



Texas Big Bend Monsoons & Hummingbird Migration | Species List

August 18 – 26, 2018 | Compiled by Michael Marsden

Guide Michael Marsden and 7 participants: Jeff, Eileen, Lawson, Deborah, Paula, Maggie and Mark

Summary: A great chance to see Texas' famed Big Bend and Davis Mountains during a season when few birders visit. We got a chance to explore the rugged terrain of the Chisos Mountains, along with the more lush Davis Mountains. Highlights included getting good looks at five accipiters, among them, the sought after Common Black Hawk and Gray Hawk. Rather serendipitously, our stay in Fort Davis coincided with the 2018 Davis Mountains Hummingbird Celebration, which afforded us 'up close and personal' looks at both Calliope and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds. We also had a bounty of mammal sightings, including Black Bear and Javelina.

BIRDS (112 species in 40 Families)

(#) = Number of days encountered

(HO) = Heard Only

(I) = Introduced

* Species not included in NJ's printed checklist

Anatidae: Ducks, Geese and Swans (2)

Mexican Duck *Anas diazi* (1)*— a flock of 12 of this newly declared species at Marfa Settlement Ponds

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* (1)— 2 at the Marfa Ponds

Odontophoridae: New World Quail (2)

Scaled Quail *Callipepla squamata* (5)— common and widespread in desert habitats throughout

Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii* (1)— a covey of 5 at the Miller Ranch

Phasianidae: Partridges, Pheasants and Allies (1)

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo* (1)— seen by Paula from the van while driving in the Davis Mountains

Podicipedidae: Grebes (3)

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* (2)— singleton at Daniel's Ranch; flock of 5 at Balmorhea Lake

Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis* (1)— at least 5 on Balmorhea Lake

Clark's Grebe *Aechmophorus clarkii* (1)— at least 20 on Balmorhea Lake

Ardeidae: Herons and Egrets (2)

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* (2)— singleton at Musquiz Creek; 2 at Balmorhea Lake

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* (1)*—at Balmorhea Lake

Threskiornithidae: Ibis and Spoonbills (1)

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi* (1)— at Marfa ponds

Cathartidae: New World Vultures (2)

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* (3)—scattered sightings in lowland areas, particularly by the Rio Grande

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* (8)— seemingly ubiquitous

Accipitridae: Hawks, Kites and Eagles (5)

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii* (1)— at Davis Mountains State Park

Common Black Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus* (1)—Lawson (from the van!) spotted a large bird perched in the cottonwoods at Rio Grande Village as we were driving out, Mark realized what it was and we all got out for wonderful views of a very cooperative bird

Gray Hawk *Buteo plagiatus* (1)— an adult and two juveniles in the cottonwoods at Cottonwood Campground

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni* (5)—frequent over grassland and shrub desert habitats throughout

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* (7)— scattered individuals, all showing characteristics of the southwestern *fuertesi* ssp

Rallidae: Rails, Gallinules and Coots (1)

American Coot *Fulica americana* (1)— at Marathon Post

Charadriidae: Plovers (1)

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* (2)— on the grounds of Sul Ross in Alpine

Scolopacidae: Sandpipers (5)

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda* (1)*—flying over the ponds at Daniel's Ranch

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* (3)— at most wetland habitats

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* (2)— at the Rio Grande Village Nature Trail wetlands and at a pond at Miller Ranch

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus* (1)—at least 33 on the shores of Balmorhea Lake

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* (1)— a fast flying flock of about 30 shorebirds over Balmorhea Lake were either Stilt Sandpipers or Wilson's Phalaropes; Michael, thinking they had dull underparts, opted for the former but Lawson's photos revealed their true identity as Wilson's Phalarope!

Columbidae: Pigeons and Doves (6)

Rock Pigeon (I) *Columba livia* (3)— in every urban area

Eurasian Collared-Dove (I) *Streptopelia decaocto* (6)— seen around just about every lowland settlement, with a very unexpected singleton at the Cottonwood Campground (this a species not even mentioned in Peterson and Zimmer's *Birds of the Trans Pecos*, published as recently as 1998!)

Inca Dove *Columbina inca* (2)— on the grounds of Sul Ross University and at Rio Grande Village

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina* (2)— at Rio Grande Village and Cottonwood Campground

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* (8)— everywhere!

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* (7)— widespread

Cuculidae: Cuckoos and Allies (1)

Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus* (7) — seen just about every day in an array of habitats

Tytonidae: Barn Owls (1)

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* (1)*— a particularly cooperative and photogenic individual at Miller Ranch

Strigidae: Typical Owls (1)

Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia* (1)— at least 8 among the prairie dog burrows on the Marathon grasslands

Caprimulgidae: Nightjars (1)

Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis* (1)— flying in the bright afternoon sun above Nine Pints Draw as we were driving into Big Bend

Trochilidae: Hummingbirds (7)

Lucifer Hummingbird *Calothorax lucifer* (2)—we estimated at least 12, including several adult males, at the Christmas Mountain Oasis feeders!

Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri* (6)—the most frequent hummingbird species encountered

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris* (3)*— adult males at both the Nature Conservancy and state park's feeders in the Davis Mountains

Broad-tailed Hummingbird *Selasphorus platycercus* (1)— at the Nature Conservancy feeders in the Davis Mountains

Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus* (3)—at all the feeders we visited

Calliope Hummingbird *Selasphorus calliope* (2)*— extraordinarily, we came across this very uncommon gem both at Miller Ranch and the Davis Mountains Nature Conservancy feeders

Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cynanthus latirostris* (1)*— we were lucky enough to get memorable views of this regional rarity at the feeders at Davis Mountains State Park

Picidae: Woodpeckers (3)

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus* (3)— frequent in wooded areas throughout

Golden-fronted Woodpecker *Melanerpes aurifrons* (4)—seen just about every time we came across cottonwoods

Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Picoides scalaris* (5)—the most widespread of the three regular woodpecker species

Falconidae: Falcons and Caracaras (1)

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* (2)—scattered singletons

Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers (10)

Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi* (2)— at Marathon Post and by the Rio Grande at Santa Elena

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Western Wood-Pewee *Contopus sordidulus* (5)—fairly common in wooded areas in both the Davis and Chisos Mountains

Gray Flycatcher *Empidonax wrightii* (2)—migrants at Marathon Post and Balmorhea State Park

Empid spp (2)— brief views of empids on the Lost Mine Trail and at Musquiz Creek, suspected to be Dusky and Willow Flycatchers, respectively

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans* (1)— seen by Jeff at Christmas Mountains Oasis

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* (8)—frequent in all grassland habitats, but our best views were from the dining room at Chisos Mountain Lodge!

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus* (4)—happily, fairly common, particularly in wetland area

Cassin's Kingbird *Tyrannus vociferans* (3)—frequent in the Davis Mountains

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis* (6)—the common lowland kingbird

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus* (2)—sightings of presumed migrants along Marathon Post Road and the Marfa grasslands

Laniidae: Shrikes (1)

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus* (7)— fairly common, particularly in grassland areas

Vireonidae: Vireos (2)

Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii* (5)—frequent in bushy habitats, particularly along washes - but generally, more often heard than seen!

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus* (1)—our only sightings were at the Miller Ranch

Corvidae: Crows and Jays (4)

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay *Aphelocoma woodhouseii* (2)—frequent in the Davis Mountains

Mexican Jay *Aphelocoma wollweberi* (4)—numerous in the Chisos Mountains

Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucus* (5)—numerous in lowland desert scrub and grassland areas, particularly in the Marfa area

Common Raven *Corvus corax* (5)—widespread throughout at higher elevations

Hirundinidae: Swallows and Martins (2)

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina* (1)—small flocks in the Davis Mountains

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (6)—numerous away from the high canyons

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva* (1)— the nesting birds seemed to have left Balmorhea State Park but fortunately, we had good views of several by the buildings at the Miller Ranch

Paridae: Tits and Chickadees (1)

Black-crested Titmouse *Baeolophus atricristatus* (4)—the common parid throughout the area

Aegithalidae: Long-tailed Tits (1)

Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus* (1)— a flock of these delightful birds at the Miller Ranch

Sittidae: Nuthatches (1)

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis* (1)—our only sightings were at Davis Mountains State Park

Troglodytidae: Wrens (4)

Rock Wren *Salpinctes obsoletus* (1)— at the Miller Ranch

Canyon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus* (4)—heard just about anywhere when we were in the canyons, with our best views at Lower Burra Mesa

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii* (2)—a few seen in pine-oak woodlands and shrubby areas at higher elevations throughout

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* (4)—common and widespread at lower elevations, with particularly cooperative birds in the grounds of Chisos Mountain Lodge

Poliotilidae: Gnatcatchers (2)

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Poliotila caerulea* (1)—on the Lost Mine Trail

Black-tailed Gnatcatcher *Poliotila melanura* (3)—frequent in Big Bend desert shrub habitat

Turdidae: Thrushes (1)

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana* (2)— a few at the Lawrence Woods Picnic Grounds and on the grasslands at McDonald Observatory

Mimidae: Mockingbirds and Thrashers (3)

Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre* (5)— fairly common, with a particularly cooperative pair at Sul Ross

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* (5)—abundant throughout at low- to mid-elevations

Sturnidae: Starlings and Mynas (1)

European Starling (I) *Sturnus vulgaris* (2)—just seen around settlements

Ptilonotidae: Silky-Flycatchers (1)

Phainopepla *Phainopepla nitens* (1)—our only views were at Davis Mountains State Park

Parulidae: New World Warblers (4)

Tennessee Warbler *Oreothlypis peregrina* (1)— on the roadway into Sandia Wetlands

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia* (2)—at Marathon Post and Rio Grande Village

Townsend's Warbler *Setophaga townsendi* (1)—on the Lost Mine Trail

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla* (1)— seen by Jeff at Miller Ranch

Icteriidae: New World Chats (1)

Yellow-breasted Chat (HO) *Icteria virens* (1)—several singing at Sam Nail Ranch

Emberizidae: New World Sparrows (8)

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina* (3)—at Sul Ross, in the Davis Mountains and at Sandia Wetlands

Black-chinned Sparrow *Spizella atrogularis* (2)— on the Lost Mine Trail and at Lower Burro Mesa

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata* (5)—frequent throughout shrub desert areas

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus* (6)—small flocks seen in grasslands throughout

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* (1)— several along the road into Sandia Wetlands

Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys* (1)— two males at the start on molt at Balmorhea Lake

Canyon Towhee *Melospiza fusca* (6)—numerous and widespread with particularly good views around Chisos Mountains Lodge

Rufous-crowned Sparrow *Aimophila ruficeps* (6)—frequent sightings both in the Davis Mountains and at Big Bend

Cardinalidae: Cardinals and Grosbeaks (10)

Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava* (1)— at Chisos Mountains Lodge, where Lawson got a great photo

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra* (4)—several seen in trees at mid- and low-elevations throughout

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* (3)— sightings both at Big Bend and in the Davis Mountains

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis* (5) —common and widespread

Pyrrhuloxia *Cardinalis sinuatus* (5)—frequently seen in the lowlands, particularly in shrub desert habitat

Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus* (3)— particularly good views at the Davis Mountains State Park feeders

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea* (5)— fairly common in higher elevation grassland habitats

Varied Bunting *Passerina versicolor* (3)— at Marathon Post, Lower burro Mesa and the Miller Ranch

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* (1)— female-types at the Miller Ranch

Dickcissel *Spiza americana* (1)*— 2 along the road into Sandia Wetlands

Icteridae: New World Blackbirds (6)

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* (1)— at the Sandia Wetlands

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna* (2)— on grasslands at Marfa and Marathon, showing tail patterns characteristic of *liliana* ssp

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus* (5)—away from urban areas, our only sightings were of a small group at Terlingua

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus* (1)— 4 at Dugout Wells

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater* (4)—widespread in the lowlands

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius* (2)— at Miller Ranch and Sandia Wetlands

Scott's Oriole *Icterus parisorum* (2)—scattered sightings in shrub desert and yucca grassland habitats throughout

Fringillidae: Finches (2)

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus* (7)—frequent in mid- to low-elevations throughout

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria* (6)—small flocks seen most days

Passeridae: Old World Sparrows (1)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (5)—around settlements throughout

MAMMALS

Bat spp. (most were probably Western Pipistrelle *Parastrellus hesperus*)

Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii*

Black-tailed Jackrabbit *Lepus californicus*

Texas Antelope Squirrel *Ammospermophilus interpres**

Mexican Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus mexicanus*

Rock Squirrel *Spermophilus variegatus*

Black-tailed Prairie Dog *Cynomys ludovicianus*

Nutria (Coypu) *Myocastor coypus**

Black Bear *Ursus americanus**

Western Hog-nosed Skunk *Conepatus mesoleucus**

Bobcat *Lynx rufus*
Feral Pig (I) *Sus scrofa**
Collared Peccary (Javelina) *Tayassu tajacu*
White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*
Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus*
Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana*
Barbary Sheep (I) (Aoudad) *Ammotragus lervia**

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Canyon Tree Frog *Hyla arenicolor**
Rio Grande Leopard Frog *Rana berlandieri**
Red-eared Slider *Trachemys scripta**
Crevice Spiny Lizard *Sceloporus poinsettia**
Greater Earless Lizard *Cophosaurus texanus**
Coachwhip *Masticophis flagellum*
Blotched Water Snake *Nerodia erythrogaster**
Western Diamondback Rattlesnake *Crotalus atrox**