



January 5 - 11, 2019

Southeast Arizona

Winter Sky Island Sampler

**Leaders: Bob Behrstock, Peg Abbott and Bob Meinke,  
with Sharon, Ken & Wynn, Christine & Turner, Pierre & Elisabeth, Cathy, Joe &  
Brian, Alison, Julie & Palmer, and Hugh**

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(I)=introduced

**Summary:** Weather challenged us this trip with cold temperatures, rain, and fog. To add to our trials, two of our sites were closed due to the government shutdown. Nonetheless, we persevered and saw a reasonable number of birds – including some that are sparse in SE Arizona. As always, the Casa de San Pedro was a comfortable and welcoming place to stay, and we enjoyed their hearty breakfasts and tasty dinners. With participants from Oregon, the eastern U.S., and as far away as Switzerland, everyone saw something of interest. Nine of the participants enjoyed the cave tour at Kartchner Caverns, and we all marveled at the huge flocks of wintering Sandhill Cranes and Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Whitewater Draw. We spent time sorting out raptors, with a wintering Rough-legged Hawk, a Ferruginous Hawk and Prairie Falcon being cooperative finds. The Violet-crowned Hummingbird at Patton's feeders was a good score.

List compiled by Bob Behrstock

**BIRDS (102 species recorded, of which 3 were heard only):**

**DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (6)**

**Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*—A flock with 100-200 birds was found at Whitewater Draw.

**Cinnamon Teal** *Spatula cyanoptera*—A stunning male and a few females were found at Whitewater Draw.

**Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata*—Seen two days; best looks at Whitewater Draw where numerous and close.

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera*—A small flock was seen on the San Pedro late in the trip and others were noted at Whitewater Draw.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*—At least 20 were found at Whitewater Draw.

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas crecca*—Several small flocks were present at Whitewater Draw.

**NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae (1)**

**Gambel's Quail** *Callipepla gambelii*—A small flock was seen investigating the front garden at Casa de San Pedro.

**PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (5)**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* (I)—Common on utility lines throughout.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* (I)—Seen three or four days, generally atop utility poles or on power lines, occasionally at feeders.

**Inca Dove** *Columbina inca*—Seen well at the San Pedro House, first perched in a small tree then investigating seed.

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica*—Common throughout, especially around feeders.

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*—Common on fences, utility lines and around feeders.

#### Cuculidae: Cuckoos and Allies (1)

**Greater Roadrunner** *Geococcyx californianus*—One individual seen on the wall of the gardens at Casa driving into the lodge.

#### HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (4)

**Rivoli's Hummingbird** *Eugenes fulgens*—An adult male was seen at Ash Canyon B&B in Hereford.

**Anna's Hummingbird** *Calypte anna*—A female was seen at Ash Canyon B&B and one was seen by a couple people at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia.

**Broad-billed Hummingbird** *Cyananthus latirostris*—A stunning adult male was seen repeatedly, guarding a feeder at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia.

**Violet-crowned Hummingbird** *Amazilia violiceps*—Expected at this location, but extremely local in the U.S., we were pleased to see a crisp individual at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia.

#### RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (3)

**Virginia Rail** *Rallus limicola*—Several were heard and one seen by a few of us at Whitewater Draw.

**Sora** *Porzana carolina*—(HO) At least one was heard calling at Whitewater Draw.

**American Coot** *Fulica americana*—Several were present at Whitewater Draw.

#### CRANES: Gruidae (1)

**Sandhill Crane** *Antigone canadensis*—Thousands seen roosting at Whitewater Draw and great, noisy swirling flocks over our heads at agricultural fields north of Elgin. Certainly one of SE Arizona's great bird spectacles.

#### PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (1)

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*—(HO) Scarce; heard two days.

#### GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (1)

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*—An adult was seen by a few of us at Whitewater Draw.

#### HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (1)

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*—Seen by a few of us on two days.

#### VULTURES: Cathartidae (1)

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*—One was seen by people in Bob M's van on Day 3. A sparse winter bird in SE Arizona.

#### HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (5)

**Northern Harrier** *Circus hudsonius*—A common species seen over open fields and agricultural land; less expected was one that flew over Ash Canyon B&B.

**Cooper's Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii*—Seen two days; Brown Canyon and along Hereford Rd.  
**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*—A common species; seen daily on fences and utility lines.  
**Rough-legged Hawk** *Buteo lagopus*—Rather rare in SE Arizona; one was seen at Davis Pasture just east of Sonoita.  
**Ferruginous Hawk** *Buteo regalis*—A very local species in SE Arizona; one was seen in cropland west of Elfrida.

### **BARN OWLS: Tytonidae (1)**

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*—We enjoyed long views of one individual on an open perch in a Freemont Cottonwood in Elgin.

### **OWLS: Strigidae (1)**

**Great Horned Owl** *Bubo virginianus*—These were present at the Casa de San Pedro, vocal mornings and evenings and seen by a number of tour participants.

### **WOODPECKERS: Picidae (6)**

**Red-naped Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*—One was in the front yard at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia.

**Acorn Woodpecker** *Melanerpes formicivorus*—Seen at Ramsey Canyon, Ash Canyon B&B, and at Bob and Karen's feeders.

**Gila Woodpecker** *Melanerpes uropygialis*—Seen throughout the trip; especially numerous at the Casa de San Pedro.

**Ladder-backed Woodpecker** *Picoides scalaris*—Seen at all feeding stations we visited, plus a few in more natural habitats.

**Arizona Woodpecker** *Picoides arizonae*—Another bird with little presence in the U.S.; at least one was seen at the entrance to the Ramsey Canyon TNC Preserve office.

**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*—Several were in cottonwoods at the bridge in Elgin; one or two were heard elsewhere.

### **FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (2)**

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*—Widespread 'though not especially common; seen throughout the tour on utility wires.

**Prairie Falcon** *Falco mexicanus*— One of these locally uncommon birds was seen on Bell Rd. several miles north of Whitewater Draw.

### **TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (4)**

**Gray Flycatcher** *Empidonax wrightii*—One was seen by the parking lot at Kartchner Caverns.

**Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans*—A couple of these were at pond edges at Whitewater Draw.

**Say's Phoebe** *Sayornis saya*—

**Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus*—A very flighty individual was seen by a few of us at Whitewater Draw.

### **SHRIKES: Laniidae (1)**

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*—Seen daily on roadside shrubs or utility wires.

### **VIREOS: Vireonidae (1)**

**Hutton's Vireo** *Vireo huttoni*—One was seen by Bob M's group at Ramsey Canyon.

### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (3)**

**Mexican Jay** *Aphelocoma wollweberi*—Raucous and social, these were seen at Ramsey Canyon, Ash Canyon B&B, and Bob and Karen's feeders.

**Chihuahuan Raven** *Corvus cryptoleucus*—A small flock was present in vineyards outside Elgin.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*—Probably seen several days. Calling birds higher up at Montezuma Pass were more easily identified.

### **TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (1)**

**Bridled Titmouse** *Baeolophus wollweberi*—A rather local bird in the U.S., these were seen at Ramsey Canyon, Ash Canyon B&B, and a couple other localities.

### **PENDULINE TITS: Remizidae (1)**

**Verdin** *Auriparus flaviceps*—Small numbers at a few sites including Amerind Foundation and the feeders behind the Casa de San Pedro.

### **LONG-TAILED TITS: Aegithalidae (1)**

**Bushtit** *Psaltriparus minimus*—A flock visited feeders at Bob and Karen's house.

### **NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (1)**

**White-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta carolinensis*—These were seen on five days, and were especially numerous at the Casa de San Pedro. A species level split has been proposed for the local, darker interior race *S. c. nelsoni*, but this action has not yet occurred.

### **CREEPERS: Certhiidae (1)**

**Brown Creeper** *Certhia americana*—One was seen at Ramsey Canyon. Watch for a future split of this bird, representing the Mexican race *C. a. albescens*.

### **WRENS: Troglodytidae (5)**

**Rock Wren** *Salpinctes obsoletus*—A cooperative bird was called in just north of Bob and Karen's house.

**Canyon Wren** *Catherpes mexicanus*—(HO) A couple were heard during Peg's group hike at Coronado National Memorial.

**Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris*—One or two were seen quickly in the reeds at Whitewater Draw.

**Bewick's Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii*—Found on four days; usually around feeders but also "in the wild."

**Cactus Wren** *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*—Arizona's State Bird was seen at least three days including at the main hotel pick-up in Tucson and at Kartchner Caverns.

### **KINGLETS: Regulidae (1)**

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula*—Seen with Kelly's group along the San Pedro at the San Pedro House, also in Ramsey Canyon and at suet feeders at the Casa de San Pedro B&B.

### **THRUSHES: Turdidae (2)**

**Western Bluebird** *Sialia mexicana*—Two were seen by Bob M's group at Kartchner Caverns and a few more at Brown Canyon Ranch.

**Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus*—One or two along the trail in Ramsey Canyon.

### **MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (2)**

**Curve-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma curvirostre*—Seen five days, mostly around feeding stations. Generally present in the yard at the Casa de San Pedro.

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*—One was seen in Bob and Karen’s yard and one by Bob B’s van on the east side of the San Pedro River.

### **STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (1)**

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* (1)—Two or three were in the cottonwoods at the San Pedro House.

### **PIPITS AND WAGTAILS: Motacillidae (1)**

**American Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*—One foraged in mud at the edge of a cattle pond in Davis Pasture east of Sonoita.

### **SILKY-FLYCATCHERS: Ptilonotidae (1)**

**Phainopepla** *Phainopepla nitens*—A vocal male was seen early in the trip at the Amerind Foundation.

### **OLIVE WARBLER: Peucedramidae (1)**

**Olive Warbler** *Peucedramus taeniatus*— One was seen by Bob M’s group at Ramsey Canyon.

### **FINCHES: Fringillidae (3)**

**House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Seen in all habitats on all days. Numerous at feeders.

**Pine Siskin** *Spinus pinus*—One was at the Casa de San Pedro and many were on feeders at Ash Canyon B&B.

**Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria*—Seen most days from cottonwoods to conifers and at all yards with feeders.

### **NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (16)**

**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*—Seen several days; generally present around feeders.

**Brewer’s Sparrow** *Spizella breweri*—Two of these diminutive sparrows were seen by Peg’s group on Bell Rd. north of Elfrida.

**Black-throated Sparrow** *Amphispiza bilineata*—One was seen the first afternoon at the Amerind Foundation and one near Whitewater Draw.

**Lark Bunting** *Calamospiza melanocorys*—A flock of several dozen was seen at close range on Bell Road north of Elfrida.

**Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis*—Small flocks of juncos were seen upslope from the town of Bisbee by Bob B’s group and in Coronado National Memorial during Peg’s hike. These represented the black-headed “Oregon Junco” (*J. h. oregonus*), the similar but washed out “Pink-sided Junco” (*J. h. mearnsi*), and the rufous-backed and pink-billed “Gray-headed Junco” (*J. h. caniceps*). Given the many differences in size, plumage, bill color, and migratory behavior, as well as the current trend to split identifiable races, watch for future divisions within the Dark-eyed Juncos.

**White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—Seen five days at various feeding stations and a few in more natural habitat.

**White-throated Sparrow** *Zonotrichia albicollis*—One was found at the San Pedro House and another was seen in the front yard at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds.

**Vesper Sparrow** *Pooecetes gramineus*—A couple were seen at Amerind Foundation and a few on fences near the Casa de San Pedro.

**Grasshopper Sparrow** *Ammodramus savannarum*—One was seen by a few of us just west of the Casa de San Pedro.

**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*—Bright rufous SW individuals were noted at Whitewater Draw and at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds.

**Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolni*—Just a few were seen during three days; sites included Amerind Foundation and Brown Canyon.

**Canyon Towhee** *Melospiza fusca*—Found at least three days; Casa de San Pedro, Ash Canyon B&B, Bob and Karen's. Some may have been seen at the Paton Center in Patagonia.

**Abert's Towhee** *Melospiza aberti*—Seen well several mornings outside the back gate at the Casa de San Pedro.

**Rufous-crowned Sparrow** *Aimophila ruficeps*—Two were seen with Bob B's group uphill from Bisbee and one was in the brush pile at Ash Canyon B&B.

**Spotted Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*—Several were at Casa de San Pedro and Ash Canyon B&B.

**Green-tailed Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*—We had marvelous looks at these attractive birds at the San Pedro House; one sitting on a bench just a few feet from us.

### **NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (7)**

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*—Along with the cranes, the other spectacle at Whitewater Draw, as thousands of blackbirds, many of them Yellow-headed, came in just before dark to roost in the reed beds.

**Western Meadowlark** *Sturnella neglecta*—Small numbers were seen around Elgin.

**Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna*—One displayed facial and tail characteristics near Whitewater Draw.

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*—Observed three days; San Pedro House, Casa de San Pedro and Whitewater Draw.

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*—A Brown-headed Cowbird was pointed out in a flock just west of the Casa de San Pedro but may not have made it on the day list.

**Brewer's Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*—Flocks were seen around horses on Waters Rd. just west of Casa de San Pedro and on utility wires NE of Elfrida.

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*—A few were seen in Sierra Vista.

### **NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (4)**

**Orange-crowned Warbler** *Oreothlypis celata*—A bright yellow Pacific Slope individual was at suet feeders at Ash Canyon B&B.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*—Seen in various locations (e.g., Ramsey Canyon); numerous at Ash Canyon B&B. All represented the colorful Western race *S. c. auduboni*, often referred to as Audubon's Warbler. Watch for this subspecies to once more become a full species.

**Townsend's Warbler** *Setophaga townsendi*—One was seen by Bob M's group at Ramsey Canyon.

**Painted Redstart** *Myioborus pictus*—Always fun to see but of special value on a cold winter day; one was seen outside the B&B below the Ramsey Canyon TNC Preserve.

### **CARDINAL-GROSBEAKS: Cardinalidae (3)**

**Hepatic Tanager** *Piranga flava*—A male was seen next to the B&B below the Ramsey Canyon TNC Preserve.

**Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis*—One was at feeders at the Casa de San Pedro B&B, here represented by the long-crested race *C. c. superbus*.

**Pyrrhuloxia** *Cardinalis sinuatus*—Seen four or five days; common at various feeding stations.

### **OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* (I)—Common throughout; often at feeders.

### Mammals (7 species)

**Pronghorn** *Antilocapra americana*—Several were seen roadside in wine country outside Elgin.

**Mule Deer** *Odocoileus hemionus*—One was seen by Peg's group as it sat under a mesquite in grasslands outside Sonoita.

**White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus*—Seen three days in the canyons; the local race represents the small *O. v. couesi*, referred to as Coues White-tailed Deer.

**Coyote** *Canis latrans*—One was seen by Bob M's group near the Casa de San Pedro.

**Black-tailed Jackrabbit** *Lepus californicus*—One was seen by Peg's group as they left Whitewater Draw.

**Arizona Gray Squirrel** *Sciurus arizonensis*—Local in the SW U.S., this attractive rodent was seen at Ramsey Canyon and Ash Canyon B&B.

**Botta's Pocket Gopher** *Thomomys bottae*—One was seen in front of the brush pile at Ash Canyon B&B.

### Reptiles (1 species)

**Slevin's Bunchgrass Lizard** *Sceloporus slevini*—Very local in the U.S. where confined to extreme SE Arizona; one was seen when a piece of lumber was flipped in Davis Pasture E of Sonoita.