

Arizona Monsoon Madness

Species List | August 23-30, 2026

with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide James Petersen. Our clients included Jean, Kim, Cynthia, John, Steve, and Richard.

We started the tour in Tucson and made our way through 4 of the major Sky Islands found in Southeast Arizona (Chiricahuas, Huachuca's, Patagonia and Santa Rita's). Willcox and the Chiricahua's were the starting points for this tour with a fantastic selection of shorebirds, including both Red-necked and Wilson's Phalaropes as well as multiple species of waterfowl. From here, we continued onwards to Cave Creek Ranch, where we spent the next 2 days drinking in the beauty of the rhyolite dominated mountains. The birds were fantastic as well with good looks at many of the specialties of SE Arizona including Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Mexican Chickadee and a stunning male Olive Warbler in the higher elevations. The lower elevations were equally as good, with a highlight of the trip overlapping with the biweekly Hummingbird banding and getting to see Mountain-gems up close. After the Chiricahuas, we continued onwards to the Huachuca's where the great birding continued with 3 Zone-tailed Hawks on the top of Carr Canyon! Other fantastic sightings included a lost, White-eyed Vireo as well multiple Greater Roadrunners and bright Vermillion Flycatchers.

We finished up with a day in the Patagonia Mountains with their Gray Hawks and good looks at Thick-billed Kingbirds and two days in the Santa Rita's. The highlights here were, with the help of Vernie, great views of Varied Buntings, Five-striped Sparrows and the diminutive Northern Beardless Tyrannulet.

This led to a fantastic trip of 156 species (6 of them never made it on a checklist due to seen while driving), 8 species of mammals, 7 species of Reptiles and Amphibians, 16 species of Butterflies and 2 species of Insects.

BIRDS 156 species were recorded of which 8 were heard only and 3 were introduced. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details the 156 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Arizona Monsoon Madness | August 23-30, 2026 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Following is a list of the mammals, reptiles and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

MAMMALS: — (8)

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus* — We observed this mammal most days of the trip. The race of White tail deer observed was the “Coues” race, a smaller race native to the desert southwest.

Collared Peccary *Pecari tajacu* — We only observed this species on our first day birding at the Casa. A small group crossed the road while we were observing a Kestrel-Roadrunner interaction.

Coyote *Canis latrans* — This species was heard only as we were road cruising for snakes while in the Chiricahuas.

White-nosed Coati *Nasua narica* — We only observed this species in the morning on the first full day. It was visiting the feeders at Cave Creek Ranch.

Cliff Chipmunk *Tamias dorsalis* — We saw this small chipmunk a few times throughout the trip, mostly at higher elevations of the Chiricahuas and the Huachuca's.

Rock Squirrel *Otospermophilus variegatus* — We observed this brownish-gray squirrel with a checkerboard pattern on its back multiple days throughout the trip. Mainly observed at the mid elevations.

Arizona Gray Squirrel *Sciurus arizonensis* — This all-gray species was only observed in the Huachuca's and the Santa Rita's.

Mexican (Apache) Fox Squirrel *Sciurus nayaritensis* — This species of red fox squirrel was only observed while in the Chiricahua's. The race here, the “Apache” race is found nowhere else in the world.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS: — (7)

Yarrow's Spiny Lizard *Sceloporus jarrovi* — This large, spiny lizard was observed while in the Chiricahuas, in the mid elevations as well as in the Huachuca's.

Clark's Spiny Lizard *Sceloporus clarkii* — This species was only observed while eating breakfast on the last day while at the Tubac Golf Resort.

Sonoran Spotted Whiptail *Aspidoscelis sonorae* — This species is made up of all females, and we observed it multiple times while at Miller Canyon.

Western Diamondback *Crotalus atrox* — We only observed this species while road cruising after sunset while in the Chiricahuas.

Desert Kingsnake *Lampropeltis splendida* — A few of us observed this snake while we were leaving Casa de San Pedro on our way out for the day as it raced across the road.

American Bullfrog *Lithobates catesbeiana* — We only observed this species while birding the bridge at Tubac. This species was introduced in southeast Arizona in the 1950s for hunting purposes.

Chiricahua Leopard Frog *Lithobates chiricahuensis* — This endangered species was observed in a pond at Beatty's as we made our way up to the hummingbird feeders.

BUTTERFLIES — (16)

Brush-footed Butterflies:Nymphalidae (7)

Monarch Butterfly *Danaus Plexippus* — We only observed this species once, while in the Chiricahuas.

Queen *Danaus gilippus* — The more common of the two orange butterflies. We observed this species in both the Chiricahuas and the Santa Rita's.

American Snout *Libytheana carinenta* — This migrating butterfly was increasingly common as we progressed throughout the trip.

Arizona Sister *Adelpha eulalia* — This brown butterfly with flashy orange spots was seen while birding both the Chiricahua's and the Huachuca's.

Bordered Patch *Chlosyne lacinia* — As we progressed along the trip, this species became increasingly common. We had over 100 of this species puddling after finishing up birding in Montosa Canyon.

Arizona Checkerspot *Texola perse* — This small, narrow winged orange butterfly was found in a few places on the trip. Our best views came while birding the Patagonia-Sonita Creek Preserve.

Canyonland Satyr *Cyllopsis pertepida* — This small brownish butterfly was only found while hiking up to the ruins while in Miller Canyon.

Swallowtail: Papilionidae (2)

Two-tailed Swallowtail *Papilio multiaudata* — This large yellow butterfly was seen infrequently throughout the trip. It is the state butterfly of Arizona.

Black Swallowtail *Papilio polyxenes* — This larger black swallowtail was observed in most of the sky Islands we visited throughout the trip.

Gossamer-winged Butterfly: Lycaenidae (2)

Marine Blue *Leptotes marina* — The common small “blue” butterfly that was seen most days of the trip.

Skippers: Hesperiidae (2)

Dull Firetip *Apyrrothrix Araxes* — We only observed this small brownish skipper with a white edge while birding Miller Canyon.

Golden-headed Scallopwing *Staphylus ceos* — We only came across this brownish butterfly with a yellow head only at Montosa Canyon. Was pointed out by Vernie.

Whites, Sulphurs and Yellows: Pieridae (2)

Southern Dogface *Colias cesonia* — This larger “yellow” butterfly was observed a few times over the trip; only in the Huachuca, Patagonia and Santa Rita Sky Islands.

Sleepy Orange *Eurema nicippe* — This small orange butterfly was seen while birding the Patagonia and Santa Rita Sky Islands.

Insects: (2)

Arizona Paper Wasp *Polistes versicolor* — A very common insect on our last day only while birding Montosa Canyon.

Tarentula sp. *Aphonopelma sp.* — We only saw one individual while out road cruising while in the Chiricahuas.