

Arizona Raptor Round-Up Species Report | March 13 – 17, 2025 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Troy Corman and Vernie Aikins with 8 wonderful clients that included Avril, Bruce & Sharon, Charles & Carolyn, Kara, Meredith, and Vicki.

Summary: An entertaining and diverse group of nature enthusiasts came together from different regions of the U.S. to share five days of birding and exploring the Sonoran desertscrub, riparian woodlands, canyons, ponds and other habitats that make southeastern Arizona so special. Strong gusty winds, cloudy skies and colder than expected temperatures challenged us the first few days, but we persevered. The final few days were warmer and much more pleasant. As the name suggests, this tour was organized around the peak weekend of raptor migration and the annual Tubac Hawkwatch celebration along the Santa Cruz River. As a group, we managed to see a respectable 128 bird species, including 18 species of raptors. Mammal encounters included the small, southwest race, Coues White-tailed Deer and after our final dinner, a small herd of Collared Peccary (Javelina).

Highlights of the first few days included, unexpectedly flushing an American Barn Owl and handsome Harris's Hawks, followed by Burrowing Owls and a pair of Crested Caracara with their nest in the arms of a large saguaro. The latter, was noted by many as their favorite experience of the tour. The site of the hawkwatch alone produced nearly a dozen raptors while we were there. Let's not forget the many other notable and colorful avian delights that filled our eyes, ears, and with some luck, our cameras. The numerous bold Vermilion Flycatchers, 6 species of energetic hummingbirds, Hepatic Tanager, Pyrrhuloxia, and 8 species of warblers including the animated, crowd-pleasing, Painted Redstart. Other memorable encounters were the concentration of 100+ Phainopeplas in the purple berried shrubs and the somber colored, but uniquely name Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet.

This species report eBird link below details the 128 species of birds our group either observed or heard during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click on "Show All Details" on the right side of the list as this will expand the report to show you where and when all of the birds were seen and how many.

[Arizona Raptor Round-Up | March 13 – 17, 2025 | eBird Trip Report](#)

The following is a list of additional mammal and reptile species we encountered during the trip.

MAMMALS (6)

Coues White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus couesi*—Regular in Madera Canyon.

Collared Peccary *Pecari tajacu*—Small herd observed our final evening at Tubac Golf Resort.

Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii*—Only observed at Sweetwater Wetlands.

Rock Squirrel *Otospermophilus variegatus*—Spotted at the Santa Rita Lodge feeders and heard elsewhere.

Round-tailed Ground Squirrel *Xerospermophilus tereticaudus*—Noted several at Sweetwater Wetlands.

Arizona Gray Squirrel *Sciurus arizonensis*—They were busy at the Santa Rita Lodge feeders.

REPTILES (3)

Pond Slider *Trachemys scripta*—(Non-native)—Individual sunbathing at Sweetwater Wetlands and Reid Park.