



Field Guides Tour Report

New Mexico: Birding the Land of Enchantment 2019

Jan 26, 2019 to Feb 1, 2019
Doug Gochfeld & Cory Gregory

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



Spending an evening with thousands of Sandhill Cranes is a spectacular sight and one that ranks highly for any birder! Our group enjoyed incredible scenery at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge where many birds, including these two cranes, came in to roost for the night. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

With sunsets over ancient vistas, thousands upon thousands of cranes and geese lifting into the dawn sky, and rosy-finches swirling through the thin air of 10,000 ft, this short tour through New Mexico had a plethora of special moments, amazing sightings, and lots of fun birding!

We started out by heading east out of Albuquerque, finding Evening Grosbeaks and Townsend's Solitaires near the church, before driving up to Sandia Crest where we were in for a treat. From the warm comforts of the indoors, we were able to watch as three different species of rosy-finches attended the feeders! Not only that, but the banders gave us an informative presentation and even let us release a few of the rosy-finches ourselves. If the elevation didn't take our breath away, the sheer beauty of the place surely did.

The following morning we birded the dry habitats of Embudito Canyon where Cactus Wren, Curve-billed Thrasher, Black-throated Sparrow, and Canyon Towhee stole the show. We even had a bonus Fox Sparrow at the feeders. We continued east and enjoyed Ferruginous Hawks and Chihuahuan Ravens in the open country near Estancia and Mountain Bluebirds even made an appearance! We ended the day watching Sandhill Cranes at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge where dozens wheeled in right in front of us. It was a magical end to a fun day of birding!

The next morning found us at Elephant Butte Reservoir where we had side-by-side comparisons between Western and Clark's grebes. They were really close too! Las Animas Creek was hosting Acorn Woodpeckers, Bridled Titmice, and even some Gambel's Quail during our visit. Percha Dam gave us our first Black Phoebe, a wintering Hammond's Flycatcher, and a dapper Red-naped Sapsucker. After our amazing lunch at Latitude 33, we headed back to Bosque del Apache where we spent the dusk soaking in the Bald Eagles, massive swarms of Ross's and Snow geese, and even some Elk!

Returning to Bosque del Apache NWR for one last morning of birding there, we made good use of it and found point-blank Ross's Geese as well as the Golden-crowned and Harris's sparrow mixed in with all the other feeder birds. In fact, we had the 4 Zonotrichia sweep from one spot! Down the road, we enjoyed scope views of singing Crissal Thrashers and a Green-tailed Towhee just in the nick of time. After lunch in Socorro, we headed up Water Canyon where we had a few Chestnut-collared Longspurs in the grasslands, a flock of siskins swirling along the roadside, and a very nice "Prairie" Merlin perched atop a telephone pole.

We headed north out of Albuquerque the following morning and climbed our way up to 10,000 feet at the Santa Fe ski area. An impervious Clark's Nutcracker, a hungry Hairy Woodpecker, and colorful Steller's Jays were waiting for us! Black Canyon Campground was hosting a flock of Pygmy Nuthatches on our way down, and we even found a flock of the tough-to-find Pinyon Jays at the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve. After lunch, we enjoyed some downtime in downtown Santa Fe to enjoy the various museums and shops before heading back to Albuquerque.

Although our final morning was short, we packed in lots of goodies that included the very birdy Tingley Lagoon which was loaded with Ring-necked Ducks, Wood Ducks, Canvasbacks, a few Neotropical Cormorants, and a Black-crowned Night-Heron. Our final stop, Valle de Oro NWR, provided us

with Cackling Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, and a last-second Prairie Falcon! Whew. Before long though, it was time to bid each other farewell and head our separate ways.

We have lots of folks to thank for making this a successful tour. At the top of the list is Karen who managed this tour from our home base in Austin. A big thanks also to Michael Hilchey and the banders that showed us rosy-finches at Sandia Crest! And of course a big thanks to you for joining Doug and me on this Field Guides tour through New Mexico! We certainly had a blast and we hope you did too.

Until we bird together again someday, stay safe and happy 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)

SNOW GOOSE (*Anser caerulescens*) – The swarms of this white goose at Bosque del Apache were jaw-dropping! One of the most memorable experiences was having a huge flock flush and fly mere feet over our heads!

ROSS'S GOOSE (*Anser rossii*) – This tour provided top-notch opportunities to study this small goose next to the larger Snow Goose on many occasions. At times, some of these diminutive geese were posing for us point-blank at Bosque del Apache. We later saw pure flocks of these at Valle de Oro NWR in Albuquerque.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*) – A singleton at Valle de Oro NWR played hide-and-seek with us for several minutes before walking out into the open.

ACKLING GOOSE (RICHARDSON'S) (*Branta hutchinsii hutchinsii*) – It wasn't until our final morning at Valle de Oro that we found a nice mixed flock of white-cheeked geese including this small species.

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – Fairly common throughout the tour but never as numerous as the white geese.

WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*) – What a gorgeous duck! We had point-blank views on our final morning at Tingley Lagoon including some males in morning light.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*) – This big-billed dabbling duck was fairly common on ponds and lakes at Bosque del Apache NWR and other bodies of water.

GADWALL (*Mareca strepera*) – This underrated dabbling duck was seen a few times at Bosque del Apache where we could appreciate the black back-end and white patch in the secondaries.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Mareca americana*) – A couple of massive flocks were seen in flight overhead at Percha Dam that numbered into the hundreds. We saw more at Bosque del Apache and Tingley Lagoon.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*) – This familiar dabbling duck was tallied most days from various ponds and lakes.

MEXICAN DUCK (*Anas diazi*) – This dark-bodied dabbling duck was recently upgraded to full species status and we had sightings at Bosque Del Apache where they flew by a couple of times. There were a few ducks at Tingley Lagoon that could have been this species but given the numerous odd, suspicious Mallard-type ducks there, it was hard to be certain.

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – A long-bodied and graceful dabbling duck, these were fairly common in ponds and lakes around Bosque del Apache.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – This dabbling, the smallest in North America, was handsome as ever at spots like Bosque del Apache.

CANVASBACK (*Aythya valisineria*) – We connected with this white-backed diving duck at Tingley Lagoon on our final morning.

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – Although our first looks were at Bosque del Apache, it was hard to top the views we had on our final morning at Tingley Lagoon where dozens of these diving-ducks were swimming at point-blank.

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – We had good studies of these diving ducks at Bosque del Apache and then at Tingley Lagoon where there was one mixed with the previous species.

BUFFLEHEAD (*Bucephala albeola*) – This adorable, little diving-duck was seen nicely at Bosque del Apache on a couple of different visits.

HOODED MERGANSER (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) – A trio of these small divers flew by the observation deck at Bosque del Apache but they didn't linger for long.

COMMON MERGANSER (*Mergus merganser*) – We saw a close male at the Elephant Butte State Park marina and then again in ditches near Tingley Lagoon in Albuquerque.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – These small stiff-tails were scoped from the observation deck at Bosque del Apache on one of our visits.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*) – One of the vacant lots near Las Animas Creek was loaded with this distinctive quail and we watched them scurry around for a few minutes before they scattered. There were some present near the feeders at Bosque del Apache NWR as well.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Our first glimpses of this tiny grebe came from Bosque del Apache but we had even better views at Tingley Lagoon on our final morning.

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) – We had several outstanding looks at this large, black-and-white grebe at Elephant Butte State Park. At the marina, we were able to compare this species with the following species where we appreciated the extensive black on the face that included the eye, the greenish bill, and darker flanks.

CLARK'S GREBE (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) – Although similar to the previous species, we were able to see the white around the eye, the bright yellow bill, and paler flanks. The Elephant Butte State Park marina was an outstanding spot to study these two species.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves).

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – This introduced species was tallied every day, mostly from urban areas. [I]

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – A fairly common introduced species now, these were seen nearly every day of the tour. [I]

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – This distinctive native dove was tallied a couple of times at Bosque del Apache, Elephant Butte State Park, and Las Animas Creek. The latter location hosted nearly 100 of them!

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – A fairly common dove throughout the tour.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos).

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – It was a real treat to be able to spend time with this large, ground-dwelling cuckoo! We spotted one in Embudito Canyon, a couple in an open field near McIntosh, and another at Las Animas Creek.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots).

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – The ones at the Elephant Butte State Park marina didn't seem too wary! We saw loads more at Tingley Lagoon as well.

Gruidae (Cranes).

SANDHILL CRANE (*Antigone canadensis*) – Without a doubt, one of the most epic shows occurs every day at Bosque del Apache with these ancient giants swooping in to roost. Our views were fantastic, numerous, and set against beautiful and scenic backdrops. We even got to enjoy the less-numerous "Lesser" Sandhill Crane one evening mixed in with the abundant "Greater".

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings).

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Although not abundant, this noisy plover was tallied on a couple of occasions including one that flew up Las Animas Creek.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies).

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – A lanky shorebird with a slightly-upturned bill, a couple of these flew in and landed in the marsh right along the highway at Bosque del Apache during one of our visits there.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers).

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – We found this familiar gull right away at the Elephant Butte State Park marina where they were the only gull present.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags).

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – A smaller, longer-tailed cormorant compared to the Double-crested, this species was seen nicely at Tingley Lagoon on our final morning.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – We encountered this hefty cormorant species at the Elephant Butte SP marina on our third morning.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns).

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Several of these giants were stalking fish at Elephant Butte State Park during our scoping from the marina.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – A youngster was sitting quietly on our chilly morning visit to Tingley Lagoon. A great, last-second addition!

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites).

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – It's always a treat to see this massive bird of prey in the open country of the West. We encountered one southwest of Estancia and a couple more near Bosque del Apache.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus hudsonius*) – A raptor of open marshes and grassy areas, these were spotted on most of our days.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – A chunky, bird-eating raptor, these were tallied a couple of times including at Bosque del Apache and again at Santa Fe Canyon Preserve.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – Several of these regal eagles were perched up near the goose flock at dusk. At one point, one flew and the entire flock of geese flushed and stormed over.

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – Woah, this was a rare sighting! One of these distinctive hawks was perched on a telephone pole between Las Animas Creek and Caballo Reservoir.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Fairly common in open country throughout the trip. We enjoyed seeing some of the western birds that were very dark-bodied as well.

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (*Buteo regalis*) – Goodness, we sure had our fill of this regal buteo! We tallied an incredible number and enjoyed views of them perched and in flight where we could appreciate the pale tail, pale upperwing panel, etc.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers).

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – One of these fish-eaters rattled by at Percha Dam but we had more extended looks at Tingley Lagoon on our final morning.

Picidae (Woodpeckers).

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) – A sharp-looking female came in to inspect us at Percha Dam.

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – We tracked down this clown-like woodpecker at Las Animas Creek on our third morning where they were quite common. We found a few more in Water Canyon as well.

AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER (*Picoides dorsalis*) – Darn it, the view was very brief for most of us as this woodpecker flew over the trail and called a few times up at Sandia Crest.

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates pubescens*) – Only a few of these small woodpeckers were seen on tour including one at the base of the Sandias and again at the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve.

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Dryobates scalaris*) – This small woodpecker, a denizen of dry desert-type habitats, was tallied a few times including at Embudito Canyon.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates villosus*) – One or two of these was visiting the feeders at the Santa Fe ski area. The birds we saw were of the distinctive Rocky Mountain group of subspecies.

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – Fairly common throughout. The males of the Red-shafted subspecies have a red moustacial stripe, not black like the Yellow-shafted.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – Our smallest falcon, these were seen several times throughout the tour, mostly in open country.

MERLIN (PRAIRIE) (*Falco columbarius richardsonii*) – A beautiful and pale Merlin was seen on our way down out of Water Canyon. This was picked by Caryn as one of her favorite birds of the trip.

PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*) – Whew, talk about last second! Our final birding stop on our final morning netted us this fantastic bird of prey! Valle de Oro NWR for the win! Mary Lou picked this as one of her Top 3 moments.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*) – One of these Empids was overwintering at Percha Dam and we connected with it as it sallied out from the other side of the stream. Typically, these winter farther south from Mexico well into Central America.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – We tracked down this black-and-white flycatcher at Percha Dam where it was catching flies from the surface of the river.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – A buff-bellied flycatcher of open country, the first sighting came from some corrals at Las Animas Creek.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – These "butcherbirds" were spotted a few times in open country where they perched up high on power-lines and fence posts.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

PINYON JAY (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*) – This nomadic species can be very difficult to track down but we had a bit of luck at the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve where a small flock flew by. They ended up perched down the canyon and we were able to get scope views before they meandered off.

STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – We connected with this handsome western jay on our first morning in the Sandias and then again on our morning up at the Santa Fe ski area where they were attending the feeder.

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (WOODHOUSE'S) (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii nevadae*) – Fairly common in a variety of dry habitats throughout the tour. Up until a couple of years ago, this was part of the Western Scrub-Jay complex.

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE (*Pica hudsonia*) – There were a couple of brief sightings on the day we ventured up to Santa Fe. This was the only area on our tour route that we expected to see this distinctive Corvid.

CLARK'S NUTCRACKER (*Nucifraga columbiana*) – A denizen of the high-elevation snowfields, peaks, and mountains, this black-and-gray Corvid showed very nicely at the Santa Fe ski area.

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – Fairly common around Albuquerque.

CHIHUAHUA RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – We had outstanding luck in finding one of the roving flocks of this interesting raven. We were able to study the bill structure and how the feathering there differed from the larger, Common Ravens nearby. The white in the neck can be difficult to see as the name suggests (*C. cryptoleucus*).

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Common throughout and tallied every day.

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – A bird of open fields, these were amassed in large flocks that we sorted through on the day we traveled down through Estancia and Socorro. We even tallied them on our final day at Valle de Oro NWR.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE (*Poecile atricapillus*) – The only spot on our tour route for this chickadee was at the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve where they ended up being fairly common along the willows.

MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE (*Poecile gambeli*) – This western chickadee has a white eyebrow which we were able to see nicely at Sandia Crest, Water Canyon, Santa Fe ski area, and Santa Fe Canyon Preserve.

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – This is a smart-looking titmouse of the Southwestern canyons. For us, we encountered them along Las Animas Creek on our third day.

JUNIPER TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*) – Both the present name (Juniper Titmouse) and the former name (Plain Titmouse) fit this species pretty well. This is a plain titmouse of junipers, after all! We saw them on our first morning as we headed up to Sandia Crest.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (INTERIOR) (*Psaltriparus minimus plumbeus*) – A couple of massive flocks of these cute puffballs were seen at Embudito Canyon and Water Canyon. There were more than 100 in the flock at Embudito Canyon!

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*) – We encountered this conifer-loving nuthatch on the two days we climbed up to higher elevations; at Sandia Crest and Santa Fe ski area.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – Fairly common throughout the tour. Note the subspecies, these sound a fair bit different from the birds out East or along the West Coast.

PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*) – This flock-loving species was seen on our descent from the Santa Fe ski area in the Black Canyon Campground area.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*) – This tiny brown species was heard-only by some folks, but some in our group actually saw the one at Sandia Crest on our first birding day.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – This large and striking wren posed very nicely for us in Embudito Canyon. In fact, the view through the scope was hard to beat!

Regulidae (Kinglets).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – A number of locations hosted this feisty, wing-flicking insectivore. We even saw one with its full ruby crown showing at Percha Dam which Bill chose as one of his Top 3 moments.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies).

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – Fairly common throughout the tour, the best views were probably on our first morning near the Church of the Sandias.

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia currucoides*) – The shade of blue on this bluebird is hard to describe! Thankfully, we got to enjoy these in all their glory on our second day of birding. Carol picked this as one of her Top 3 birds and for good reason!

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes townsendi*) – A long-bodied thrush that's especially fond of junipers, these were seen nicely near the church on our first morning and then again at the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*) – Common and tallied on each of our days.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers).

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – We couldn't have asked for a better show at Embudito Canyon by these sandy-brown thrashers. The pale eye and rusty undertail were easily seen.

CRISSAL THRASHER (*Toxostoma crissale*) – This long-billed thrasher is sneaky at the best of times and so we were ecstatic to have a couple perched out in the open singing! This encounter made the Top 3 for Jim, Joann, and Caryn.

Sturnidae (Starlings).

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – This introduced species was seen every day. [I]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits).

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) – One of these called while flying over at Valle de Oro NWR. We never got eyes on it though so it remained heard-only. [*]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings).

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Small numbers of these frugivores were tallied on about half of our days from locations like the church, Las Animas Creek, and Tingley Lagoon.

Ptilionotidae (Silky-flycatchers).

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – This sleek, black, and crested species was first spotted at Las Animas Creek alongside the Acorn Woodpeckers. We saw more at Percha Dam later in the day. Lastly, one was seen briefly at the Bosque del Apache feeder area.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).

EVENING GROSBEAK (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*) – Sometimes it pays going to church, like the time we saw these big finches near the Church of the Sandias! It's always a treat seeing these irruptive winter wanderers.

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*) – Of the three rosy-finch species we saw at the Sandia Crest, this species was the least numerous. Still, the researchers caught a few and we were able to release them.

BLACK ROSY-FINCH (*Leucosticte atrata*) – Our visit to the Sandia Crest House was made even more special by the roving flock of rosy-finches. This species, the darkest of the three, was the most numerous and we all got to enjoy good looks and even got to release a few that the researchers had caught.

BROWN-CAPPED ROSY-FINCH (*Leucosticte australis*) – This rosy-finch is the most restricted in range but was still quite numerous during our time at the Sandia Crest. This species is almost endemic to Colorado but winters into northern New Mexico.

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – This attractive finch was fairly common and tallied most days, often from areas with feeders.

CASSIN'S FINCH (*Haemorhous cassinii*) – Most of our sightings of this western finch came in the form of flyovers; first at the gas station in Sandia Park and then again at the Church of the Sandias.

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – A big flurry of activity caught our attention on the lower slopes of Water Canyon... turns out it was a flock of dozens of siskins feeding on the roadside vegetation.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – We had looks at this small, dark-backed finch at spots like Embudito Canyon and Las Animas Creek.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*) – The only spot hosting this wintering species was Percha Dam where we saw them towards the end of our walk.

Calcariidae (Longspurs and Snow Buntings).

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (*Calcarius ornatus*) – A flock of these wintering birds was swirling around the cattle pond in lower Water Canyon. They landed briefly once or twice but seemed to spend more time in the air than drinking!

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows).

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – This species was seen towards the end of the walk at Percha Dam.

BREWER'S SPARROW (*Spizella breweri*) – A close relative of the previous species, these were seen at Bosque del Apache in the sage habitats.

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – What a gorgeous sparrow! We encountered a tame individual in Embudito Canyon that kept us and our cameras busy!

FOX SPARROW (*Passerella iliaca*) – It was a treat to see this chunky sparrow at the feeders in Embudito Canyon. This particular bird was of the "Slate-colored" complex of Fox Sparrows.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (*Junco hyemalis*) – This species has a number of subspecies and most of them are found wintering in New Mexico! When we were able to, we assigned our juncos to the various varieties (see below for more details).

DARK-EYED JUNCO (SLATE-COLORED) (*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*) – This subspecies is plain white below and plain dark gray above. We saw a bird on our first morning near the Church that was probably this subspecies.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (OREGON) (*Junco hyemalis montanus*) – This handsome subspecies was fairly common throughout. The black head and hood was distinctive!

DARK-EYED JUNCO (PINK-SIDED) (*Junco hyemalis mearnsi*) – This was probably the most numerous subspecies we encountered overall. These have a pale gray head, darker gray/black around the lores, a brownish back, and pale pinkish flanks.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (GRAY-HEADED) (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*) – This attractive subspecies was tallied at a few places like at Sandia Crest. These are gray overall with a bright rufous back.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (GAMBEL'S) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) – This was our most abundant sparrow and spots like the Bosque del Apache feeders had dozens, if not more than a hundred or so!

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) – This is a rare wintering species in New Mexico but we caught up to one at the Bosque del Apache feeders where we all had good looks at the plain face and yellowish crown. Excellent addition!

HARRIS'S SPARROW (*Zonotrichia querula*) – Typically, this attractive sparrow species winters east of New Mexico. However, this winter was a good one for them and we found the continuing bird at the Bosque del Apache feeders.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – The best place for this uncommon wintering species was at the Bosque del Apache feeders where at least 5 were present.

SAGEBRUSH SPARROW (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*) – This local sage specialist was one of our targets around the Bosque del Apache area and we ended up finding a couple on a side road that climbed up through the sage and creosote.

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Good numbers of these were present at Valle de Oro NWR at the end of our trip, especially along the taller grass edges.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*) – A classic sparrow, these were tallied at a number of spots like Percha Dam, Santa Fe Canyon Preserve, and Bosque del Apache.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) – A finely-streaked sparrow, one of these popped up at Embudito Canyon much to our delight. Turns out, that was the only spot we encountered this wintering species.

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – Stunning looks were had at Embudito Canyon and the morning light really was icing on the cake!

RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – A specialist of grassy and rocky areas, this attractive sparrow, sporting a rufous crown and white eye-ring, popped out at Embudito Canyon and did a close inspection of us!

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – It took a little effort but we eventually found one at the Crissal Thrasher spot near the little town of San Antonio.

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – We encountered these attractive towhees, that were once part of the Rufous-sided Towhee complex, at Bosque del Apache and Embudito Canyon.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*) – After the cranes and geese left the roadside pond at Bosque del Apache, the only sound was of these meadowlarks in full song! We saw a few along roadsides through dry grasslands as well.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – A few of these familiar blackbirds were picking around the corral at Las Animas Creek. We saw larger numbers at Bosque del Apache as well.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) – We encountered decent numbers of these at Las Animas Creek, Bosque del Apache NWR, and picking around on the tires in the water at Elephant Butte Reservoir.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – A dozen or two were spotted at Bosque del Apache, often in flight as they flew to/from roost sites.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – Our best study of this western subspecies was at Las Animas Creek. Most of the time, these have nice yellow throats that set them apart from the Myrtle subspecies.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – This relative of the Northern Cardinal was seen in the dry habitats around Bosque del Apache NWR on a couple of different days. Males have red down the breast/belly whereas females don't.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – This introduced species was tallied every day. [H]

MAMMALS

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – There were a couple of sightings of this cottontail in the dry habitats around Bosque del Apache NWR.

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – The open country of the West makes it a lot easier to see these canines out in the middle of fields. We spotted one at Valle de Oro NWR on our final morning.

COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*) – Folks in the 2nd van were treated to views of one of these as it darted away from the road.

ELK (*Cervus canadensis*) – A small herd of males were jostling behind the flock of Snow Geese one evening at Bosque del Apache. What a scene they made with the setting sun and thousands of birds!

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – These were seen on a couple of evenings at Bosque del Apache NWR in the fading light.

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – Good spotting from the 1st van! We were able to pull off the road and watch several of these grassland specialists as the poked around. These are the fastest land mammals in the Western Hemisphere. It's often said the only faster land mammal is the Cheetah. However, Pronghorn can maintain their speed for longer than the Cheetah.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 128 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa