

**Big Bend & Davis Mountains, 21 April - 29 April 2011**

**Guide: Woody Wheeler, with five participants**

**Species List**

**Birds**

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*— Pair at Lake Balmorhea

**“Mexican Duck” (Mallard)** *A. platyrhynchos*—seen well at Lake Balmorhea

**Blue-winged Teal** *A. discors*— 4 seen in a roadside pond between Ft. Davis and Alpine

**Cinnamon Teal** *A. cyanoptera*—Nice looks at above roadside pond

**Northern Shoveler** *A. clypeata*—at Lake Balmorhea

**Green-winged Teal** *A. crecca*— 2 at Lake Balmorhea

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*—30+ at Lake Balmorhea

**Scaled Quail** *Callipepla squamata*— Coveys en route to and from Big Bend, Dugout Wells and Rio Grande Village

**Gambel’s Quail** *C. gambelii*— Several at El Paso Archaeological Museum/Nature Center

**Montezuma Quail** *Cyrtonyx montezumae*— Female at roadside picnic area near Davis Mountains State Park

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*— In large swimming pool at Balmorhea State Park

**Eared Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*— 5 at Lake Balmorhea

**Western Grebe** *Aechmophorus occidentalis*—at least 2 at Lake Balmorhea

**Clark’s Grebe** *A. clarkii*—10 at Lake Balmorhea, giving a good comparison with the Westerns

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*— 1 at Lake Balmorhea

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*— 1 at Lake Balmorhea

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula*— 2 at Balmorhea State Park

**Green Heron** *Butorides virescens*— 1 on Nature Trail board walk at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend N.P.

**White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis chihi*—about 20 on NW shore of Lake Balmorhea

**Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus*—5 in the vicinity of Rio Grande Village

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*—throughout

**Northern Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*— 1 at Lake Balmorhea

**Cooper’s Hawk** *A. cooperii*—1 in the Davis Mountains

**Common Black-Hawk** *Buteogallus anthracinus*—2 nesting hawks scoped at Rio Grande Village

**Gray Hawk** *Buteo nitidus*— A nesting pair at Cottonwood Campground

**Swainson’s Hawk** *B. swainsoni*—1 near Lake Balmorhea and others en route to and from Big Bend and Ft. Davis

**Zone-tailed Hawk** *B. albonotatus*—1 near Prairie Dog town north of Marathon

**Red-tailed Hawk** *B. jamaicensis*—seen throughout in small numbers

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* – 1 on a power pole at Marathon’s western city limit

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*— 1 along Hwy 20 east of El Paso

**Wild Turkey** *Meleagris gallopavo*— Three greeted us to Madera Canyon picnic area in the Davis Mountains

**Virginia Rail** *Rallus limicola* – Beautiful close look at Cienega at Balmorhea State Park

**Sora** *Porzana carolina*— Heard several at The Post County Park south of Marathon

**American Coot** *Fulica americana*—about 3 at pond near entrance of Balmorhea State Park

**Piping Plover** *Charadrius melodus* – a rare find, but one we studied at length at Lake Balmorhea

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*— Several at Balmorhea State Park

**Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus*— 20+ at Lake Balmorhea

**American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana*—10+ at Lake Balmorhea

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius* —2 at Lake Balmorhea

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*—2 in mudflats on west shore of Lake Balmorhea

**Least Sandpiper** *C. minutilla*—a flock of 4 at Lake Balmorhea

**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* –10 on west side of Lake Balmorhea

**Wilson’s Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor*— 3 on west side of Lake Balmorhea

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*— 1 followed us around Lake Balmorhea

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*—present in towns throughout, including El Paso, Ft. Davis & Alpine

**Forster’s Tern** *Sterna forsteri* – A group of 7 on Lake Balmorhea

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*—seen in cities like El Paso and Van Horn

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica*—common everywhere, except high in the Chisos Mountains

**Mourning Dove** *Z. macroura*—seen most days except on the hike to Boot Springs

**Common Ground-Dove** *C. passerina*—2 at Rio Grande Village in campground near store

**Greater Roadrunner** *Geococcyx californianus*—these engaging characters were seen most days!

**Great Horned Owl** *Bubo virginianus* – Great look on nest in Cottonwood, Balmorhea State Park

**Elf Owl** *Micrathene whitneyi*— 1 seen at dusk at Dugout Wells, Big Bend National Park

**Burrowing Owl** *Athene cunicularia*— 1 at construction site north of I-10 near Clint exit

**Lesser Nighthawk** *Chordeiles acutipennis*— several flying at dusk near van we drove to Dugout Wells; others seen near Van Horn on drive back to El Paso

**Common Poorwill** *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii* – 1 heard clearly and repeatedly at Dugout Wells

**White-throated Swift** *Aeronautes saxatalis*— Several above the roadside pond between Ft. Davis and Alpine; more in the high Chisos and in Santa Elena Canyon.

**Lucifer Hummingbird** *Calothorax Lucifer* – 5 seen at Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Magnificent Hummingbird** *Eugenes fagens* – Seen frequently around Chisos Basin Lodge

**Black-chinned Hummingbird** *Archilochus alexandri*—the commonly seen hummer throughout

**Belted Kingfisher** *Ceryle alcyon* – Spotted at the Post reservoir near Marathon

**Acorn Woodpecker** *Melanerpes formicivorus*—in the Davis and the Chisos Mountains

**Golden-fronted Woodpecker** *M. aurifrons*—the common, conspicuous woodpecker at Rio Grande Village, Cottonwood Campground and the Post

**Ladder-backed Woodpecker** *Picoides scalaris*— Several, usually in Chihuahuan Desert habitats

**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*— One in the Davis Mountains

**Olive-sided Flycatcher** *Contopus cooperi*—1 at Rio Grande Village, its “vest” in plain sight

**Western Wood-Pewee** *C. sordidulus*—a few of this usually-common flycatcher, encountered in the Davis Mountains

**Gray Flycatcher** *E. wrightii*— Seen in the Davis Mountains  
**Dusky Flycatcher** *E. oberholseri*—One along the trail to Boot Springs  
**Cordilleran Flycatcher** *E. occidentalis*— One at entrance to the Post County Park, Marathon  
**Eastern Phoebe** *Sayornis phoebe* – One at Rio Grande Village  
**Say's Phoebe** *S. saya*—several in Balmorhea State Park and Chisos Basin  
**Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus*—a favorite, these exquisite flycatchers were common at Balmorhea State Park, Cottonwood Campground & the Post  
**Ash-throated Flycatcher** *Myiarchus cinerascens*—several at Davis and the Chisos Mountains  
**Brown-crested Flycatcher** *M. tyrannulus*—the large, vocal flycatcher in the campground in Rio Grande Village  
**Cassin's Kingbird** *T. vociferans*—common in Davis Mountains  
**Couch's Kingbird** *T. couchii* – One found at Rio Grande Village, another at Cottonwood C.G.  
**Western Kingbird** *T. verticalis*—common and widespread, seen most days  
**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** *T. forficatus* – Great looks at the Marathon Post of them perching and feeding; another good look along the road from Big Bend to Marathon.  
**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*—a few along highways en route to and from Big Bend  
**Bell's Vireo** *Vireo bellii*—at least a dozen at Rio Grande Village (where we were eventually rewarded with good views) and many elsewhere, where shrubs were dense. Its song was a constant in most areas visited in Big Bend N.P.  
**Plumbeous Vireo** *V. plumbeus*—1 in the Davis Mountains  
**Western Scrub-Jay** *Aphelocoma californica*—in the Davis Mountains  
**Mexican Jay** *A. ultramarina*—these bright blue birds belong to the race *woodhousei*, different from the race in Arizona; they were seen close-up and often in the Chisos Mountains  
**Chihuahuan Raven** *Corvus cryptoleucus*—frequent along Highways 20, 90, and I-10 as we drove from and to El Paso  
**Northern Raven** *C. corax*—in the Davis and Chisos Mountains, with a few in the lower regions  
**Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor* – 12 or so at roadside pond between Ft. Davis and Alpine  
**Violet-green Swallow** *Tachycineta thalassina*— 6 in the same roadside pond  
**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*— Several in same roadside pond  
**Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*— Many in Balmorhea State Park  
**Cave Swallow** *P. fulva*—a small colony at the Van Horn underpass on I-10  
**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*—throughout, seen most days except for the hike to Boot Springs  
**Black-crested Titmouse** *Baeolophus atricristatus*—in the Davis Mountains at the TNC preserve and the state park; also in the Chisos Mountains  
**Verdin** *Auriparus flaviceps*— Several at Dugout Wells, Big Bend N.P.  
**Bushtit** *Psaltriparus minimus* – A few in the brush on the edge of meadows in Davis Mountains  
**White-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta carolinensis*—5 in the Davis Mountains  
**Brown Creeper** *Certhia Americana* – 1 found creeping up a tree in the high Chisos Mountains  
**Cactus Wren** *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*—seen in Ocotillo at El Paso Archaeological Museum grounds; again in Davis Mountains; also frequently heard and seen in Big Bend  
**Rock Wren** *Salpinctes obsoletus*— 1 encountered at Madera Canyon Picnic Area in the Davis Mountains, then several at Chisos Basin Campground  
**Canyon Wren** *Catherpes mexicanus*—heard and seen in the Davis Mountains; heard well on the Pinnacles Trail while looking at Colima Warbler  
**Bewick's Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii*—common in the Davis and Chisos Mountains  
**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*— Several on the Pinnacles and Laguna Meadows Trail

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula*—Many, mostly in the Davis Mountains and along the trail to Boot Spring

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea*—Many along the trail to Boot Spring

**Black-tailed Gnatcatcher** *P. melanura*— 3 seen in brush bordering Rio Grande Campground

**Western Bluebird** *Sialia mexicana*— 3 lovely birds, seen well at nesting hole in Davis Mountains

**Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus*— A fair number seen one at a time in Davis Mountains, a the high Chisos Mountains along the trail to Boot Spring, at Sam Nail Ranch and Christmas Mountains Oasis

**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*— Just 1 at Balmorhea State Park

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*—a conspicuous species, seen daily

**Curve-billed Thrasher** *T. curvirostre*—first seen well in Davis Mountains, several more in Big Bend and Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Crissal Thrasher** *T. crissale*—1 great look at Rio Grande Village in brush behind store

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*—small groups in El Paso & Fort Davis

**American Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*— Several seen on shore of Lake Balmorhea

**Phainopepla** *Phainopepla nitens*— 1 of this elegant silky-flycatcher in Davis Mountains

**Orange-crowned Warbler** *Vermivora celata*—only 1, at Sam Nail Ranch

**Nashville Warbler** *V. ruficapilla*—One at Sam Nail Ranch

**Colima Warbler** *V. crissalis*— Close encounter with one just below (west) of Toll Mountain Pass and another good sighting of a second Colima along the Pinnacles trail and near Boot Spring

**Black-throated Blue Warbler** *Dendroica caerulescens* – One rare and fantastic look in the wetlands on the north side of the Post reservoir.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler, Audubon's form** *Dendroica coronata*—common at El Paso Archaeological Museum; Lake Balmorhea, in the Davis Mountains, Rio Grande Village, along the Pinnacles Trail, and especially in the filtration pond at Chisos Basin Campground

**Townsend's Warbler** *D. townsendi*—5 along the Pinnacles Trail and several at Chisos Basin

**Ovenbird** *Seiurus aurocapillus* – One at filtration pond at Chisos Basin Campground seen several times clearly by most in our group

**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas*—heard only, at Rio Grande Village's small wetland

**Wilson's Warbler** *Wilsonia pusilla*—the most frequently encountered migrant warbler, seen every day

**Painted Redstart** *Myioborus pictus* – 2 near Boot Springs while looking for Colima Warbler

**Yellow-breasted Chat** *Icteria virens*—several at Rio Grande Village in exuberant display, plus others at Sam Nail Ranch and Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Hepatic Tanager** *Piranga flava*—several in Davis Mountains

**Summer Tanager** *P. rubra*—several in Davis Mountains State Park, Balmorhea State Park, Rio Grande Village, and Cottonwood Campground

**Western Tanager** *P. ludoviciana*—this beautiful tanager was encountered in Davis and Chisos Mountains

**Green-tailed Towhee** *Pipilo chlorurus*— First found at Ft. Davis and later seen at several locations in Big Bend N.P.

**Spotted Towhee** *P. maculatus*—3 in the Chisos Mountains on the way to Boot Springs

**Canyon Towhee** *P. fuscus*—small groups seen almost daily

**Rufous-crowned Sparrow** *Aimophila ruficeps*—seen well in Davis Mountains, at Madge Lindsay's house

**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*—very common throughout

**Clay-colored Sparrow** *S. pallida*— 3 seen at Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Brewer's Sparrow** *S. breweri*—First seen and heard at El Paso Archaeological Museum; later seen often at Balmorhea State Park and at the Post

**Vesper Sparrow** *Pooecetes gramineus*—a few of this wintering species still present, best seen at Lake Balmorhea and at the Post

**Lark Sparrow** *Chondestes grammacus*—a striking species, seen very well at Rio Grande Village and even in the Chisos Basin parking lot!

**Black-throated Sparrow** *Amphispiza bilineata*—a desert specialist, this dapper sparrow was seen best at El Paso Archaeological Museum and in the Davis Mountains

**Lark Bunting** *Calamospiza melanocorys*—Quite a few on Lake Balmorhea and several more at the Post

**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*—single at the Post spotted by Mary

**Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolni*—only 1, at the Post, just below the dam

**White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—small groups of both the *oriantha* & *gambeli* races still lingered at most sites

**Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis* – A handful in the Davis Mountains

**Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis*—a few at Balmorhea State Park, in the Davis Mountains, and in riparian areas throughout Big Bend's lower elevations

**Pyrrhuloxia** *C. sinuatus*—beautiful relative of the cardinal, seen well in Davis Mountains, at Rio Grande Village and elsewhere in Big Bend's Chihuahuan Desert habitats

**Black-headed Grosbeak** *Pheucticus melanocephalus*—regularly encountered in Davis Mountains and Big Bend NP

**Blue Grosbeak** *Passerina caerulea*— 4 seen well in grass at the Post

**Lazuli Bunting** *Passerina amoena* – First seen at Post by Mary, then seen repeatedly in Chisos

**Indigo Bunting** *P. cyanea*—another beauty, enjoyed at the Post

**Varied Bunting** *P. versicolor*—a gem, seen by two of us at Sam Nail Ranch and by all at Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Painted Bunting** *P. ciris*—great views of this stunning bird at Rio Grande Village and Cottonwood Campground

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*—a number seen at Balmorhea State Park and Lake Balmorhea

**Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna*—individuals were seen and heard best around Chisos Basin Lodge

**Western Meadowlark** *Sturnella neglecta* – Seen and heard in Davis Mountains

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*— Many along road to Ft. Davis; several more along well-hidden along road to Big Bend

**Brewer's Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*— a dozen or so mixed in with Yellow-headed Blackbirds on road to Ft. Davis

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*—abundant in El Paso and other towns

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*— 5 at Balmorhea State Park

**Bronzed Cowbird** *Molothrus aeneus* – 1 identified by Carol Edwards in the Davis Mountains

**Orchard Oriole** *Icterus spurius*—1 at the Post spotted by Jane

**Bullock's Oriole** *I. bullockii*— One at Dugout Wells near above our picnic table; singles at Cottonwood Campground and Christmas Mountains Oasis  
**Scott's Oriole** *I. parisorum*—Seen well on nature trail at El Paso Archaeological Museum  
**House Finch** *Carpodacus mexicanus*—seen throughout  
**Pine Siskin** *Carduelis pinus*—numerous at Davis and Christmas Mountains feeders;  
**Lesser Goldfinch** *C. psaltria*—several at Balmorhea State Park and at the Post  
**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*—common in towns throughout

### Mammals

**Desert Cottontail** *Sylvilagus auduboni*—common in lower elevations  
**Black-tailed Jack Rabbit** *Lepus californicus*—1 seen from highway entering Big Bend N.P.  
**Mexican Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus mexicanus*—2 at Balmorhea State Park  
**Rock Squirrel** *S. variegatus*—many in the Chisos Basin  
**Black-tailed Prairie Dog** *Cynomys ludovicianus*— 6 seen in two dog colonies near Marathon  
**Collared Peccary (Javelina)** *Tayassu tajacu*— At least 12 seen in Davis and Chisos Mountains  
**White-tailed Deer** *O. virginianus*—common in the Davis Mountains and at higher elevations in Big Bend; this race is the Carmen Mountains White-tail  
**Mule Deer** *Odocoileus hemionus* – Several small herds in the Davis Mountains  
**Pronghorn** *Antilocapra americana*— About 20 total south of Marathon and between Fort Davis and Alpine  
**American Black Bear** *Ursus americanus*—a sow with 3 cubs at Chisos Basin filtration pond  
**American Badger** *Taxidea taxus* – 1 running behind first Prairie Dog town  
**Coyote** *Canis latrans* – 1 hefty coyote ran across I-20 near Marfa  
**Rocky Mountain Elk** *Cervus Canadensis* – John found 2 below the Davis Mountains overlook  
**Cougar** *Puma concolor* – Distinct tracks found and howling heard by Mary and Sylvia at Chisos Basin

### Reptiles

**Greater Earless Lizard** (Southwestern race) *Cophosaurus texanus scitulus*—Many in Big Bend  
**Common Snapping Turtle** *Chelydra serpentina* – Relaxing near pond at Balmorhea State Park  
**Blotched Water Snake** *Nerodia erythrogaster transversa* -- Swimming in water at Cienega overlook, Balmorhea State Park

### Ampibians

**Leopard Frog** *Rana blairi* – In Cienega at Balmorhea State Park  
**American Bull Frog** *Rana catesbeiana* – Heard too well at Rio Grande Village wetlands

### Invertebrates we noted along the way...

**Tarantula Hawk** *Pepsis Formosa* – Abundant wasp that preys upon Tarantulas seen throughout Chihuahuan Desert  
**Flame Skimmer** *Libellula saturate* – In wet areas of Davis and Chisos Mountains  
**Blue-eyed Darner** *Rhionaeschna multicolor* – In ponds and backwaters of Big Bend Park