

Trip Report — Mexico: Oaxaca Valley I 2026

March 1-8, 2026 with Chris Benesh & Doug Gochfeld



One of the many fabulous Red Warblers seen in the pine-oak forests on Cerro San Felipe. Photo by Doug Gochfeld.

Mexico's state of Oaxaca sits in an enviable, biologically diverse place, offering a rich variety of habitats ranging from lowland thorn scrub in the Pacific to mixed coniferous forest in the highlands, descending into rich cloud forest on the Gulf slope. It has the most diverse avifauna of any state in Mexico. The Oaxaca Valley tour is designed to tap into a couple of distinct areas that are high in regional endemism. These include the arid, cactus-rich habitat that forms a fringe around the interior of Oaxaca, as well as the oak and pine-oak zones that rise above these. Our tour had six days to explore these varied habitats.



Slaty Vireo is unlike any other; its dark slaty plumage with contrasting chartreuse crown, wings, and tail, and piercing white eyes can elicit an audible gasp from the observer when first sighted. Often skulking, we had a couple of exceptional sightings. Photo by Chris Benesh.

The floor of the Oaxaca Valley, at around 5000 feet in elevation, has been heavily anthropogenically altered. A flourishing mezcal production industry has transformed natural cactus thorn-scrub into fields of agave in many places. Yet despite this, many of the original avian inhabitants still thrive in places. This is important as many occur nowhere else on Earth. Our tour began exploring some of this habitat near the town of Teotitlan del Valle, including birding around one of the region's most precious resources, water. The reservoir of Piedra Azul was filled with a variety of waterbirds and others coming to it to drink and bathe. The habitat surrounding Monte Alban, Highway 175 near Pollo Niño, Presa La Mina, and Kilometer 77 were other examples of thornscrub. Here such goodies as Bridled Sparrow, Slaty and Golden vireos, Pileated and Nutting's flycatchers, Black-vented and Streak-backed orioles, West Mexican Chachalacas, and many others were found.



We also had great views of Golden Vireo, another of Mexico's endemic vireos. Photo by Doug Gochfeld.

Venturing higher into the mountains, thornscrub gives way to oaks, then long-needled pines, and ultimately, a splendid mix of giant oaks and pines, these shrouded in epiphytes. Here is habitat for a memorable assortment of birds. Red and Golden-browed warblers, Dwarf Jay, Gray-barred Wren, Russet Nightingale-Thrush, Long-tailed Wood-Partridge, Brown-backed Solitaire, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, Rufous-capped and Chestnut-capped brushfinches, and Black-headed Siskins are just a tiny sample of what is possible. Thankfully, we had a some really wonderful experiences in the highlands. That first magical hour or two at La Cumbre where birds were coming fast and furious. And then there was the hot chocolate and feast at Restaurant Colibri.



Perhaps the most sought after of the highland birds on this tour is Dwarf Jay, an endemic with a tiny range that travels around with Gray-barred Wrens and Steller's Jays. This one was photographed by Chris Benesh.

Doug and I have a reputation for bringing rain to drought-stricken areas, and we even managed to squeeze out a little rain in the highlands during our night birding up on Cerro San Felipe. Not ideal for the owls we were seeking, but it didn't keep us from enjoying an endemic scorpion (*Vaejovis franckei*) and a small *Myotis* bat roosting at a dry spot out of the rain. We also took in the Tule Tree, an ancient, massive Montezuma Cypress tree in the town of Santa Maria del Tule. We also had a mezcal during lunch one day, and a demonstration of rug dyeing and weaving in Teotitlan del Valle. And importantly, Jorge Herrera gave us expert guided tours of Monte Alban and Mitla, highlighting the important cultural significance of the region.



One of the most exciting finds of the tour began with John spotting a Long-tailed Wood-Partridge poking its head up above the edge of the road as we were driving past. We were eventually treated to a calling bird coming completely into the open. Wow! Photo by Chris Benesh.

Doug and I wish to thank all of you for joining us on this adventure in Mexico. The group really makes the trip, and y'all were wonderful.



Oaxaca Sparrow is a skulky species endemic to the arid interior of Oaxaca. We were fortunate to have a couple of wonderful sightings including this bird photographed by Doug Gochfeld.

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/490116>

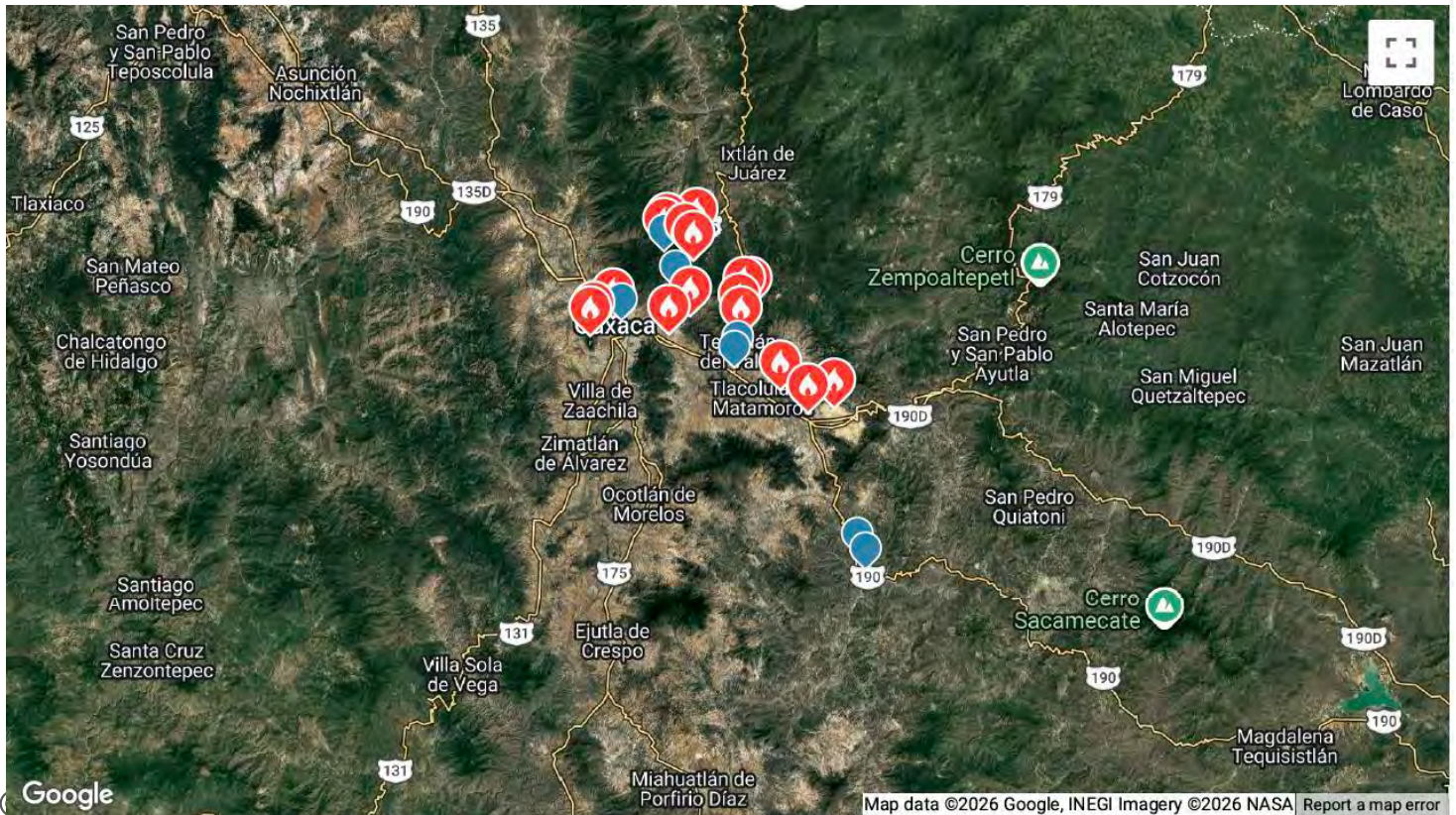
You can download a combined PDF of this page and the eBird report at this link: <https://fieldguides.com/triplists/oax26aTRIPLIST.pdf>

-- Chris

Field Guides Birding Tours -- OAXACA VALLEY, 2026 (with guides Chris Benesh & Doug Gochfeld)



2 – 7 Mar 2026 (6 days) Link-only



- Oaxaca, Mexico**
Centro | Ixtlán | Tlacolula
- Chris Benesh, fgi Triplists



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

DATA FOR: **Group (all people)** ▾

 **185**

Species Observed
























 **31**

Checklists
























Species Observed
























[Show all details](#)

210	Blue-winged Teal <i>Spatula discors</i>	▶  1
1	Green-winged Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	▶  1
77	Ring-necked Duck <i>Aythya collaris</i>	▶  2
4	Ruddy Duck <i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	▶  2
18	West Mexican Chachalaca <i>Ortalis poliocephala</i>	▶  2
3	Long-tailed Wood-Partridge <i>Dendrortyx macroura</i>	▶  1
37	Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i> *	▶  3
3	Band-tailed Pigeon <i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>	▶  2
5	Eurasian Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	▶  2
13	Inca Dove <i>Columbina inca</i>	▶  5
8	Common Ground Dove <i>Columbina passerina</i>	▶  2
73	White-winged Dove <i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	▶  11
24	Mourning Dove <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	▶  3
2	Rivoli's Hummingbird <i>Eugenes fulgens</i>	▶  2
1	Plain-capped Starthroat <i>Heliomaster constantii</i>	▶  1
1	Amethyst-throated Mountain-gem <i>Lampornis amethystinus</i>	▶  1
2	Blue-throated Mountain-gem <i>Lampornis clemenciae</i>	▶  2
1	Garnet-throated Hummingbird <i>Lamprolaima rhami</i>	▶  1
4	Ruby-throated Hummingbird <i>Archilochus colubris</i>	▶  3
19	Dusky Hummingbird <i>Phaeoptila sordida</i>	▶  11

5	White-eared Hummingbird	<i>Basilinna leucotis</i>	▶  3
2	Violet-crowned Hummingbird	<i>Ramosomyia violiceps</i>	▶  1
2	Green-fronted Hummingbird	<i>Ramosomyia viridifrons</i>	▶  2
6	Berylline Hummingbird	<i>Saucerottia beryllina</i>	▶  2
1	Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>	▶  1
1	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	▶  1
95	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	▶  1
18	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	▶  1
6	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	▶  2
3	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	▶  1
33	Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	▶  2
2	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	▶  2
1	Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum brasilianum</i>	▶  1
1	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	▶  1
1	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	▶  1
10	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	▶  1
3	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	▶  1
35	Western Cattle-Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	▶  3
3	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	▶  3
1	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	▶  1
104	Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	▶  9
54	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	▶  12
3	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Astur cooperii</i>	▶  3
























1	Northern Harrier <i>Circus hudsonius</i>	▶ 1
4	White-tailed Hawk <i>Geranoaetus albicaudatus</i>	▶ 2
2	Zone-tailed Hawk <i>Buteo albonotatus</i>	▶ 2
6	Red-tailed Hawk <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	▶ 4
1	Northern Pygmy-Owl <i>Glaucidium gnoma</i>	▶ 1
6	Mountain Trogon <i>Trogon mexicanus</i>	▶ 4
1	Russet-crowned Motmot <i>Momotus mexicanus</i>	▶ 1
1	Belted Kingfisher <i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	▶ 1
3	Green Kingfisher <i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	▶ 2
2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker <i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	▶ 2
20	Gray-breasted Woodpecker <i>Melanerpes hypopolius</i>	▶ 5
4	Golden-fronted Woodpecker <i>Melanerpes aurifrons</i>	▶ 1
2	Ladder-backed Woodpecker <i>Dryobates scalaris</i>	▶ 2
3	Hairy Woodpecker <i>Leuconotopicus villosus</i>	▶ 3
12	Crested Caracara <i>Caracara plancus</i>	▶ 6
1	American Kestrel <i>Falco sparverius</i>	▶ 1
6	Green Parakeet <i>Psittacara holochlorus</i>	▶ 1
6	Spot-crowned Woodcreeper <i>Lepidocolaptes affinis</i>	▶ 3
3	Rose-throated Becard <i>Pachyramphus aglaiae</i>	▶ 1
5	Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet <i>Camptostoma imberbe</i>	▶ 4
5	Greenish Elaenia <i>Myiopagis viridicata</i>	▶ 4
1	Pileated Flycatcher <i>Xenotriccus mexicanus</i>	▶ 1
7	Tufted Flycatcher <i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>	▶ 4

9	Greater Pewee	<i>Contopus pertinax</i>	▶  4
2	Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	▶  2
3	Hammond's Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax hammondii</i>	▶  1
5	Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax oberholseri</i>	▶  3
5	Western Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis</i>	▶  3
4	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	▶  2
1	Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>	▶  1
11	Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	▶  4
3	Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>	▶  3
6	Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	▶  4
8	Nutting's Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus nuttingi</i>	▶  4
8	Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	▶  4
8	Social Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>	▶  4
6	Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	▶  4
8	Cassin's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	▶  4
4	Thick-billed Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus crassirostris</i>	▶  3
7	Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	▶  2
1	Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo	<i>Vireolanius melitophrys</i>	▶  1
5	Golden Vireo	<i>Vireo hypochryseus</i>	▶  3
3	Slaty Vireo	<i>Vireo brevipennis</i>	▶  2
5	Dwarf Vireo	<i>Vireo nelsoni</i>	▶  1
12	Hutton's Vireo	<i>Vireo huttoni</i>	▶  7
1	Blue-headed Vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>	▶  1

2	Plumbeous Vireo <i>Vireo plumbeus</i>	▶  2
5	Dwarf Jay <i>Cyanolyca nanus</i>	▶  1
11	White-throated Magpie-Jay <i>Cyanocorax formosus</i>	▶  1
11	Steller's Jay <i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	▶  5
1	Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay <i>Aphelocoma woodhouseii</i>	▶  1
4	Common Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>	▶  3
4	Mexican Chickadee <i>Poecile sclateri</i>	▶  2
35	Violet-green Swallow <i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	▶  5
22	Northern Rough-winged Swallow <i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	▶  5
1	Cliff Swallow <i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	▶  1
62	Bushtit <i>Psaltiriparus minimus</i>	▶  2
8	Ruby-crowned Kinglet <i>Corthylio calendula</i>	▶  5
1	Golden-crowned Kinglet <i>Regulus satrapa</i>	▶  1
4	Brown Creeper <i>Certhia americana</i>	▶  3
45	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher <i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	▶  8
5	White-lored Gnatcatcher <i>Polioptila albiloris</i>	▶  1
1	Rock Wren <i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>	▶  1
4	Canyon Wren <i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>	▶  3
2	Northern House Wren <i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	▶  2
10	Bewick's Wren <i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	▶  6
24	Gray-barred Wren <i>Campylorhynchus megalopterus</i>	▶  3
2	Russet-naped Wren <i>Campylorhynchus humilis</i>	▶  1
9	Boucard's Wren <i>Campylorhynchus jocosus</i>	▶  3

3	Happy Wren <i>Pheugopedius felix</i>	▶ 1
2	Gray-breasted Wood-Wren <i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>	▶ 2
12	Blue Mockingbird <i>Melanotis caerulescens</i>	▶ 7
11	Curve-billed Thrasher <i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>	▶ 6
4	Ocellated Thrasher <i>Toxostoma ocellatum</i>	▶ 3
1	Northern Mockingbird <i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	▶ 1
8	Brown-backed Solitaire <i>Myadestes occidentalis</i>	▶ 3
5	Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush <i>Catharus aurantiirostris</i>	▶ 4
3	Russet Nightingale-Thrush <i>Catharus occidentalis</i>	▶ 3
3	Hermit Thrush <i>Catharus guttatus</i>	▶ 3
6	American Robin <i>Turdus migratorius</i>	▶ 4
4	Rufous-backed Robin <i>Turdus rufopalliatus</i>	▶ 1
2	Clay-colored Thrush <i>Turdus grayi</i>	▶ 2
27	Gray Silky-flycatcher <i>Ptiliogonys cinereus</i>	▶ 4
11	Olive Warbler <i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>	▶ 7
23	House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i> *	▶ 5
2	American Pipit <i>Anthus rubescens</i>	▶ 1
2	Elegant Euphonia <i>Chlorophonia elegantissima</i>	▶ 1
88	House Finch <i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	▶ 9
6	Red Crossbill <i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	▶ 3
5	Black-headed Siskin <i>Spinus notatus</i>	▶ 1
60	Lesser Goldfinch <i>Spinus psaltria</i>	▶ 6
5	Bridled Sparrow <i>Peucaea mystacalis</i>	▶ 2

3	Chipping Sparrow <i>Spizella passerina</i>	▶ 1
40	Lark Sparrow <i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	▶ 2
3	Chestnut-capped Brushfinch <i>Arremon brunneinucha</i>	▶ 2
12	Yellow-eyed Junco <i>Junco phaeonotus</i>	▶ 3
5	Lincoln's Sparrow <i>Melospiza lincolnii</i>	▶ 3
48	White-throated Towhee <i>Melospiza albicollis</i>	▶ 7
6	Oaxaca Sparrow <i>Aimophila notosticta</i>	▶ 2
3	Spotted Towhee <i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	▶ 2
3	Collared Towhee <i>Pipilo ocai</i>	▶ 1
6	Rufous-capped Brushfinch <i>Atlapetes pileatus</i>	▶ 2
1	Yellow-breasted Chat <i>Icteria virens</i>	▶ 1
11	Black-vented Oriole <i>Icterus wagleri</i>	▶ 6
4	Orchard Oriole <i>Icterus spurius</i>	▶ 1
6	Streak-backed Oriole <i>Icterus pustulatus</i>	▶ 2
2	Bullock's Oriole <i>Icterus bullockii</i>	▶ 2
6	Audubon's Oriole <i>Icterus graduacauda</i>	▶ 2
3	Baltimore Oriole <i>Icterus galbula</i>	▶ 1
1	Scott's Oriole <i>Icterus parisorum</i>	▶ 1
1	Bronzed Cowbird <i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	▶ 1
20	Great-tailed Grackle <i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	▶ 1
2	Louisiana Waterthrush <i>Parkesia motacilla</i>	▶ 1
8	Black-and-white Warbler <i>Mniotilta varia</i>	▶ 6
8	Crescent-chested Warbler <i>Oreothlypis superciliosa</i>	▶ 5

7	Orange-crowned Warbler <i>Leiothlypis celata</i>	▶  6
29	Nashville Warbler <i>Leiothlypis ruficapilla</i>	▶  4
7	Virginia's Warbler <i>Leiothlypis virginiae</i>	▶  3
17	MacGillivray's Warbler <i>Geothlypis tolmiei</i>	▶  4
2	Common Yellowthroat <i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	▶  1
1	Northern Yellow Warbler <i>Setophaga aestiva</i>	▶  1
35	Yellow-rumped Warbler <i>Setophaga coronata</i>	▶  10
1	Yellow-throated Warbler <i>Setophaga dominica</i>	▶  1
3	Black-throated Gray Warbler <i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>	▶  2
13	Townsend's Warbler <i>Setophaga townsendi</i>	▶  6
7	Hermit Warbler <i>Setophaga occidentalis</i>	▶  4
16	Rufous-capped Warbler <i>Basileuterus rufifrons</i>	▶  4
4	Golden-browed Warbler <i>Basileuterus belli</i>	▶  4
13	Wilson's Warbler <i>Cardellina pusilla</i>	▶  7
1	Red-faced Warbler <i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>	▶  1
16	Red Warbler <i>Cardellina rubra</i>	▶  5
5	Painted Redstart <i>Myioborus pictus</i>	▶  3
12	Slate-throated Redstart <i>Myioborus miniatus</i>	▶  9
4	Hepatic Tanager <i>Piranga flava</i>	▶  2
6	Summer Tanager <i>Piranga rubra</i>	▶  4
18	Western Tanager <i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	▶  6
6	Black-headed Grosbeak <i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	▶  4
1	Lazuli Bunting <i>Passerina amoena</i>	▶  1

- 3 **Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea* ▶ 🗑️ 2
- 4 **Varied Bunting** *Passerina versicolor* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 2 **Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer** *Diglossa baritula* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 1 **Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater** *Sporophila torqueola* ▶ 🗑️ 1

EXOTIC: ESCAPEE

- 7 **Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata* * ▶ 🗑️ 1

ADDITIONAL TAXA

- 6 hummingbird sp. *Trochilidae* sp. ▶ 🗑️ 5
- 2 diurnal raptor sp. *Accipitriformes/Falconiformes* sp. ▶ 🗑️ 2
- 1 Hammond's/Dusky Flycatcher *Empidonax hammondii/oberholseri* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 1 Empidonax sp. *Empidonax* sp. ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 3 Ash-throated/Nutting's Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens/nuttingi* ▶ 🗑️ 3
- 3 Myiarchus sp. *Myiarchus* sp. ▶ 🗑️ 2
- 1 yellow-bellied kingbird sp. *Tyrannus* sp. (yellow-bellied) ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 1 Cassin's/Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo cassinii/solitarius* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 1 solitary vireo sp. *Vireo cassinii/solitarius/plumbeus* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 9 Eastern/Western Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus/swainsoni* ▶ 🗑️ 5
- 4 swallow sp. *Hirundinidae* sp. ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 3 gnatcatcher sp. *Polioptila* sp. ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 1 Townsend's/Hermit Warbler *Setophaga townsendi/occidentalis* ▶ 🗑️ 1
- 1 Lazuli/Indigo Bunting *Passerina amoena/cyanea* ▶ 🗑️ 1