



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Idaho: Snake River to Sawtooths 2019**

May 18, 2019 to May 26, 2019

Eric Hynes & Mitch Lysinger

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



*Check out those claws on this pair of digging machines! Despite its lack of feathers, American Badger was voted the "Bird of the Tour." Photo by guide Eric Hynes.*

Thanks so much for joining Mitch and me on this maiden voyage of Idaho: Snake River to Sawtooths. The name of the tour might have been more appropriate had I called it Idaho: Plan B. You all handled some unseasonably harsh weather with aplomb. The steady precipitation or the threat of it kept us from reaching some of the sites described in the itinerary. Luckily some thorough scouting allowed us to tweak our days on multiple occasions and still have a fantastic time.

After our meet and greet dinner on day one, given the forecast for the next morning, we ventured out for an evening outing. We watched in amazement as multiple Dusky Grouse males displayed roadside. A Northern Pygmy-Owl began to call in the fading light, followed by several calling Common Poorwill, getting our adventure off to a great start.

The next morning we headed back to the same riparian corridor and observed Yellow-breasted Chat, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak and Bullock's Oriole before adding Lewis's Woodpecker, Great Horned Owl fuzzy branchers, Bald Eagle, Belted Kingfisher and a drumming Ruffed Grouse. The cherry on top occurred when Ellen spotted a different Ruffed Grouse foraging behind us. In the afternoon we made our way over to the Snake River Canyon and peered in at Dedication Point. We quickly added Rock and Canyon wrens, Say's Phoebe, White-throated Swift and Prairie Falcon.

Day three began with the buzzing swarm of Bank Swallows at Walters Ferry, where we crossed the Snake River. Undisturbed sagebrush habitat hosted Brewer's, Lark, Vesper and Sagebrush sparrows, while a Horned Lark performed an enchanting display flight overhead and a chorus of Western Meadowlarks rang out. Muddy road conditions dictated that we divert from our original plans for the afternoon. Ted Trueblood Wildlife Management Area proved to be a welcome option as we marveled at the incredible concentration of Cliff Swallows and Swainson's Hawks. None of us could have predicted how many thrilling sightings we would have on Simco Road: a twister in its infancy, Long-billed Curlews displaying and escorting chicks, a hunting Prairie Falcon repeatedly diving after a Mourning Dove and then a European Starling, and those were just the bird highlights. A Pronghorn with a newborn was adorable but not quite as exciting as a digging American Badger. We drove away giddy about our fortune only to be shocked by the luck of seeing two more badgers close to the road. A trip out to the mouth of Jacks Creek in CJ Strike Wildlife Management Area added pelicans, grebes, shorebirds, cormorants, quail and an unlikely Western Screech-Owl that appeared to be hunting during the day.

The next morning began with a quick stop at Indian Creek Reservoir to pad our list with some ducks and shorebirds, including a migrant flock of Red-necked Phalaropes that couldn't settle down. From there, we departed the Boise area and made our way to the South Hills. Our primary target for this region was to see the recently split Cassia Crossbill, which required that we reach upper elevations. Mother Nature conspired against us at first with a late spring snow. Patience and a little luck allowed us to reach our destination and the crossbills cooperated almost immediately once we were in place.

Since we were unable to access "PJ" (pinyon pine - juniper habitat) earlier in the tour, we started day five with an unscripted trip to City of Rocks National Reserve. Black-throated Gray and Virginia's warblers, Juniper Titmouse, Green-tailed and Spotted towhees, and Townsend's Solitaire were all new for the trip. A small flock of Pinyon Jays crossed our path on our way out. Midday was spent traveling to the Idaho Falls region. After an early dinner, we ventured to Market Lake Wildlife Management Area for a pretty magical evening. Hordes of raucous Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Marsh Wrens welcomed us, while a majority of North American duck species paddled in the canals. Bugling Sandhill Cranes and a hunting Peregrine Falcon were standouts. As we turned the vans back toward the hotel, Black-crowned Night-Herons and an American Bittern emerged for their nocturnal activities.

Day six kicked off with a birdy morning at Camas National Wildlife Refuge. Trumpeter Swans, calling Soras and Virginia Rails, and point-blank Eared Grebes were just a few of the highlights. The displaying Ruddy Duck was really cool too. Next stop was at Mud Lake Wildlife Management Area. Our approach was marked by a cooperative Loggerhead Shrike and Eastern Kingbirds. Numerous migrant Western Tanagers and Yellow-rumped Warblers were piled up along the north shore. We added a Common Loon, Black Terns, Bonaparte's and Franklin's gulls, Red-necked Phalaropes and Red-breasted Mergansers on the water. A copse of trees at our picnic site attracted migrants like Hammond's and Cordilleran flycatchers, and Wilson's and Orange-crowned warblers. In the afternoon we traveled up to Stanley through some of the most picturesque landscapes in the West.

The beautiful landscapes continued the next morning as we studied American Dipper, Wilson's Snipe and Mountain Bluebird. In Garden Valley we took a walk through Ponderosa Pines and scored Vaux's Swift, Calliope Hummingbird, Cassin's Vireo, Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Bluebird and displaying Black-headed Grosbeak. We eventually landed in McCall and spent the afternoon on the shores of Little Payette Lake where we studied a male MacGillivray's Warbler at arms reach.

Our last morning in the field was spent in the Bear Basin region outside McCall. Numerous Evening Grosbeaks teed up for scope views while we teased out a number of new species from the northern forest: kinglets, jays, thrushes, plus Fox Sparrow, Townsend's Warbler, Williamson's Sapsucker and Pileated Woodpecker. Our adventure concluded when we arrived back in Boise.

Thanks again for choosing Field Guides for your birding adventure in Idaho. Mitch and I had a blast birding with all of you and we look forward to our birding paths crossing again in Ecuador, Colorado or wherever the birds lead us.

Cheers,

Eric

Here is a key for the acronyms used in the following text for the various sites we visited: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, WMA = Wildlife Management Area, NF = National Forest, NCA = National Conservation Area, and NR = National Reserve

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#### 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

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## BIRDS

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl).

**CANADA GOOSE** (*Branta canadensis*) – Lots of goslings at the time of year we visited.

**TRUMPETER SWAN** (*Cygnus buccinator*) – Good looks at Camas NWR.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Spatula discors*) – At the eastern wetland refuges.

**CINNAMON TEAL** (*Spatula cyanoptera*) – Excellent views at Market Lake WMA and Camas NWR.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Spatula clypeata*) – Excellent views at Market Lake WMA and Camas NWR.

**GADWALL** (*Mareca strepera*) – Excellent views at Market Lake WMA and Camas NWR.

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – All over.

**NORTHERN PINTAIL** (*Anas acuta*) – Only at Camas NWR.

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN)** (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – Excellent views at Market Lake WMA and Camas NWR.

**CANVASBACK** (*Aythya valisineria*) – One of the more uncommon ducks during our adventure but we did enjoy excellent views at Market Lake WMA and Camas NWR.

**REDHEAD** (*Aythya americana*) – Excellent views at Market Lake WMA and Camas NWR.

**RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Aythya collaris*) – First seen at Market Lake WMA; in low numbers throughout the tour.

**LESSER SCAUP** (*Aythya affinis*) – Excellent views at Market Lake WMA and Camas NWR.

**WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** (*Melanitta deglandi*) – An immature drake was found during scouting and thankfully it stuck around for the tour above Swan Falls Dam on the Snake River.

**BUFFLEHEAD** (*Bucephala albeola*) – Only up at McCall on Little Payette Lake.

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** (*Bucephala clangula*) – A fair number on the Snake River above Swan Falls Dam.

**COMMON MERGANSER** (*Mergus merganser*) – Good looks on the rivers to the north.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** (*Mergus serrator*) – An unexpected find on Mud Lake.

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – We were treated to a wonderful view of a drake at Camas NWR giving the "Bubbling Display." It is described in the Birds of North America Online account as: "Male holds head and tail and 2 rows of feathers on crown ("horns") erect, inflates neck; begins



beating bill slowly at first against neck, forcing air out of feathers, causing bubbles to appear in water; beating intensifies toward end of display with concomitant movement of tail over back and head moved slightly forward over water; low belching sound uttered at end."

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

**CALIFORNIA QUAIL** (*Callipepla californica*) – These funny little chickens went skittering off the road at a number of sites when we were in the Boise area.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**RING-NECKED PHEASANT** (*Phasianus colchicus*) – Ted Trueblood WMA was where we heard and saw several of these introduced game birds. [I]

**RUFFED GROUSE** (*Bonasa umbellus*) – It was so thrilling to hear a male drumming; followed by the pleasant surprise of Ellen spotting one nipping buds in a tree just off the road.

**DUSKY GROUSE** (*Dendragapus obscurus richardsonii*) – The evening performance of the displaying males was truly unforgettable. This subspecies ranges from Idaho up to Alaska and lacks the conspicuous light terminal tail band of the more southern subspecies.

**WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Bob R. spotted our first one the first night out. We likely saw the same individual in the same area the following morning. [I]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Never numerous but good looks in multiple locations.

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – The roadside pair on our loop drive at Camas NWR could not have been more cooperative.

**WESTERN GREBE** (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) – We were fortunate enough to witness some courtship behavior of this elegant water bird.

**CLARK'S GREBE** (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) – Compared to the previous species, this grebe has a brighter, more colorful bill; the black cap above the eye and typically lighter flanks.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – The usual spots. [I]

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – This species has increased dramatically in Idaho in the last decade or so. [I]

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaidura macroura*) – An everyday bird.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**COMMON POORWILL** (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – Heard well our first evening out. [\*]

Apodidae (Swifts)

**VAUX'S SWIFT** (*Chaetura vauxi*) – Thanks to Mitch's vigilance looking up, we scored this species in Garden Valley.

**WHITE-THROATED SWIFT** (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – This aerial artists went whizzing by us at Dedication Point.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus alexandri*) – Our first occupied those waiting for a bathroom in Grand View.

**CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus calliope*) – A favorite for some and the highlight of our walk in Garden Valley.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**VIRGINIA RAIL** (*Rallus limicola*) – Heard well in the eastern wetland complexes but mostly just glimpses in the cattails.

**SORA** (*Porzana carolina*) – We were there for the peak of their vocalizing I suspect; like the previous species, heard well but not very obliging for views. To hear it again, click on the Soundcloud link to the right.

**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*) – Strange birds.

Gruidae (Cranes)

**SANDHILL CRANE** (*Antigone canadensis*) – Wonderful views and vocalizations at Market Lake WMA and then again at Camas NWR the next morning.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – One of the more elegant shorebirds.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Another striking shorebird species.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*) – An everyday bird.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW** (*Numenius americanus*) – Sadly, this majestic grassland bird is declining rapidly. We were fortunate to witness a pair with young.

**WILSON'S SNIPE** (*Gallinago delicata*) – Stanley was THE area for this species on our tour.

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – What a beautiful shorebird.

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – A flock flew round and round at Indian Creek Reservoir and just couldn't settle down. We had better luck with several flocks on the water at Mud Lake WMA allowing for scope views.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – An everyday bird.

**WILLET (WESTERN)** (*Tringa semipalmata inornata*) – It was exciting to hear them calling in flight at Market Lake WMA.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

**BONAPARTE'S GULL** (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) – Just one individual, an immature, at Mud Lake WMA.

**FRANKLIN'S GULL** (*Leucophaea pipixcan*) – I am not sure where all the ones I saw while scouting dispersed to, but we did finally catch up to at least one at Mud Lake WMA.

**RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*) – Common and widespread.

**CALIFORNIA GULL** (*Larus californicus*) – Also common and widespread but perhaps not as numerous as the previous species.

**CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – Good looks at CJ Strike WMA.

**BLACK TERN** (*Chlidonias niger*) – Good scope views of birds in flight at Mud Lake WMA.

**FORSTER'S TERN** (*Sterna forsteri*) – Just two encounters.

*Gaviidae (Loons)*

**COMMON LOON** (*Gavia immer*) – A beautiful adult in breeding plumage at Mud Lake WMA.

*Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)*

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Several large colonies.

*Pelecanidae (Pelicans)*

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – Their size is remarkable.

*Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)*

**AMERICAN BITTERN** (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – One flushed out of a roadside ditch at dusk at Market Lake WMA.

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*) – An everyday bird.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Seen well but only a few individuals.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) – Primarily in flight views at Market Lake WMA.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – More and more were coming out to hunt as we were departing Market Lake WMA.

*Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)*

**WHITE-FACED IBIS** (*Plegadis chihi*) – Only at the wetland refuges in the eastern part of the state.

*Cathartidae (New World Vultures)*

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – Masters of soaring.

*Pandionidae (Osprey)*

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Interesting to see all the nests now along rivers during the last few days of the tour.

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**NORTHERN HARRIER** (*Circus hudsonius*) – These graceful raptors were seen most days of the tour.

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** (*Accipiter striatus*) – We finally caught up to this diminutive hawk up in the McCall area.

**COOPER'S HAWK** (*Accipiter cooperii*) – Seen on several days of the tour.

**BALD EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – We had more luck with this species during the second half of the tour.

**SWAINSON'S HAWK** (*Buteo swainsoni*) – The breeding population in Idaho is strong with many birds seen each day of the tour.

**RED-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Common but not as numerous as the previous species.

**FERRUGINOUS HAWK** (*Buteo regalis*) – We had to wait quite a few days to catch up to this regal raptor; the lousy weather undoubtedly contributing to that. But it was worth the wait, as the scope view in the drizzle rose to the favorite bird of the tour after the final vote. It truly is an impressive raptor.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**WESTERN SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops kennicottii*) – It is always nice to catch up to a nocturnal species during day. The roadside bird at CJ Strike WMA was a thrill.

**GREAT HORNED OWL** (*Bubo virginianus*) – This species seems to thrive in Idaho. We witnessed large owlets hanging around the nest on a number of days.

**NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – Hearing a bird toot away from atop that pine was a delightful way to end our first day. [\*]

**BURROWING OWL** (*Athene cunicularia*) – The inclement weather seemed to have pushed a lot of these guys underground as we only caught to that one. Luckily it was a very obliging individual.

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – We only caught up to this specialist on two occasions.

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*) – The ponderosa pines up in the McCall area held a number of this beautiful woodpecker.

**RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) – Our best look was up in the South Hills in the snow.

**LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes lewis*) – This colorful woodpecker generated lots of oohs and aahs, especially that individual in gorgeous morning light outside of Stanley.

**AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides dorsalis*) – We had a drumming bird up in the McCall area.

**DOWNY WOODPECKER** (*Dryobates pubescens*) – This common species was inconspicuous on the tour.

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Dryobates villosus*) – Good looks in multiple places.

**PILEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – Hank got us onto our first one working that stump and it was followed with several more good looks in the McCall area.

**NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED)** (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – Widespread.

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*) – A frequent sighting on our long drives.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – The hunting bird at Market Lake WMA was exciting.

**PRAIRIE FALCON** (*Falco mexicanus*) – Watching that individual take feathers off the Mourning Dove, then just miss the European Starling, was breathtaking.

*Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)*

**HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax hammondi*) – We heard them singing and got good looks outside of McCall.

**DUSKY FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – This edge/early successional species was in a number of locations.

**CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – The copse of trees on the north side of Mud Lake provided a good study of Empids.

This guy was the one with the yellowish wash on the belly and the ragged crest.

**SAY'S PHOEBE** (*Sayornis saya*) – Good looks at Dedication Point in the Snake River Canyon.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – This flycatcher is a common breeder in Idaho.

**EASTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – Our best look was at Mud Lake WMA.

#### *Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – We watched a hunting bird drop out of view on some potential prey at Mud Lake WMA.

#### *Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)*

**CASSIN'S VIREO** (*Vireo cassinii*) – Heard more than seen over the course of the tour but eventually everyone got a look -- for most it was during our walk at Garden Valley.

**WARBLING VIREO** (*Vireo gilvus*) – They breed in good numbers in riparian habitat.

#### *Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**CANADA JAY** (*Perisoreus canadensis*) – Another species we did not catch up to until we were in McCall.

**PINYON JAY** (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*) – A small flock foraged across the landscape as we were leaving City of Rocks.

**STELLER'S JAY** (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – Excellent views at Bear Basin.

**BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE** (*Pica hudsonia*) – This species deserves more recognition as a colorful and charismatic bird.

**AMERICAN CROW** (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – Easy to find but not numerous.

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) – This species does very well in many parts of Idaho.

#### *Alaudidae (Larks)*

**HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris*) – All across the state in appropriate open habitat; who could forget the performance of the individual on the road to Silver City performing the endless song flight.

#### *Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – Best looks at Swan Falls Dam on the Snake River.

**TREE SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – Not as common in Idaho as other regions of the U.S.

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – Common and widespread.

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – The massive colony at Walters Ferry was exciting.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – No big colonies but plenty to be seen.

**CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – Who could forget the swarms over the water or the birds lining the barbed wire at Ted Trueblood WMA; they had to number in the thousands.

#### *Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE** (*Poecile atricapillus*) – Only in the riparian areas near Boise.

**MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE** (*Poecile gambeli*) – Numerous in the northern forests.

**JUNIPER TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*) – One of the first species we scored as we entered City of Rocks National Reserve.

#### *Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta canadensis*) – Common in the towering conifers outside McCall.

**PYGMY NUTHATCH** (*Sitta pygmaea*) – These squeaky little guys came in nicely at Garden Valley.

#### *Certhiidae (Treecreepers)*

**BROWN CREEPER** (*Certhia americana*) – We watched one vigorously thrashing a moth practically at our feet at Bear Basin.

#### *Troglodytidae (Wrens)*

**ROCK WREN** (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – We had several bouncing all around us and singing up a storm at Dedication Point.

**CANYON WREN** (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – One of the best songs in North America; we saw one well at Dedication Point, on the rocks below us.

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Here and there.

**MARSH WREN** (*Cistothorus palustris*) – The cattail marshes at Market Lake WMA and Camas NWR were absolutely loaded with singing males.

**BEWICK'S WREN** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – We only heard this species at City of Rocks NR. [\*]

#### *Cinclidae (Dippers)*

**AMERICAN DIPPER** (*Cinclus mexicanus*) – We found a cooperative bird frequenting its nest under the bridge outside of Stanley.

#### *Regulidae (Kinglets)*

**GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus satrapa*) – Their soft "see see see" calls were easily heard in Bear Basin.

**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus calendula*) – More numerous and vocal than the previous species.

#### *Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**WESTERN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia mexicana*) – We saw this beauty well in the scope at Garden Valley.

**MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia currucoides*) – The cooperative male on the fence post outside of Stanley received multiple votes for a favorite species during the tour.

**TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** (*Myadestes townsendi*) – It took a little maneuvering to find the angle to scope our first bird at City of Rocks NR.

**SWAINSON'S THRUSH** (*Catharus ustulatus*) – The roadside bird on our drive to Stanley in the cemetery was undoubtedly a migrant.

**HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*) – One of my favorite songs.

**AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*) – It is amazing how many habitat types you can find this species breeding in.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers).

**GRAY CATBIRD** (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – I remember a bird in the shrubs below one of the Great Horned Owl nests we stopped to view.

**SAGE THRASHER** (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) – Singing in the rain on the drive to Stanley.

Sturnidae (Starlings).

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – One almost became a meal for a Prairie Falcon. [I]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings).

**CEDAR WAXWING** (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Few and far between on this tour.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).

**EVENING GROSBEAK** (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*) – This large, striking finch was easily encountered in the McCall area.

**HOUSE FINCH** (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – The suburban finch.

**CASSIN'S FINCH** (*Haemorhous cassinii*) – The raspberry and pink tones of the male plumage are gorgeous.

**CASSIA CROSSBILL** (*Loxia sinesciuris*) – North America's newest endemic species was almost going to be a miss, but thankfully we caught a break in the weather and were able to get in position. Hearing the flight call was key to identification and was confirmed when the band color code was reported to the research team.

**PINE SISKIN** (*Spinus pinus*) – Just a few up in the McCall area.

**AMERICAN GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus tristis*) – A few here and there

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows).

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – Lots in Bear Basin.

**BREWER'S SPARROW (BREWERI)** (*Spizella breweri breweri*) – Singing in the sagebrush in Owyhee County, outside of Murphy.

**LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*)

**FOX SPARROW (SLATE-COLORED)** (*Passerella iliaca schistacea*) – We didn't catch up to this robust sparrow until the last day but what a show.

This dark subspecies was singing up a storm and what a lovely song it is.

**DARK-EYED JUNCO (OREGON)** (*Junco hyemalis oreganus*) – On about half of the days.

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (ORIANATHA)** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – A memorable one was singing at a rest stop west of Stanley.

**SAGEBRUSH SPARROW** (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*) – This habitat specialist was first found on the SW side of the Snake River Canyon singing its delicate song.

**VESPER SPARROW** (*Poocetes gramineus*) – A few here and there.

**SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – There was a nice concentration at Market Lake WMA.

**SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*) – Nearly an everyday bird.

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (*Melospiza lincolni*) – Good looks in the Sawtooths.

**GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – City of Rocks NR was the only spot we found this species.

**SPOTTED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo maculatus*) – At the same time as the previous species.

Icteridae (Yellow-breasted Chat).

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*) – One of the first songbirds we enjoyed in the riparian habitat outside Boise.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies).

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – The concentration of breeding birds in the eastern cattail marshes was impressive. They sound like a frog that swallowed a harmonica.

**WESTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella neglecta*) – An everyday bird.

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus bullockii*) – We found a nest our first morning when we stopped for the Belted Kingfisher and Lewis's Woodpeckers.

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – An everyday bird.

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*) – More days than not.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) – Idaho is a stronghold for this species.

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – An unexpected find in Roberts.

Parulidae (New World Warblers).

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*) – One of the birds we found as part of a migrant flock on the north side of Mud Lake.

**NASHVILLE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – Only on two days of the tour.

**VIRGINIA'S WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – We found this sharp warbler close to the border with Utah.

**MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – That handsome male chipping at arms length along the shore of Little Payette Lake was a treat.

**COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*) – At the eastern refuges.

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – More days than not.

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S)** (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – The most common and widespread warbler of the tour. There was a significant pile up of migrants along the shore of Mud Lake WMA, where we encountered dozens and dozens.

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – We enjoyed excellent views of this denizen of "PJ" (pinyon pine - juniper) habitat.

**TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – It took a bit of effort to get our first good look at this gorgeous warbler but as is often the case, once we saw the first one, we couldn't get away from them.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Another migrant found at Mud Lake.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies).

**WESTERN Tanager** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – We enjoyed some stunning views of gorgeous males.



**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – We savored good looks of this striking migrant on a number of days but the male performing aerial song flights in Garden Valley was the most outstanding.

**LAZULI BUNTING** (*Passerina amoena*) – Thick in stream-side willows.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Of course. [I]

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## MAMMALS

**NUTTALL'S (MOUNTAIN) COTTONTAIL** (*Sylvilagus nuttalli*) – A few spotted here and there.

**SNOWSHOE HARE** (*Lepus americanus*) – Seen briefly by a few people north of McCall.

**BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT** (*Lepus californicus*) – In the road at the entrance to the City of Rocks.

**LEAST CHIPMUNK** (*Tamias minimus*) – A great study during our walk in Garden Valley.

**YELLOW-BELLIED MARMOT** (*Marmota flaviventris*) – Just a few sightings, mostly while driving. Normally this species is more conspicuous but the wet weather kept them underground.

**COLUMBIAN GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Urocitellus columbiana*) – The reddish ones when we were in the more northern region of the state (Stanley to McCall).

**WYOMING GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Urocitellus elegans*) – The cooperative one standing roadside at Camas NWR was possibly this species but tough to tell them apart from Uinta G.S..

**PIUTE GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Urocitellus mollis*) – Numerous in the Snake River Canyon area; the primary food source for so many nesting raptors.

**FOX SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus niger*) – Mostly during the first half of the tour.

**RED SQUIRREL** (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) – Not in the South Hills! We found them easily up in the McCall area; a few would not be quiet.

**MUSKRAT** (*Ondatra zibethica*) – Common in the eastern marshes.

**NORTH AMERICAN PORCUPINE** (*Erethizon dorsatum*) – We enjoyed an excellent view of a blonde, roosting animal at Mud Lake WMA.

**RED FOX** (*Vulpes vulpes*) – We saw one dark-backed individual in the snow up in the South Hills.

**COYOTE** (*Canis latrans*) – This clever and adaptable predator is heavily persecuted so it is not surprising that we only saw it on one day. Coyotes need to be wary of humans to survive.

**AMERICAN BADGER** (*Taxidea taxus*) – The "bird" of the trip! My mantra of "Stay alert for flying dirt" paid off thanks to Hank. We watched our first actively excavating then lucked into a pair together - WOW.

**ELK** (*Cervus canadensis*) – A small herd crossed the road west of Stanley as we headed toward McCall.

**MULE DEER** (*Odocoileus hemionus*) – More days than not.

**WHITE-TAILED DEER** (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Two individuals at Camas NWR.

**PRONGHORN** (*Antilocapra americana*) – The female standing over her newborn on Simco Road, as we were driving away from the American Badger, was an adorable surprise.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The Field Guides tradition of sharing your three favorite species of the tour is always an interesting exercise. The fact that 17 different species received votes speaks to the diversity of experiences we enjoyed. There was no runaway winner but Ferruginous Hawk took top honors. The majestic adult teed up was quite a sight in the scope. Other species receiving multiple votes included: Cassia Crossbill, Mountain Bluebird, Dusky Grouse, Williamson's Sapsucker and MacGillivray's Warbler. Lewis's Woodpecker, Wilson's Snipe, Calliope Hummingbird, and Prairie Falcon were nominated by at least two of you.

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**Totals for the tour: 177 bird taxa and 19 mammal taxa**