

Trip Report — Mexico: Oaxaca Valley II 2025

December 20-27, 2025 with Dan Lane



The group at Monte Alban.

Oaxaca is a pretty magical place. It has an amazing mixture of culture, history, food, scenic beauty, and impressive natural diversity. For us in the chilly North, it is a very welcoming place to visit during the winter, although we found out that it can get cold there too! Overall, we enjoyed all these aspects of the region during a lovely week's visit there. Christmas time is particularly a nice time to visit as there are cultural events we were able to witness such as the Noche de los Rabanos on the 23rd. Our view from our restaurant's balcony allowed us to get an overview of this unique event without having to stand in line for hours to shuffle by the exhibits. But we also enjoyed other Oaxaqueña culture, such as the wool spinning and dying at Teotitla and the making of mezcal. And another aspect of culture, the food, was something we could enjoyed daily as well! Tlyudas, quesadillas, tacos, cecina enchilada, tasajo, several different types of moles, and even the chapulines all were sampled during our visit. Finally, the history of the region informed us of the modern culture as well, particularly the pre-columbian

cultures: the Zapotecos and Mixtecos, for example, and their importance in subsequent American civilizations. Visits to several ruins in the valley provided a perspective on how these groups lived both before and after the Spanish conquest, and as we saw, to this day folks in the valley still speak in Zapotec.



After spending an hour looking for him, this male Coppery-tailed Tropic showed after we'd given up. Photo by Dan Lane.

Our tour visited the various habitats around the Oaxaca Valley, ranging from the open agricultural and semi-desert scrub of the valley floor to the humid pine-oak forests of the ridge crests that flank the valley to the north. We also visited some Pacific-slope tropical arid woodland just outside the valley proper for a few choice treats! Our first day was arguably also our most diverse, with a drive from the open agricultural landscape at the start of the road to Teotitlan, also visiting the area around the reservoir by the town, and

then the dry pine-oak forest above. Our second day was to the aforementioned tropical arid woodland on the highway to Tehuantepec where we walked in a dry wash and looked for “lowland” birds with surprising success, with the afternoon at a couple of ruins; dinner was on the Zocalo, where we enjoyed viewing the Noche de Rabanos festival. Next, we headed to the rather different humid montane forests of Cerro San Felipe, where it was decidedly colder and foggy; birding here was more difficult, but we still got some important species! Our fourth birding day was Christmas Eve, and we spent the morning at the ruins of Monte Alban, had a birthday celebration for Neal at lunch, and the evening back in the mountains hoping for nightbirds (this didn’t go so well!). Day five found us back on the road above Teotitlan in the brushy semi-arid slopes above the reservoir and also enjoying some cultural immersion with the artisanal wool spinning and dying. Our final day was on the ridge north of the valley, working the more oak-dominated forested slopes and then lunch at a local restaurant nearby which is always a nice meal! In all, it was a great week away from the grind back home and chance to see a nice smattering of flashy birds!



These two Montezuma Baldcypresses are among the largest trees in the world, the left one, El Tule, is considered one of the girthiest! Photo by Dan Lane.

Highlights of the tour were many and varied. There were several non-bird events and things that made the list: the Noche de los Rabanos on the 23rd, the various Zapotec ruins that Jorge led us around, the mezcal making

process (and tasting!), and the woolworking of Teotitlan. More lively highlights included the random Southern Opossum we watched as it lazily wandered the grounds of our hotel, some of the wintering migrants that we knew from home such as Baltimore Oriole and Summer Tanager (don't hurt that these two are also quite colorful!), the stunning Orange-breasted Bunting, flamboyant White-throated Magpie-Jays, and stoic Russet-crowned Motmot we saw at Km 77, and the cute Northern Pygmy-Owls that tooted away in the pine-oak forests at Yuvila our final day, the brief but impressive Golden Eagle that drifted over the scrub ridges, and the muted female Flame-colored Tanager that was such a surprise for the tour. Higher on the list was the sneaky Lesser Roadrunner that zipped by us on the slope above the road in the scrub above Teotitlan or the very relaxed male Coppery-tailed (formerly Elegant) Trogan that gave us a bit of a run for our money before eventually deciding to sit still in front of us until we eventually had to walk away! Tied for second place were two stunning birds: one was a Long-tailed Wood-Partridge that gave us about 20 seconds of view—after we had wifed on seeing them at a feeder where we spent nearly an hour waiting, only to call one out “in the wild” later—and two opportunities to see the very smartly-dressed Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, a bird that looks like a Chestnut-sided Warbler went all Incredible Hulk. The bird voted top choice of the tour was the flaming Red Warbler, a hot ember that inhabits the dark understory of the montane pine forests of Cerro San Felipe. But there were far more great views and memories on the tour, and I hope that you will remember them with pleasure the way I will!



After hearing a few distant birds, we finally had smashing views of Northern Pygmy-Owl our final morning. Photo by Dan Lane.

Mammals seen:

Southern Opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*)

Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)

Red-bellied Squirrel (*Sciurus aureogaster*)



One of the top-voted sightings of the tour was this Long-tailed Wood-Partridge. Photo by Dan Lane.

In all, this visit to Oaxaca was a fun time, as much because of the company as because of the experiences we shared! I hope we will meet up again in the future and enjoy another similar tour elsewhere. Meanwhile, keep those binoculars close at hand and be prepared to enjoy a good view of a feathered waif!

Good birding to all!



The Noche de los Rabanos is one of the most iconic festivals of Oaxaca's Christmas season.
Photo by Dan Lane.



Streak-backed Orioles are at home in the cactus-clad arid zone just on the Pacific slope outside the Oaxaca Valley. Photo by Dan Lane.



The Golden Vireo is a Mexican endemic that can be sneaky, showing up unannounced as this one did. Photo by Dan Lane.

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/452520>

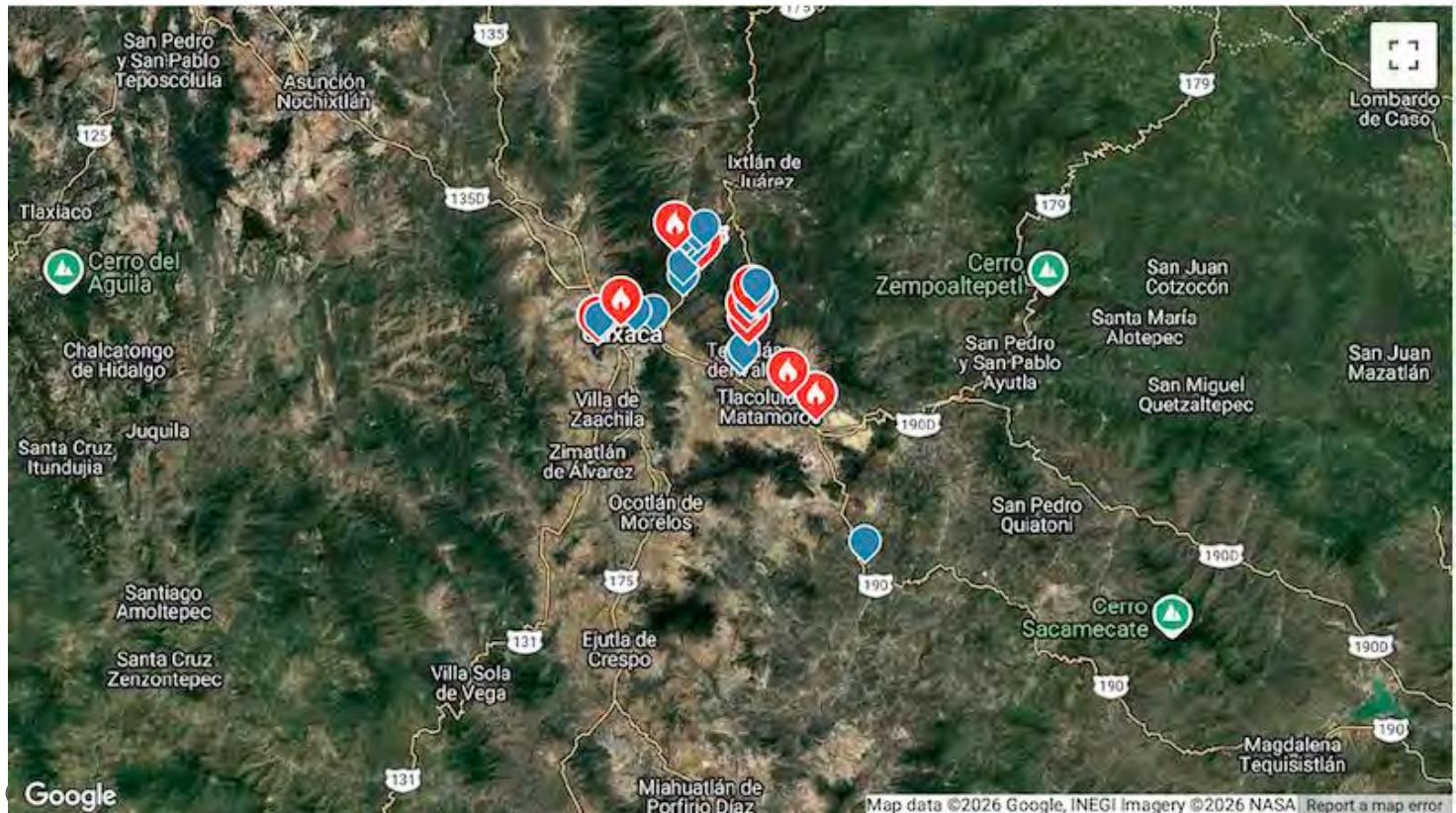
You can download a combined PDF of this page and the eBird report at this link: <https://fieldguides.com/triplists/oax25bTRIPLIST.pdf>

-- Dan (the Barbet)



Field Guides Birding Tours --MEXICO: OAXACA VALLEY, 2025 (with Dan Lane)

20 – 27 Dec 2025 (8 days) Link-only



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Dan Lane FGI tours



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

187

32

Species Observed

Show all details

72	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Spatula discors</i>	4
3	American Wigeon	<i>Mareca americana</i>	1
12	Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	2
70	Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	2
4	Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	2
1	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	1
4	West Mexican Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis poliocephala</i>	1
8	Long-tailed Wood-Partridge	<i>Dendrortyx macroura</i>	3
2	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	1
103	Band-tailed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>	2
2	Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	1
7	Inca Dove	<i>Columbina inca</i>	3
5	Common Ground Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>	1
63	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	8
4	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	1
5	Groove-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>	2
1	Lesser Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx velox</i>	1
1	Mexican Squirrel-Cuckoo	<i>Piaya mexicana</i>	1
1	Mexican Whip-poor-will	<i>Antrostomus arizonae</i>	1
14	Mexican Violetear	<i>Colibri thalassinus</i>	6
6	Rivoli's Hummingbird	<i>Eugenes fulgens</i>	5

3	Plain-capped Starthroat	<i>Heliodoxa constantii</i>	✓	1
12	Blue-throated Mountain-gem	<i>Lampornis clemenciae</i>		4
1	Beautiful Hummingbird	<i>Calothorax pulcher</i>		1
23	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>		11
3	Broad-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus platycercus</i>		1
11	Dusky Hummingbird	<i>Phaeoptila sordida</i>		7
33	White-eared Hummingbird	<i>Basilinna leucotis</i>		9
2	Green-fronted Hummingbird	<i>Ramosomyia viridifrons</i>	✓	1
24	Berylline Hummingbird	<i>Saucerottia beryllina</i>		11
3	Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>		1
3	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>		2
208	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>		4
6	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>		3
3	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>		2
1	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>		1
51	Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>		3
2	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>		2
1	Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum brasilianum</i>		1
1	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>		1
1	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>		1
9	Western Cattle-Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>		4
5	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		2
1	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>		1
65	Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>		8

55	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	11
1	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	1
2	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	2
5	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Astur cooperii</i>	5
2	Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>	1
1	Short-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>	1
11	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	8
4	Northern Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium gnoma</i>	3
1	Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>	1
1	Coppery-tailed Trogon	<i>Trogon ambiguus</i>	1
6	Mountain Tropicbird	<i>Trogon mexicanus</i>	4
1	Russet-crowned Motmot	<i>Momotus mexicanus</i>	1
1	Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	1
2	Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	1
8	Gray-breasted Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes hypopolius</i>	4
1	Golden-fronted Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes aurifrons</i>	1
2	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates scalaris</i>	2
6	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Leuconotopicus villosus</i>	5
1	Laughing Falcon	<i>Herpetotheres cachinnans</i>	1
5	Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara plancus</i>	4
1	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	1
3	Strong-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus</i>	1
2	White-striped Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes leucogaster</i>	1

5	Spot-crowned Woodcreeper <i>Lepidocolaptes affinis</i>	► 3
1	Rose-throated Becard <i>Pachyramphus aglaiae</i>	► 1
3	Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet <i>Camptostoma imberbe</i>	► 3
2	Greenish Elaenia <i>Myiopagis viridicata</i>	► 2
5	Tufted Flycatcher <i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>	► 4
7	Greater Pewee <i>Contopus pertinax</i>	► 6
4	Least Flycatcher <i>Empidonax minimus</i>	► 1
7	Hammond's Flycatcher <i>Empidonax hammondi</i>	► 4
2	Gray Flycatcher <i>Empidonax wrightii</i> ✓	► 1
6	Dusky Flycatcher <i>Empidonax oberholseri</i> ✓	► 4
3	Black Phoebe <i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	► 2
1	Say's Phoebe <i>Sayornis saya</i> ✓	► 1
7	Vermilion Flycatcher <i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	► 4
7	Dusky-capped Flycatcher <i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>	► 6
7	Ash-throated Flycatcher <i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	► 6
11	Nutting's Flycatcher <i>Myiarchus nuttingi</i>	► 6
9	Great Kiskadee <i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	► 5
14	Social Flycatcher <i>Myiozetetes similis</i>	► 7
2	Tropical Kingbird <i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	► 2
13	Cassin's Kingbird <i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	► 5
4	Thick-billed Kingbird <i>Tyrannus crassirostris</i>	► 3
13	Western Kingbird <i>Tyrannus verticalis</i> ✓	► 3
4	Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo <i>Vireolanius melitophrys</i>	► 2

2	Golden Vireo <i>Vireo hypochryseus</i>	► 2
11	Hutton's Vireo <i>Vireo huttoni</i>	► 4
2	Blue-headed Vireo <i>Vireo solitarius</i>	► 2
5	Plumbeous Vireo <i>Vireo plumbeus</i>	► 3
20	Western Warbling Vireo <i>Vireo swainsoni</i>	► 7
2	Dwarf Jay <i>Cyanolyca nanus</i> ✓	► 1
5	White-throated Magpie-Jay <i>Cyanocorax formosus</i>	► 1
29	Steller's Jay <i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	► 6
8	Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay <i>Aphelocoma woodhouseii</i> ✓	► 1
5	Common Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>	► 3
4	Mexican Chickadee <i>Poecile sclateri</i>	► 2
18	Violet-green Swallow <i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	► 4
3	Northern Rough-winged Swallow <i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	► 2
13	Bushtit <i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>	► 3
23	Ruby-crowned Kinglet <i>Corthylio calendula</i>	► 7
3	Golden-crowned Kinglet <i>Regulus satrapa</i> ✓	► 2
1	White-breasted Nuthatch <i>Sitta carolinensis</i> ✓	► 1
5	Brown Creeper <i>Certhia americana</i>	► 4
44	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher <i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	► 12
20	White-lored Gnatcatcher <i>Polioptila albitorquata</i>	► 1
2	Canyon Wren <i>Catherpes mexicanus</i> ✓	► 1
8	Northern House Wren <i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	► 7
6	Bewick's Wren <i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	► 5

27	Gray-barred Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus megalopterus</i>	► 5
8	Russet-naped Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus humilis</i>	► 1
6	Boucard's Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus jocosus</i> ✓	► 1
3	Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	<i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>	► 3
1	Blue Mockingbird	<i>Melanotis caerulescens</i>	► 1
1	Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	► 1
6	Curve-billed Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>	► 2
4	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i> ✓	► 3
22	Brown-backed Solitaire	<i>Myadestes occidentalis</i>	► 7
6	Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus aurantiirostris</i>	► 3
1	Russet Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus occidentalis</i>	► 1
1	Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus frantzii</i>	► 1
5	Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i> ✓	► 4
2	American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	► 1
2	Rufous-backed Robin	<i>Turdus rufopalliatus</i>	► 1
1	Clay-colored Thrush	<i>Turdus grayi</i>	► 1
49	Gray Silky-flycatcher	<i>Ptiliogonyx cinereus</i>	► 4
7	Olive Warbler	<i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>	► 4
10	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i> *	► 2
5	Elegant Euphonia	<i>Chlorophonia elegantissima</i>	► 3
39	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	► 7
1	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	► 1
19	Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	► 5

8	Bridled Sparrow <i>Peucaea mystacalis</i>	✓	► 3
5	Chipping Sparrow <i>Spizella passerina</i>	✓	► 2
20	Lark Sparrow <i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	✓	► 1
3	Chestnut-capped Brushfinch <i>Arremon brunneinucha</i>		► 2
7	Yellow-eyed Junco <i>Junco phaeonotus</i>		► 3
1	Lincoln's Sparrow <i>Melospiza lincolnii</i>		► 1
50	White-throated Towhee <i>Melozone albicollis</i>		► 9
2	Rufous-crowned Sparrow <i>Aimophila ruficeps</i>	✓	► 1
3	Oaxaca Sparrow <i>Aimophila notosticta</i>	✓	► 1
7	Spotted Towhee <i>Pipilo maculatus</i>		► 4
8	Collared Towhee <i>Pipilo ocai</i>		► 5
4	Rufous-capped Brushfinch <i>Atlapetes pileatus</i>		► 3
7	Black-vented Oriole <i>Icterus wagleri</i>		► 6
7	Streak-backed Oriole <i>Icterus pustulatus</i>		► 2
2	Bullock's Oriole <i>Icterus bullockii</i>		► 2
1	Baltimore Oriole <i>Icterus galbula</i>		► 1
1	Scott's Oriole <i>Icterus parisorum</i>		► 1
30	Bronzed Cowbird <i>Molothrus aeneus</i>		► 1
1	Great-tailed Grackle <i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>		► 1
2	Louisiana Waterthrush <i>Parkesia motacilla</i>		► 1
7	Black-and-white Warbler <i>Mniotilla varia</i>		► 6
2	Crescent-chested Warbler <i>Oreothlypis superciliosa</i>		► 2
2	Tennessee Warbler <i>Leiothlypis peregrina</i>		► 1

6	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis celata</i>	3
14	Nashville Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis ruficapilla</i>	6
3	Virginia's Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis virginiae</i>	2
7	MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Geothlypis tolmiei</i>	5
1	Northern Parula	<i>Setophaga americana</i>	1
2	Magnolia Warbler	<i>Setophaga magnolia</i>	2
49	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	9
2	Black-throated Gray Warbler	<i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>	2
21	Townsend's Warbler	<i>Setophaga townsendi</i>	8
9	Hermit Warbler	<i>Setophaga occidentalis</i>	5
10	Rufous-capped Warbler	<i>Basileuterus rufifrons</i>	5
2	Golden-browed Warbler	<i>Basileuterus belli</i>	1
23	Wilson's Warbler	<i>Cardellina pusilla</i>	13
1	Red-faced Warbler	<i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>	1
13	Red Warbler	<i>Cardellina rubra</i>	5
7	Painted Redstart	<i>Myioborus pictus</i>	6
4	Slate-throated Redstart	<i>Myioborus miniatus</i>	4
3	Hepatic Tanager	<i>Piranga flava</i>	3
4	Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>	3
22	Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	8
1	Flame-colored Tanager	<i>Piranga bidentata</i>	1
5	Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	3
2	Blue Grosbeak	<i>Passerina caerulea</i>	1

- 1 **Orange-breasted Bunting** *Passerina leclancherii*  1
- 2 **Varied Bunting** *Passerina versicolor*   1
- 2 **Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer** *Diglossa baritula*  1
- 1 **Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater** *Sporophila torqueola*   1

EXOTIC: ESCAPEE

- 5 **Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*   1
- 1 **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*   1

ADDITIONAL TAXA

- 3 **Empidonax sp.** *Empidonax sp.*  2
- 1 **Blue-headed/Plumbeous Vireo** *Vireo solitarius/plumbeus*  1
- 1 **solitary vireo sp.** *Vireo cassinii/solitarius/plumbeus*  1
- 1 **vireo sp.** *Vireo sp.*  1
- 2 **Leiothlypis sp.** *Leiothlypis sp.*  1
- 7 **Townsend's/Hermit Warbler** *Setophaga townsendi/occidentalis*  3
- 1 **Passerina sp.** *Passerina sp.*  1