



Field Guides Tour Report

Texas' Big Bend & Hill Country 2019

Apr 20, 2019 to Apr 29, 2019
Chris Benesh and Micah Riegner

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



We stopped at the Pecos River Overlook on our way to Big Bend. Photo by guide Micah Riegner.

On a balmy Texas afternoon in late April, 13 birders from across the country (and the UK) converged on the sidewalk of the San Antonio Airport, objective lenses clean, diopters adjusted. Two shiny black Mercedes Sprinter vans swooped into the airport pickup lane and the birders piled in: their first destination Del Rio, Texas. In the drivers' seats were Chris, a veteran of many Big Bend adventures, and Micah, first timer to this corner of Texas.

Excitement was high as they weaved through the traffic, leaving the concrete spaghetti behind. Their first stop—a roadside rest area where they scoped their first Couch's Kingbirds (remember: olive back does not contrast with the tail!), and Scissortails on the wire fences. The birders arrived in Del Rio by late afternoon, filled their grumbling stomachs and went to bed, eagerly awaiting the day ahead. They filed back into the Sprinters before sunrise and sprinted off to bird the Rio Grande valley, where Olive Sparrows and Long-billed Thrashers awaited in lush floodplain vegetation. Other highlights from the Rio Grande were Morelet's Seedeater, which everyone saw more or less, and an unanticipated Great Kiskadee, a reminder of how close they were to the tropics.

From Del Rio, they shot to Big Bend National Park, covering hundreds of miles before they could see the jagged Chisos Mountains on the Texas horizon. Their stay at Big Bend was punctuated by many moments of awe, excitement, and exhaustion, especially after that Colima climb! Besides the regular Big Bend assortment of Gray Hawk, Lucifer Hummingbird, and Varied Bunting, the birders also saw Slate-throated Redstart and Tropical Parula, two rarities establishing territories well north of their Mexican homeland. And those weren't the only novelties—a Short-tailed Hawk also flew by along the jagged pinnacles, one of the few records for that part of Texas. Another highlight of birding Big Bend was the flurry of warblers that came down to drink at a small pool at Boot Springs. Among the mix were Colima, Townsend's, and Hermit Warblers, Black-crested Titmice, Townsend's Solitaire, and a couple of Hermit Thrushes. Unfortunately, the Slate-throated Redstart didn't come down to drink, but folks had good looks as it sang in the canopy.

After a satisfying retreat at Big Bend, they drove north to the juniper-clad hillsides of the Davis Mountains where they watched an Elf Owl emerge from a telephone-pole nest-cavity carved by an Acorn Woodpecker. The diminutive thing stared from the hole for several minutes before trading spots with its mate that was waiting in a nearby oak.

The last leg of the trip they spent in the Texas Hill Country, but to get there they had to traverse hundreds of miles of open flat country where they had a close roadside encounter with Scaled Quail singing from the top of a shrub. They scanned Lake Balmorhea for shorebirds and found a handful of Phalaropes and Dowitchers in the shallow corner of the lake, but not much else because the water was so high.

Lost Maples State Natural Area is one of the best places to see the famed Golden-cheeked Warbler. These stunning birds spend their winters in the oak-covered hills of Nicaragua and breed on the Edwards Plateau, Texas. When the group arrived in Lost Maples, anticipation was palpable. They struggled initially with some distant views but were rewarded when a Golden-cheek came down to the ground to mob a snake only 20 feet away. The saffron cheeks outlined in ebony in the dappled light of the understory made for a dazzling sight.

The Black-capped Vireo is another must-see specialty of the Edwards Plateau. This snazzy little vireo spends the winter in the tropical thornscrub of west Mexico and breeds in juniper shrublands of central Texas. Despite its flashy spectacles, it's not an easy bird to see. After nearly an hour of trying to see the darn bird, everyone in the group got at least a glimpse of it as it danced from juniper to juniper almost magically evading detection.

The tour concluded at the mouth of the Rio Frio Bat Cave, where millions of Brazilian Free-tailed Bats emerged after dark. They fanned out into multiple plumes, which weaved and flowed back into one another as they winked out in the darkening sky.

Thanks to all for a great tour! We hope to see you again soon. Also, thanks to Karen for setting everything up, and Peg and Sharon for the fabulous picnic dinner at the Rio Frio Bat Cave.

Micah and 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 = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – Several seen our first morning of birding around Del Rio.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Spatula discors*) – We saw a few out on the pond on near the Rio Grand our first morning of birding around Del Rio.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*)

GADWALL (*Mareca strepera*) – Some were in the shallow cove at Lake Balmorhea.

MALLARD (NORTHERN) (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*)

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – A brief fly-by at Del Rio.

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – A small flock was out on a pond near the Rio Grande at Del Rio.

BUFFLEHEAD (*Bucephala albeola*) – A few females were with the Lesser Scaup on the pond at Del Rio.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

NORTHERN BOBWHITE (*Colinus virginianus*) – Heard along the road outside Uvalde. [*]

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – Fabulous looks along the highway outside of Fort Davis. The male sat out on a low shrub and sang for several minutes before taking off and flying across the road.

MONTEZUMA QUAIL (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – Heard along the road near Fort Davis. They have been increasingly difficult to see in recent years. [*]

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Some "wild" turkeys were being fed near Fort Davis. The male strutted around providing fabulous views of his snood.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)

CLARK'S GREBE (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) – Several were out on Lake Balmorhea. They were just about the only waterbirds out on the lake.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – This species has been spreading north throughout the last few decades. A few were seen at Cook's Preserve.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*)

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*)

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – A few were out in the shallow mudflat at Lake Balmorhea.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Seen almost every day of the tour.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – One flew by the Chisos-- surely a migrant on its way north.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – A fine-looking bird sat out at the Cottonwood Campground.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

COMMON BLACK HAWK (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – The nesting pair put on a show at the Rio Grande Village.

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*)

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – After a good deal of triangulating, we finally found the bird at the Rio Grande Village Campground.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*) – One perched out for us at Utopia River Retreat.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – A few seen throughout the Hill Country. Our best looks were at Lost Maples.

SHORT-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo brachyurus*) – Woohoo! This was a major rarity in Big Bend, with only a handful of previous records.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – Several seen throughout the tour. We saw one at the Rio Frio Bat Cave, but it didn't go for any bats.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – Susan spotted this one on a slope near the Rio Grande Village Campground. It was sitting on an Ocotillo.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus limicola*) – Heard at the marsh behind Lake Balmorhea. [*]

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) – Also heard at Lake Balmorhea. [*]

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A few were out in the shallow water at Lake Balmorhea.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – Some were out on the mudflat at Lake Balmorhea.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – Lots on the shoreline of Lake Balmorhea.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonias niger*) – A few flew by at Lake Balmorhea. Somewhat rare at this time of year.

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*) – Several at Lake Balmorhea.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

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

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*)

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – We saw one in the juniper woodland near Fort Clark Springs.

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (WHITE-TIPPED) (*Leptotila verreauxi angelica*) – Heard at Lost Maples. [*]

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Ubiquitous. Seen every day of the tour.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – We had great looks at one along the road near Del Rio.

Strigidae (Owls)

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops asio*) [*]

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – One flew across the road as we were driving near Uvalde.

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – Yay! After waiting at the nest cavity, we were rewarded with fine views of the smallest owl in North America!

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – We stopped on our way to Santa Elena Canyon to see droves of these nighthawks migrating through.

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – Heard on a hillside near Fort Davis. [*]

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Several seen on the hike up to Boot Springs.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – One showed nicely at Boot Springs.

LUCIFER HUMMINGBIRD (*Calothorax lucifer*) – After a couple visits to the marsh below the Chisos Basin waste water treatment, we all had great views of this stunning little hummer.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*)

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – A few were up at Boot Springs.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*) – One flew past us near Del Rio, one of the few places in North America to see this bird.

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*) – One flew along the river at Utopia River Retreat.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Several seen around Big Bend and the Davis Mountains.

GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) – Common throughout the tour. We saw our first at the rest area outside San Antonio.

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – Several seen throughout the tour.

NORTHERN FLICKER (*Colaptes auratus*) – We had nice views of a pair in the Davis Mountains.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – A few seen on the way to Del Rio and the Rio Frio Bat Cave.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – It was cool to see this bird below the Chisos Basin campground. These long-distance migrants spend the winter in the Amazon.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*) – Several seen at Big Bend.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus virens*) – We had good looks at one at Lost Maples. Very similar to Western Wood-Pewee, these birds are best told apart by voice.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax virescens*) – We had great looks at one at Lost Maples.

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*) – One was seen on the hike to Boot Springs.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – Several were seen on the way to Boot Springs.

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – A few were seen at the high-elevation forest around Boot Springs.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*)

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – We found a nesting pair the first day of the tour outside of San Antonio.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*)

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Common around Big Bend.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – Another rarity from Mexico. This bird was hanging out at Boot Springs.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – The most common *Myiarchus* on the tour.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – Seen in the riparian areas around Big Bend.

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – One flew over us while we were birding the road near Del Rio. We also saw one at Cook's Preserve.

COUCH'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus couchii*) – Seen well our first day of the tour. Best told apart from Western Kingbird by the uniform back and tail.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – A few seen in the Davis Mountains.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – Common throughout the tour. The tail is much darker than the back, unlike Couch's Kingbird, which shows a uniform color on the back and tail.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – Common in the Hill Country.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Seen along the road at Big Bend.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLACK-CAPPED VIREO (*Vireo atricapilla*) – After several attempts at seeing this skulker, we all managed to catch it dashing between junipers outside of Uvalde.

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*) – We had our best views of this bird at the Utopia River Retreat.

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*) – One sat out and sang at the Rio Grande Village campground.

GRAY VIREO (*Vireo vicinior*) – Yes! We called one out in the juniper woodland near Fort Clark Springs. These vireos spend the winter feeding on Elephant Tree fruit along the coastal deserts of the Gulf of California.

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – A few seen on the hike to Boot Springs.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*) – Nice! We had great looks at Lost Maples State.

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – There were a few singing at the Cottonwood Campground.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*)

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – Seen at Lost Maples.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

GREEN JAY (*Cyanocorax yncas*) – These gave us the run-around at Fort Clark Springs.

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*)

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – Common in the Chisos. These are much richer blue than the ones in Arizona.

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – Seen our first day of the tour on the way to Del Rio.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – A few were flying around Del Rio.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

CAVE SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon fulva*) – We saw one perched out on a telephone line near Del Rio.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Poecile carolinensis*) – There were a few around the lunch spot at Fort Clark Springs.

BLACK-CRESTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus atricristatus*) – Very common in Big Bend and the Hill Country. It was a lifer for Micah.

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – Seen at the campground at the Rio Grande Village.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (*Psaltriparus minimus*) – Seen well in the Davis Mountains.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*) – Some were coming into the feeders at the Davis Mountains.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) [*]

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) [*]

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – We had good looks at this species near Del Rio.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – Common at Big Bend. We saw it almost every day we were there.

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – Some were hanging out at the Chisos Basin Campground.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – Common in the juniper woodland on the way up to Boot Springs.

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*) – We had a few of these around the Rio Grande Village.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – A pair was nesting at the Rio Grande Village Campground, which was somewhat unusual for this part of Texas.

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – We had good scope views in the Davis Mountains.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes townsendi*) – One was coming in to drink at Boot Springs.

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – There was one hanging around the Chisos Basin sewage treatment facility.

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*)

LONG-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma longirostre*) – Yes! One of the target birds of the trip. We saw a few along the road at Del Rio. Some were even bringing food to a nest.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – This must be the most common bird in Texas. I guess that's why it's the state bird.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*)

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)

Ptilionotidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*)

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*) – Heard and possibly seen by a few at Lost Maples. [*]

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – There were some singing at Lost Maples.

COLIMA WARBLER (*Oreothlypis crissalis*) – Woohoo! We had our first Colima on the switchbacks going up the Pinnacles and then several in the forest around Boot Springs.

LUCY'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis luciae*) – There was a family group with fledglings at the Cottonwood Campground.

NASHVILLE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – We saw a few around Del Rio.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) [*]

TROPICAL PARULA (NORTHEAST MEXICO) (*Setophaga pitiayumi nigrilora*) – Fantastic! We saw the singing male that was setting up a territory at the Rio Grande Village Campground. Not a bird you see every day.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (MYRTLE) (*Setophaga coronata coronata*) – Some were near Del Rio.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – The most common form of Yellow-rumps on the tour.
YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Setophaga dominica*) – We had great looks at this one at Lost Maples as it probed through moss and lichen.
TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*) – One came down to bathe at the pool at Boot Springs.
HERMIT WARBLER (*Setophaga occidentalis*) – Also bathing at Boot Springs.
GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER (*Setophaga chrysoparia*) – Score! After several distant views at Lost Maples we had one at knee height coming down to mob a snake!
WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*) – A few seen at Big Bend.
PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – There were a few of these flashy warblers up at Boot Springs.
SLATE-THROATED REDSTART (*Myioborus miniatus*) – Another rarity from Mexico. It was singing from various spots along the canyon at Boot Springs. Few birders have seen this species in Texas.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies).

WHITE-COLLARED SEEDEATER (WHITE-COLLARED) (*Sporophila torqueola sharpei*) – Now called Morelet's Seedeater, we saw a few along the road near Del Rio. They seem to prefer the tall non-native cane grass.

Passerellidae (New World Buntings and Sparrows).

CASSIN'S SPARROW (*Peucaea cassinii*) – We saw some at the visitor center at Big Bend and along the road near Fort Clark Springs.
GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – Some were out in an open field near Uvalde.
OLIVE SPARROW (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) – Another target bird for the tour. We saw a few near Del Rio. They have recently colonized Lost Maples, where we heard a few singing away.
CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*)
CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (*Spizella pallida*) – Fairly common in the Davis Mountains.
FIELD SPARROW (*Spizella pusilla*) – We saw a few near Uvalde that were singing away in the juniper woodland.
BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*)
LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*)
LARK BUNTING (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) – We saw a few migrants in the semi-desert grassland outside of Big Bend. The males were beginning to molt into their jet-black plumage.
DARK-EYED JUNCO (GRAY-HEADED) (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*)
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – One showed up at the sewage treatment facility below the Chisos Basin Campground.
VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*)
LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) – We had some brief looks at one in the marsh below the Chisos Basin Campground.
CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – Common at Big Bend.
RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – Very common on the arid slopes of the Chisos.
SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – A few were up at the higher elevations of the Chisos.

Icteriidae (Yellow-breasted Chat).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – Del Rio must be the easiest place in the world to see Yellow-breasted Chat. We saw several that were out on the telephone wires.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies).

HEPATIC Tanager (*Piranga flava*) – A pair kept coming in to attack their reflections at the Chisos Basin Restaurant.
SUMMER Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – We had great scope views at the Rio Grande Village.
WESTERN Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)
NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – We saw a few in the desert around Big Bend.
BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)
BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*)
INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – Common in the Hill Country. We saw a few at Lost Maples.
VARIED BUNTING (*Passerina versicolor*) – We had great looks at a singing male below the Chisos Basin Campground.
PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) – We finally caught up with a bright male at Cook's Preserve.
DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*) – Some were singing in a weedy field near Uvalde.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – Some were out at the pond near Del Rio.
EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*) – A few were seen in the semi-desert grassland near Big Bend.
ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*) – We had great scope views at the Cottonwood Campground.
HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*)
BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) – We saw a fine male at the rest stop outside of San Antonio.
SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*) – Remarkably common at Big Bend. We saw them practically every day we were there.
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)
BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – We saw our first one at the rest area near San Antonio.
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)
BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)
COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – Some were strutting in the parking lot of the rest area near San Antonio.
GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – Lots were coming in to the feeders at Fort Davis.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*)

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows).

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [I]

MAMMALS

BRAZILIAN FREE-TAILED BAT (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) – Millions emerged from the Rio Frio Bat Cave forming a river of bats. What a mesmerizing experience!

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – Seen in at Rio Grande Village.

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*)

MEXICAN GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus mexicanus*) – We saw one in a field on our way to Big Bend.

ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*)

FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus niger*)

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – We watched one playing with a stick below the Black Hawk nest at Rio Grande Village.

SPOTTED DEER (*Axis axis*) – Several in the Hill Country near Utopia. [I]

MULE DEER (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – We saw one in the semi-desert grassland near Big Bend.

BLACKBUCK (*Antelope cervicapra*) – We saw a few of these Asian Antelopes in the Hill Country. [I]

BARBARY SHEEP (*Ammotragus lervia*) – We stopped to see a huge herd of these introduced sheep on the way to Big Bend. We also saw some in the Davis Mountains. [I]

Herps

CREVICE SPINY LIZARD (*Sceloporus pointsettii*) – We saw a few on the rocks on the way up to Boot Springs.

EASTERN FENCE LIZARD (*Sceloporus undulatus*)

RED STRIPE RIBBON SNAKE (*Thamnophis proximus*) – This slender snake was seen at the creek at Lost Maples.

FLAT-HEADED SNAKE (*Tantilla gracilis*) – We found one crossing the road at Utopia River Retreat. We were very lucky to have seen this species, which spends much of its time under logs. They tend to be found in areas with high moisture and feed on centipedes and other small arthropods.

DIAMONDBACK WATERSNAKE (*Nerodia rhombifer*) – There were a few swimming around at Cook's Preserve.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 208 bird taxa and 14 mammal taxa