del Rio where the duck pond was abuzz with Chimney Swifts, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, lots of swallows, and a variety of other goodies. Our next stop, the Vega Verde Road, was full of birdlife and we tallied some south Texas specialties like Olive Sparrow, Long-billed Thrasher, Couch's Kingbird, Painted Bunting, and even a couple of fantastic White-collared Seedeaters! The drive west was highlighted by a stop at the Pecos River where, besides an impressive selection of shorebirds, we were treated to views of Rock Wren, White-throated Swift, and Hooded Oriole. We continued west to Big Bend National Park where, for the last hour or two of the drive, the impressive sky-touching vista grew ever larger in the fading light.

We awoke the next morning to a beautiful night sky in Big Bend! After breakfast, we drove to Blue Creek Canyon where we took a stroll up into the dry creekbed and saw the rare Lucifer Hummingbird, the sharp-looking Black-throated Sparrow, and bonus sightings like Grasshopper and Rufous-crowned sparrows. A visit to the Sam Nail Ranch oasis gave us a quick Varied Bunting before heading back for lunch. The afternoon at the Dugout Wells was warm but filled with Bell's Vireos, Scaled Quail, and even a migrant Marsh Wren!

Taking advantage of a good forecast, we decided to make the hike up the Pinnacles Trail on our second day in Big Bend. On the ascent, we enjoyed the friendly Mexican Jays, a variety of tanagers, flycatchers, and vireos. We finally struck gold when a Colima Warbler was found singing shy of the pass! Eventually, we continued up and over the pass and down towards Boot Springs for lunch. Eating a picnic in the company of Cordilleran Flycatchers is never a bad thing! The shade of the canyon was a welcome sight as we continued birding, finding Blue-throated Hummingbirds and additional Colima Warblers as well. We got back to the cabins that afternoon tired but happy!

Our final full day in Big Bend was spent exploring some additional birdy spots along the Rio Grande. The Rio Grande Village was hosting a Common Black Hawk and Gray Hawk that we all saw well despite some wind! The campground was alive with Clay-colored Sparrows, Vermilion Flycatchers, Inca Dove, and even a White-faced Ibis. An afternoon visit to the wastewater pond was quite birdy with sightings including Scott's Oriole, Varied Bunting, a hoard of Pine Siskins, and even a rare Cassin's Finch.

Our final morning in Big Bend found us at the Cottonwood Campground where we enjoyed a brief encounter with a Lucy's Warbler, a regal Great Horned Owl, and a wide variety of migrants like Northern Parula, Painted Bunting, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and Bullock's and Orchard orioles. We made a quick pause at the Santa Elena Canyon overlook before moving on to the Davis Mountains where we were greeted by Cassin's Kingbirds galore. That evening, we even witnessed two Elf Owls at a nest hole!

We explored more of the Davis Mountains the next morning before heading for Balmorhea Lake to the north. Always a birdy spot, this migrant trap was hosting a variety of new waterbirds and shorebirds for our list such as Willet, Baird's Sandpiper, Clark's and Western grebes, a lingering Snow Goose, and even a stray Laughing Gull. Meanwhile, the nearby cattails were hosting Soras and Virginia Rails that, occasionally, would chirp and grunt. From there, we headed back to the east, to the Hill Country.

Neal's Lodges, our home for the remaining few nights, was a great jumping off spot for visiting Lost Maples SNA, home to the range-restricted Golden-cheeked Warbler. To say we got good looks at this warbler would be an understatement! The variety of other warblers and vireos was impressive as well; Yellow-throated Warblers, Indigo Buntings, Yellow-throated Vireos, White-eyed Vireo, and even a Black-capped Vireo put in brief appearances. Some White-tipped Doves were heard and then seen, and even an Eastern Screech-Owl glared at us from its day-roost. That afternoon, we studied parulas along the river and were "rewarded" with several hybrids. That evening, even a Chuck-will's-widow did a leisurely lap around us!

Our final morning took us towards Brackettville where we added Dickcissel and Northern Bobwhite among the lush grasslands, and had a stunning look at a well-behaving Gray Vireo. It was here that we had outstanding luck with a Black-capped Vireo that decided to pop out and perch in the open allowing scope views! Later that day, Fort Clark Springs hosted a number of new species such as Canyon Wren, Eastern Bluebird, and Eastern Wood-Pewee. The evening show in Concan was not one to forget! After our awesome food brought by Tiara and John, the Frio Bat Cave exploded with bats around dusk and we witnessed the better part of 13 million bats exiting the cave! The local Red-tailed Hawks nabbed a few, a visiting Swainson's Hawk had tough luck, and a Striped Skunk had a different idea altogether and instead headed for the cave opening.

This tour was made a lot more enjoyable by having such a fun group along and Chris and I really enjoyed showing some of Texas to all of you. Major thanks goes to Karen for having everything in order from our Austin office and to Tiara and John for meeting us with such a great picnic dinner! Until next time, good birding!

- Cory

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)

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – This attractive duck was common at the pond in Del Rio during our first morning of birding. We'd see them again on the wooded pond in Fort Clark Springs towards the end of the trip as well.

SNOW GOOSE (*Anser caerulescens*) – A lingerer was swimming on Balmorhea Lake. This is a pretty uncommon sighting for this part of Texas at this time of year.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Spatula discors*) – A few of these migrant dabblers were on the Pecos River alongside a variety of other ducks and shorebirds as we headed towards Big Bend.

CINNAMON TEAL (*Spatula cyanoptera*) – Like the previous species, these handsome dabblers were spotted on the Pecos River and then again at Balmorhea Lake.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*) – This is another duck that we spotted on the Pecos River and then again at Balmorhea Lake.

GADWALL (*Mareca strepera*) – A few of these were sprinkled throughout the teal and shovelers at the Pecos River. At Balmorhea Lake, a couple of these flew by showing the distinctive white inner secondaries.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Mareca americana*) – Although never very numerous, this dabbler was also spotted at the Pecos River Overlook and Balmorhea Lake.

MALLARD (NORTHERN) (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*) – It's debatable whether some of the green-headed Mallards we saw were legit, wild ones or not.

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – This subspecies of Mallard was spotted briefly at Balmorhea Lake by a few folks, perhaps only in flight.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (*Anas crecca*) – Not expected on every tour. We chanced into this dabbler, the smallest dabbling duck species in the world, both at the Pecos River Overlook and at Balmorhea Lake.

REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*) – Our first encounter with this attractive diving duck was along Vega Verde Road in Del Rio where a flock of 8 was found swimming on a pond. We saw another drake on Balmorhea Lake as well.

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – Our only encounter with this migrant was on the pond along Vega Verde Road in Del Rio.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – More than 60 of these stiff-tails were afloat on Balmorhea Lake.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

NORTHERN BOBWHITE (*Colinus virginianus*) – Our final day of birding yielded a few of these singing in the grasslands on a side-road near Brackettville. They, however, remained unseen. [*]

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – Plump little feathered footballs, these cottontops were seen skirting along a roadside in Big Bend near the Dugout Wells oasis. We ended up seeing another distant flock at Balmorhea Lake coming down to the water.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – We had a couple of scattered sightings throughout the tour as well as some heard-only gobbling.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Balmorhea Lake was the only spot we found this little grebe.

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) – Balmorhea Lake was a great spot to compare this species with the following one. The Western Grebe has more black on the face that extends down below the eye.

CLARK'S GREBE (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) – We had side-by-side views along with Western Grebes at Balmorhea Lake. These have a brighter yellow bill and more white in the face.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – Our only encounters with this species were in Del Rio at the pond and then again along the river there.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – A duo of these big waterbirds were at Balmorhea Lake.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – This familiar heron was seen at a few of the freshwater habitats we visited.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – One of these was spotted on our second day.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Slender with yellow feet, these little egrets were seen at Vega Verde Road in Del Rio and again at Balmorhea Lake.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – This little heron was seen by a few on our first day as we headed west towards Del Rio.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – One of these unobtrusive herons was spotted from the Pecos River Overlook on our second day of birding.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – A flyover in Del Rio was our only encounter with this night-heron.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – This dark ibis was spotted in Big Bend at a flooded, grassy area. We saw a couple more at Balmorhea Lake later on as well.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Common and widespread throughout the tour.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Our most common vulture, these were abundant throughout.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – These fish-eaters were present at Balmorhea Lake.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus hudsonius*) – Our first was along Vega Verde Road in Del Rio and then we had another migrant at Blue Creek Canyon in Big Bend.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – We had good looks at one at Lost Maples as it soared overhead showing the long tail with a rounded tip.

COMMON BLACK HAWK (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – The nesting area at Rio Grande Village in Big Bend was being attended by at least one bird that we saw perched quite low. This is such a fun specialty and it was picked by many as one of the highlights of the trip.

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – As we drove west out of San Antonio, we found a pair of these cool hawks perched alongside the highway. We saw another at the bat cave on our final evening.

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – This was another raptor at the Rio Grande Village in Big Bend that was high on our list of targets. By some miracle, and despite a roaring wind, we got a view of one of these perched out in the open!

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*) – A quick detour on our first day of birding yielded one of these perched on a telephone pole. This would end up being the only sighting of the trip.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – A long-winged, graceful buteo. We spotted these numerous times in open country throughout the tour. At the bat cave, a few tried catching bats but they didn't seem to quite manage the mechanics.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – We ended up seeing quite a few of these interesting raptors including at Vega Verde Road in Del Rio, the Pinnacles Trail in Big Bend, and then another along the river at Neal's Lodges.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – This is a familiar raptor of open country that we tallied every day of tour.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus limicola*) – Being rather secretive, this marsh bird was heard only from the cattails at Balmorhea Lake. [*]

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) – From deep within the marsh at Balmorhea Lake, this slinky species called a few times tipping us off to its presence. [*]

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – One of these was poking along the shore of the duck pond in Del Rio on our first morning of birding. Turns out, that was our only sighting of the tour.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Good numbers were at Balmorhea Lake but we saw them earlier as well at the Pecos River.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A small number of these long-legged shorebirds had gathered at Balmorhea Lake.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Our first sighting of this graceful and colorful shorebird came from the Pecos River but we caught up to more at Balmorhea Lake.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*) – A rare sighting at the Pecos River in late-April! One of these perched out on the flats in the river alongside several other shorebirds.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – A couple of these sat quietly near the duck pond in Del Rio on our first morning.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*Calidris bairdii*) – Both the Pecos River and Balmorhea Lake hosted this long-distance migrant in small numbers.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – This tiny peep is the smallest shorebird in the world! Despite this, we saw a couple at Balmorhea Lake on the flats with the other shorebirds.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*) – Not a common shorebird on this tour, only a few of these migrants were spotted at the Pecos River.
WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – This long-billed peep was also present at the Pecos River on our 2nd day of birding.
LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – A flock of 9 flew by at Balmorhea Lake giving their distinctive twittering calls.
WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – A beautiful and interesting shorebird, these were seen swimming in circles on Balmorhea Lake.
That circular motion creates an upwelling of sediment that the birds then pick through for food.
SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – This tail-bobber was fairly common at the Pecos River and Balmorhea Lake.
SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*) – An unobtrusive *Tringa* species, these were seen a couple of times on tour; first at the Pecos River, then in Del Rio at the Vega Verde Road, and lastly at the Rio Grande Village in Big Bend NP.
WILLET (WESTERN) (*Tringa semipalmata inornata*) – Always a good species to find inland in Texas, this uncommon migrant was spotted at Balmorhea Lake where several foraged on the lake shore. A few times, one flew by showing the distinctive black-and-white pattern to the wings.
LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – Seen at the two main shorebird spots on tour; the Pecos River and Balmorhea Lake.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – We spotted this rarity sleeping alongside some other gulls and terns at Balmorhea Lake. This represents the 5th record for Reeves County and the first there in 4 years. On the Texas coast, however, they're abundant.
FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) – We crossed paths with a couple of large flocks of these prairie gulls in Del Rio, the Pecos River, and Balmorhea Lake. Being in breeding plumage, they were donning their sharp, black caps which makes for a beautiful species of gull.
RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – A couple were loafing on the shore of Balmorhea Lake during our visit.
FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*) – Balmorhea Lake provided us with our only looks at this sharp tern species.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Widespread, seen in urban areas. [I]
BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – Some folks saw this on the hike up to Boot Springs.
EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Common and widespread, often in urban areas. [I]
INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – Our best look at this tiny dove came from the Rio Grande Village of Big Bend where one was foraging on the ground.
COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – Awesome looks were had in Del Rio near the seedeater spot. They look less scaly and shorter-tailed than the previous species.
WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (WHITE-TIPPED) (*Leptotila verreauxi angelica*) – The range of this species has expanded northward recently and they can now be seen in the Hill Country. Some folks got a look at one at the feeders at Lost Maples SNA.
WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Abundant, seen every day.
MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Almost as abundant as the previous species, this familiar dove was seen nearly every day of tour.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – This tour was a great one for seeing these snake-eating, ground-cuckoos! In fact, we tallied them almost every day.

Strigidae (Owls)

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops asio*) – A day-roosting gray-phase was spotted at Lost Maples SNA and we all had excellent looks; through the scope, you could even watch it inhaling/exhaling! Cool!
GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – One of these behemoths was perched quietly above the Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend NP.
ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – Our owling adventure in the Davis Mountains yielded a pair attending a nest hole! And yes, they are TINY... in fact, this is the smallest owl species on earth.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – Our very first evening together, in Del Rio, we watched as these swooped and darted overhead at the hotel.
COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – We heard this tiny nightjar calling in the Davis Mountains but a wind storm blew in and sent us packing. Thankfully, we caught up to another at the Frio bat cave on our final evening.
CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) – This chunky nightjar came in and did a lap around us one evening at Neal's Lodges. They're quite vocal and, in fact, their song was the most common night sound during our time there.

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*) – The pond in Del Rio on our first morning had an impressive number of these overhead. This species has such weak feet that they cannot perch horizontally on a tree branch. Instead, they hang.
WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – This speedy, western species was first seen at the Pecos River Overlook and then again around the pinnacles high above the Chisos Basin in Big Bend.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – One or two of these big hummers were hanging around Boot Springs in Big Bend NP. However, they were tough to find as they would perch motionless for good chunks of time.
LUCIFER HUMMINGBIRD (*Calothorax lucifer*) – Success! This is a very local hummingbird anywhere in the US and our hike up Blue Creek Canyon in Big Bend provided us with looks at a male.
RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – A male of this eastern species was perched high in the canopy above the Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend.
BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*) – There was no shortage of this western species at Neal's Lodges! The feeders by the dining area were always hosting a swarm.
BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – We heard the high-pitched whirring sound made by this species during our hike up the Pinnacles Trail in Big Bend.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – We had a scope look at one of these familiar fish-eaters at Balmorhea Lake.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – These clowns of the woodpecker world were fairly common at Big Bend and the Davis Mountains where we tallied them every day.

GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) – It didn't take long for us to get our first looks, we found some at the rest area after leaving the San Antonio airport! One of the highlights of the trip for some was the melanistic Golden-fronted we found at Fort Clark Springs.

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – Fairly common throughout our tour in dry, scrubby habitat. In fact, there was a pair nesting near our cabins at the Chisos Basin Lodge.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – A couple of these cool birds were spotted in Del Rio and then later in the trip at Fort Clark Springs.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – We had a couple of sightings but these falcons were never abundant. Our best looks came from a weedy rest area near Fort Davis.

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – This was a surprise! One of these falcons zoomed overhead in Del Rio at the duck pond. This species is easily missable on this tour.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – We encountered this master-of-speed twice; first at Balmorhea Lake and then again at the Frio bat cave. Any day with a Peregrine sighting is a good day!

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – A couple folks had this on the hike up the Pinnacles Trail/Boot Springs and then later on one was seen briefly on the approach drive to Santa Elena Canyon. This flycatcher is in the *Contopus* genus, the same as the pewees.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*) – These flycatchers were tallied a couple of times in Big Bend including at the Cottonwood Campground.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus virens*) – It's a cool tour when you're able to tally both wood-pewees just days apart! These were vocal in the Hill Country at places like Neal's Lodges and Fort Clark Springs.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax virescens*) – These empids were heard at Lost Maples SNA and a few may have gotten a glimpse as well. Tough to see sometimes, they like to stay high in deciduous forests.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – Our first encounter with this western empid was in Blue Creek Canyon in Big Bend NP. We saw another on our hike up the Pinnacles Trail as well.

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – This yellowish empid was heard well at our picnic lunch stop near Boot Springs in Big Bend. [*]

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – One of these water-loving flycatchers was spotted in Del Rio along Vega Verde Road.

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – Our trip started out with this species at the rest area along the highway. We would go on to see more at Lost Maples SNA at the end of our tour.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – These friendly flycatchers kept us company at the Chisos Basin Lodge dining hall nearly every evening!

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Vibrant and full of personality! These were seen well in Big Bend including at the Rio Grande Village campground where one perched at eye-level.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – A common and widespread *Myiarchus* on this tour.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – Bigger than the previous species, this *Myiarchus* often prefers riparian habitats of the Southwest. We saw them several times including at the Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend.

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – A very vocal bird came zooming in overhead at Fort Clark Springs but appeared to keep on going!

COUCH'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus couchii*) – This south Texas specialty showed up a couple of times including in Del Rio along Vega Verde Road, and then again at Fort Clark Springs at the end of our tour.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – Common in the rolling hills of the Davis Mountains. These yellow-bellied kingbirds have a darker gray head, a white chin/malar, and a pale tip to the tail.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – Fairly common with scattered sightings throughout including in Del Rio, Balmorhea Lake, and Fort Clark Springs.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – It didn't take long for us to start seeing these fantastic flycatchers on fences and power-lines near San Antonio. This species is in the *Tyrannus* genus, same as the kingbirds.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Widespread but never abundant, these little predators were spotted a few times in Big Bend NP and the Balmorhea Lake area.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLACK-CAPPED VIREO (*Vireo atricapilla*) – Success! We first played tag with this specialty at Lost Maples SNA but we all saw another quite well the following day along a roadside near Brackettville. This vireo is no longer listed as endangered.

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*) – This sneaky vireo put in brief appearances at Lost Maples SNA, Neal's Lodges, and Fort Clark Springs.

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*) – One of the most common songbirds in Big Bend, these were constantly giving their up-and-down, scratchy songs from thick shrubbery. Seeing them, however, was often a challenge.

GRAY VIREO (*Vireo vicinior*) – After an incredibly brief look at this plain vireo in Big Bend, we properly caught up to some near Brackettville where everyone had point-blank looks!

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – Fairly common in the oak habitats near the Chisos Basin in Big Bend NP.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*) – The burry quality to the song gave it away! We caught up to a couple of these at Lost Maples in the Hill Country including one right over the parking lot.

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – This vireo, formerly in the Solitary Vireo complex before it was split 3 ways, was spotted a few times in Big Bend NP including at Sam Nail Ranch, along the Pinnacles Trail, and at the Cottonwood Campground.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – It wasn't until we visited Lost Maples SNA that this widespread vireo came out of the woodwork. Their incessant song is one of the feature sounds of summer for many.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*) – A couple of years ago, Western Scrub-Jay was split into two new species, the California Scrub-Jay and the Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay. The ones on this tour, which are the interior birds, are now known as Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays.

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – This jay, which is not part of the scrub-jay complex, was fairly common in Big Bend, especially in the oak forests around the Chisos Basin and up the Pinnacles Trail.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Widespread and common, these were tallied nearly every day on tour.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – Although our first sighting of this swallow came from the Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend, most folks got a better look at the ones perched over the water at Lost Maples SNA.

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – During our first evening in Del Rio, these big swallows were chortling, swooping, and flying overhead at dusk.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Quite a collection of these small swallows were overhead the duck pond in Del Rio as well as along Vega Verde Road.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – A common swallow, these were present in a variety of locations and habitats throughout the trip.

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – Quite a collection of nests were spotted on the cliffs across the Pecos River. We continued to see these nesting under overpasses throughout the trip.

CAVE SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon fulva*) – A few of these Cliff Swallow look-alikes were seen at the rest area on our first day but we saw MANY more coming and going from the bat cave in Concan on our last evening.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Poecile carolinensis*) – One of these was spotted at the feeders at Lost Maples SNA late in our tour.

BLACK-CRESTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus atricristatus*) – A fairly common species in the oak woodlands throughout this tour.

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – We tallied this dry-country denizen more days than not. Big Bend NP was a good place for these and we had lots of looks at Dugout Wells and many of the other oases.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHY TIT (*Psaltriparus minimus*) – There was a magic tree near the deck of the Chisos Basin restaurant that seemed to host these little guys on a daily basis. A few folks saw them at various times on our hike up the Pinnacles Trail as well.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*) – It was a bit of a surprise to bump into this little nuthatch right as we were starting uphill on our Pinnacles Trail hike in Big Bend NP.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*) – We tallied this species on one day only, the day we hiked up the Pinnacles Trail. The ones in Big Bend are of the interior subspecies, a subspecies that has been proposed as a split.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – We couldn't have gotten a closer look at this wren at the Pecos River Overlook!

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – Although the cascading song of this western wren was a common sound, we didn't see any until Fort Clark Springs when one materialized on the rock chimney!

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Perhaps our only sighting of the trip was along the service road in the Chisos Basin in Big Bend NP.

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) – This was a fun surprise! Not a common species on this tour, this skulky wren was encountered twice; first at Dugout Wells and then later at Balmorhea Lake.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – The loud and chanty song of this wren was commonplace at Lost Maples SNA but they remained out of sight. [*]

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – A common songster on this tour. This long-tailed wren was especially numerous on our hike up the Pinnacles Trail where we were hardly out of earshot of one.

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – It's not desert without this species! Big Bend NP is a good place for this big wren and we saw them at Blue Creek Canyon, Dugout Wells, Pinnacles Trail, Chisos Basin area, etc.

Poliptilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliptila caerulea*) – This attractive gnatcatcher was tallied nearly every day and was one of the more common species up the Pinnacles Trail in Big Bend.

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliptila melanura*) – Big Bend NP is a good place for this species too, especially in the lower-elevation desert washes. We found our first ones in Blue Creek Canyon.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – Spastic, plain, but cute... these little dudes were seen on most of our days in a variety of habitats.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – Our one and only location for these was at Fort Clark Springs where we saw a couple on the golf course.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes townsendi*) – One of these visited an air conditioning unit in the Chisos Basin for sips of water! We later heard this species on our hike up the Pinnacles Trail as well.

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – This subtle thrush was detected on back-to-back days; first at Blue Creek Canyon and then on the hike up into Boot Springs.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – Fairly common in a variety of dry habitats.

LONG-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma longirostre*) – This south Texas specialty was spotted at the start and end of the tour. First, along Vega Verde Road in Del Rio and then again at Fort Clark Springs in the Hill Country.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Common and widespread throughout the tour.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Seen mostly in urban areas. [H]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) – Some were present at the Pecos River but we saw more that were actually foraging on the Chisos Basin parking lot in Big Bend.

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – We had good numbers of these fruit-eaters late in the tour at places like Lost Maples SNA and Fort Clark Springs. More often than not, we saw them flying in sizable groups.

Ptilionotidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – The Davis Mountains played host to these silky-flycatchers and we had great looks at Davis Mountains State Park on our first evening there.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*) – Our itinerary nicked the corner of the breeding range of this warbler and we encountered it at Lost Maples SNA in the Hill Country. As is typical of this species, it was creeping along the edge of the stream, bobbing its back-end.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – One of these limb-creeping warblers showed up at Lost Maples SNA late in the tour.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – Only one of these was seen and that was along the Pinnacles Trail/Boot Springs in Big Bend.

COLIMA WARBLER (*Oreothlypis crissalis*) – Success! It was a healthy hike up the Pinnacles Trail to see this specialty but we managed to pull one out before reaching the pass. Continuing down into Boot Springs, we found a couple more including one that foraged, at length, in a tree right in front of us. The number of Colimas in Big Bend fluctuates from year to year, often in response to rain. This year had been extremely dry and that often makes finding this bird a bit tougher.

LUCY'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis luciae*) – We had a very brief encounter with this cavity-nester in the dry mesquites at Cottonwood Campground. Unfortunately, it didn't stick around for long.

NASHVILLE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – Although we snagged our first one in Del Rio along the Vega Verde Road, we saw nearly half a dozen at Sam Nail Ranch in Big Bend.

MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – A few lucky folks saw this secretive species at Cottonwood Campground in a riverside thicket. This is the western counterpart to the Mourning Warbler that birders might know from out east.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – This marsh-loving warbler was heard a couple of times including at Vega Verde Road in Del Rio and again at Fort Clark Springs. [*]

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – We heard a migrant singing in the Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend but it wasn't until Neal's Lodges that we had extended studies of some parulas. Interestingly, most of the parulas we studied at Neal's Lodges were hybrids between Northern Parula and Tropical Parula! The songs from one of those hybrids, after being analyzed, were shown to fit better with Northern Parula.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – Only a few sightings of this classic warbler were sprinkled throughout this tour including at Cottonwood Campground and then again at Fort Clark Springs.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – These warblers, which are still considered to be subspecies in the Yellow-rumped Warbler complex, were fairly common in Big Bend, especially at the Cottonwood Campground.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Setophaga dominica*) – Found mostly in the southeastern reaches of North America, we barely reached the range at Lost Maples SNA and we had a singing bird foraging right overhead there.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – There was one quick sighting of this migrant warbler during our hike up the Pinnacles Trail.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*) – Both the Sam Nail Ranch oasis and the Pinnacles Trail in Big Bend hosted this migrant warbler.

GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER (*Setophaga chrysoparia*) – There's no doubt about it, this was one of the targets of the trip and we ended up with smashing looks at this endangered species at Lost Maples. This is the only species of bird that breeds solely in the state of Texas.

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Perhaps our most common warbler on tour, these were seen on most of our days in a variety of habitats.

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – The dry conditions in Boot Springs may have been part of why this species was so scarce this year. We did manage to hear one singing once but it never showed itself. [*]

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

WHITE-COLLARED SEEDEATER (WHITE-COLLARED) (*Sporophila torqueola sharpei*) – Talk about starting out with a bang! Our first full day together started out with several seedeaters in Del Rio including some that perched point blank! This is a very local species anywhere in the US and it's a treat to be able to see this tanager (yes, it's a true tanager) on this tour.

Passerellidae (New World Buntings and Sparrows)

CASSIN'S SPARROW (*Peucaea cassinii*) – A singing bird was spotted perched atop some mesquite near Del Rio on our 2nd day of tour.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – One of these secretive sparrows was spotted on the dry slopes near Blue Creek Canyon in Big Bend. It was a bit of an odd look for this grassland species but we didn't mind!

OLIVE SPARROW (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) – Another specialty of south Texas, this somewhat-secretive species was spotted lurking in the undergrowth in Del Rio on our 2nd day of birding. We ended up seeing them again at Lost Maples and Fort Clark Springs.

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – A common and widespread species, these were tallied almost every day.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (*Spizella pallida*) – It was a treat to see this subtle but handsome *Spizella* so well at the Rio Grande Village in Big Bend NP. These were foraging on the ground alongside other sparrows like Chipping, Lark, and Vesper sparrows.

BREWER'S SPARROW (*Spizella breweri*) – One of these was called out from the sparrow spot in the Rio Grande Village in Big Bend. Unfortunately, it vanished before most of us got a glimpse.

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – A common but gorgeous sparrow of desert regions on this tour.

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*) – This ended up being one of our most common sparrows on the tour. The rufous pattern on the head sure is a good fieldmark.

LARK BUNTING (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) – We had oh-so-brief looks once or twice of birds foraging on the ground out in the mesquite flats... but then we finally caught up to one that stayed put for everyone.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (GRAY-HEADED) (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*) – Just a couple were seen near the Chisos Basin and up the Pinnacles Trail at Big Bend.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) – A widespread and fairly common sparrow on this tour.

VESPER SPARROW (*Poocetes gramineus*) – The Rio Grande Village area of Big Bend was hosting four of these sparrows foraging on the ground. These have distinctively white outer tail feathers.

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – The Dugout Wells in Big Bend provided us with one of these small, streaky sparrows.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) – You never know where these will pop up... for us, it was the wastewater treatment plant near the Chisos Basin in Big Bend.

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – Quite common around the Chisos Basin area of Big Bend as well as many of the nearby desert habitats. Our first looks came on the Blue Creek Canyon hike.

RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – Blue Creek Canyon provided us with our first looks at this grass and rock-loving sparrow. More than once, they were spotted perched atop bushes and cacti as they sang.

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – The Pinnacles Trail had a number of these songsters skulking in the bushes. Once upon time, these were known as Rufous-sided Towhees.

Icteriidae (Yellow-breasted Chat)

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – Remember, this species is no longer considered a warbler, it's in a family of its own! This tour had a number of these whacky songsters including some in Del Rio, Sam Nail Ranch, Fort Clark Springs, etc.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC Tanager (*Piranga flava*) – Our dinners in Big Bend were often attended by a defensive pair of these birds pecking at the glass windows! Hepatic means "relating to the liver" and yes, the males are liver-colored.

SUMMER Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – This all-red species was common and widespread, especially late in the tour in the Hill Country.

WESTERN Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – All of our sightings of this attractive tanager came from within Big Bend. They were spotted at places like Blue Creek Canyon, the Pinnacles Trail, Chisos Basin wastewater treatment plant, and Cottonwood Campground.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – A familiar species, these were common and widespread throughout.

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – This desert-loving *Cardinalis* species was seen in Big Bend at spots like Blue Creek Canyon, Dugout Wells, and Cottonwood Campground.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – Although not everyone saw it, one of these eastern grosbeaks was spotted in Big Bend NP.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – A couple of these handsome grosbeaks were seen in Big Bend such as on the walk down to the wastewater treatment pond.

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*) – Fairly common on this tour, they were seen at a variety of locations such as the Pecos River Overlook, Big Bend NP, Lost Maples SNA, etc. Note that this species is in the genus *Passerina*, the same as the following buntings.

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – We finally reached the breeding range of this blue beauty at Lost Maples SNA where we eventually scoped one singing atop a tree.

VARIED BUNTING (*Passerina versicolor*) – These were just in the process of returning for the spring and the few we saw were rather skittish. We did get brief looks at Sam Nail Ranch and then a bit better at the wastewater treatment plant in the Chisos Basin of Big Bend.

PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) – Ooh, what a looker! One of these gaudy buntings was spotted singing from a treetop in Del Rio. We would go on to see several on the trip including some females too.

DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*) – It wasn't until our last birding day near Brackettville that this grassland bird was spotted. We had nice looks of some perched out in the grassland singing their "dick dick ciss-cissel" songs.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – At least one of these big blackbirds was keeping some Brewer's Blackbirds company in a treetop at the Dugout Wells. We later saw a flock in flight over the fossil exhibit of Big Bend.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*) – These were seen perched on fences alongside the grasslands near the Davis Mountains.

ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*) – With the males being burnt orange and black, these stood out from the other orioles at the Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend.

HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*) – Our first looks at this attractive southern and western oriole came from the Pecos River Overlook where a pair were foraging on the vegetation below the railing.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) – Not many on this tour which was a surprise. Our only sighting was of a female that slunk through a riverside tree at the Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*) – A black and yellow oriole of the dry, yucca-dotted landscapes. A nice look came at the wastewater treatment plant in Big Bend when a male perched up for all to see.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Of all the sightings we had of this familiar blackbird, none of them came within Big Bend. Instead, we had them numerous times in Del Rio, Balmorhea Lake, and Fort Clark Springs.

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – Our first birding stop as a group, at the rest area after arriving in San Antonio, yielded a male perched high up showing the distinctive thick-necked look with the red eye.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – Scattered sightings throughout.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) – A good-sized flock had gathered in some treetops at Dugout Wells in Big Bend.

COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – The rest area on our first day had a male and that turned out to be our only sighting of the tour.
GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Common on our first two days but absent from the Big Bend area.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – Very common, this finch was seen every day of tour.

CASSIN'S FINCH (*Haemorhous cassinii*) – Although a rare bird in a typical spring, these finches were lingering in the area. For us, we bumped into a female in the campground at the Chisos Basin in Big Bend.

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – A healthy-sized flock joined us as we birded the wastewater treatment pond in Big Bend.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – These too were fairly common with the siskins at the wastewater treatment pond in Big Bend.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*) – We had just one and it was seen in flight over both the US and Mexico! It flew by us as we birded the riverbank at the Cottonwood Campground.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Common in urban areas and at the Panther Junction Visitor Center in Big Bend. [I]

MAMMALS

BRAZILIAN FREE-TAILED BAT (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) – A few of these were seen exiting the cave in Concan. A few... million! It's hard to put into words but the stream of bats that pour out of the Frio Bat Cave every night is just astounding. This always ranks towards the top of awe-inspiring moments of the tour.

NINE-BANDED ARMADILLO (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) – We saw fewer of these than the bats. In fact, we saw only one as it scampered out into the parking area and then back into the brush again.

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – The higher elevation cottontails we saw were of this species.

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – The lower elevation cottontails were probably this species. There was no shortage as we drove around in Big Bend predawn though!

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*) – Only one or two of these were seen on tour, one of which was in the Chisos Basin area of Big Bend.

TEXAS ANTELOPE SQUIRREL (*Ammospermophilus interpres*) – These will sometimes perch up in bushes, like we saw it doing near the Chisos Basin campground.

MEXICAN GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus mexicanus*) – This species is now known as "Rio Grande Ground Squirrel" by some sources. We had a few of these scampering around some flats on our 2nd day of birding.

ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – Blue Creek Canyon in Big Bend gave us our first looks at this common species.

FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus niger*) – Seen by some early in the tour in Del Rio and then again in the Hill Country.

GRAY FOX (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – We had a quick glimpse in the Davis Mountains and then again in the Hill Country.

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – Seeking shade and a water source, one of these canines was seen at close range tucked in at Dugout Wells in Big Bend. It didn't seem too bothered by us either!

NORTHERN RACCOON (*Procyon lotor*) – One of these scampered across the road as we were leaving the Concan bat cave.

STRIPED SKUNK (*Mephitis mephitis*) – Seeking out a meal at the mouth of the bat cave, one of these was spotted waddling in that direction. Their objective is to nab downed bats for an easy meal.

WILD BOAR (*Sus scrofa*) – We found a litter of youngsters running along the roadside near the Davis Mountains. [I]

COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*) – On the day we drove from the Davis Mountains to Concan, one of these was seen crossing in front of us. This is a native species.

SPOTTED DEER (*Axis axis*) – Lots of sightings near the game farms that we drove past. This introduced species has become established in the wild in some parts of Texas. [I]

MULE DEER (*Odocoileus hemionus*) – A couple were spotted in the Davis Mountains.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Not uncommon, especially later in the tour.

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – Our drive through the flats yielded nice looks at this prairie species.

BLACKBUCK (*Antelope cervicapra*) – Another species of animal introduced for sport hunting. We saw these a few times, mostly as drive-by sightings. [I]

BARBARY SHEEP (*Ammotragus lervia*) – We spotted a few on a ridge in Davis Mountains State Park. Sometimes called "aoudads", these were also introduced for hunting. They are native to Africa but have become established in Texas. [I]

Herps

BLACK-TAILED RATTLESNAKE (*Crotalus molossus*) – Tom found one of these not far from the Chisos Basin Lodge! His awesome picture made him famous for the rest of the trip. :-)

SPINY SOFTSHELL (*Apalone spinifera*) – Seen by some on our second day of birding.

GREATER EARLESS LIZARD (*Cophosaurus texanus*) – Some sources split this into multiple species which would include "Texas Earless Lizard".

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Some other introduced mammals were seen including:

ELK - Seen in the Davis Mountains.

WILDEBEEST - Introduced! At least they're safe from crocodiles in Texas.

ZEBRA - Captive at a game farm.

SCIMITAR ORYX - Also introduced for hunting. The magnificent, curved horns were quite impressive!

Totals for the tour: 219 bird taxa and 21 mammal taxa