

Texas Big Bend: Birding & Wildlife | Species List

April 22 - 29, 2019 | Compiled by Michael Marsden



With guides Michael Marsden & David Mehlman, and participants Mark, Mary Emma, Jayne, Ingrid, Mark, Sheila, Betty, Jim, Elizabeth, Marria and Nancy & Steve

Outline Itinerary:

22nd: El Paso - Marfa Settling Ponds - Holland House, Alpine

23rd: Holland House - Marathon Pena Park (the Post) - Gage Gardens - Marathon grasslands - Fossil Discovery Exhibit, Big Bend National Park - Panther Junction - Chisos Mountain Lodge (CML)

24th: CML - Rio Grande Village Campground & Nature Trail - Daniel's Ranch - Boquillas - Dugout Wells - CML

25th: CML - Chisos Mountains loop (Pinnacles Trail - Boot Canyon Trail - Colima Trail - Laguna Meadow Trail) - CML

26th: CML - Sam Nail Ranch site - Lower Burro Mesa Pour-off - Cottonwood Campground - Santa Elena Canyon - Castalon - Lajitas - Terlingua - CML

27th: CML - Christmas Mountain Oasis - Fort Davis National Historic Site - Davis Mountains State Park - Limpia Hotel, Fort Davis

28th: Limpia Hotel - Lawrence Wood Picnic Grounds - Madera Canyon Trail - McDonald Observatory - Limpia Hotel

29th: Limpia Hotel - El Paso

BIRDS (134 species recorded, of which 3 were heard only):

SP = special species of note (rare, local or endemic)

(HO)= heard only

(#) = number of days encountered

Anatidae: Ducks, Geese and Swans (2)

Mexican Duck *Anas diazi* SP (2)— at least 60 on ponds just south of Marfa; a pair over the Rio Grande at Santa Elena.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* (2)— small numbers on ponds at Marfa, Marathon & Rio Grande Village.

Odontophoridae: New World Quails (1)

Scaled Quail *Callipepla squamata* SP (2)— our best views were in shrub desert habitat at Marathon and Christmas Mountain.

Partridges, Pheasants and Allies (1)

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo* (2) — singleton on the Post road at Marathon; heard calling at the Lawrence Wood Picnic Area.

Columbidae: Pigeons and Doves (6)

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* (3)— just seen around settlements.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (5)— small numbers at just about every lowland settlement (and a species not even mentioned in Peterson and Zimmer's *Birds of the Trans Pecos*, published as recently as 1998!).

Inca Dove *Columbina inca* SP (2)— at Marathon and Rio Grande Village only.

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

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* (7)— absent only from high altitude woodland habitats.

Cuculidae: Cuckoos and Allies (1)

Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus* SP (4) — our best views were of one at Rio Grande Village and a juvenile with one its parents at Boquillas.

Apodidae: Swifts (1)

White-throated Swift *Aeronautes saxatalis* (1)—at least 30 flying high around the cliff faces above the Pinnacles Trail.

Trochilidae: Hummingbirds (4)

Blue-throated Hummingbird *Lampornis clemenciae* SP (1)—singleton on the Chisos Mountains loop.

Lucifer Hummingbird *Calothorax lucifer* SP (1)— several, including wonderful views of an adult male, at the Christmas Mountain Oasis feeders.

Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri* (3)— the most frequent hummingbird species encountered.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird *Selasphorus platycercus* (1)— on the Laguna Meadow Trail.

Rallidae: Rails, Gallinules and Coots (2)

Virginia Rail *Rallus limicola* (HO-2)— calling at the Post wetlands and at the beaver pond at the start of the RGV Nature Trail.

American Coot *Fulica americana* (1)— pair at the Post pond.

Charadriidae: Plovers (1)

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* (1)— on Hwy 90 grasslands.

Scolopacidae: Sandpipers (1)

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* (1)— singleton at Gage Gardens.

Ardeidae: Herons and Egrets (1)

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* (1)—flying over Daniel's Ranch.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* (1)— small numbers on grasslands along Hwy 90.

Cathartidae: New World Vultures (2)

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*(1)—oddly our only sightings were by the river at Rio Grande Village

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

Accipitridae: Hawks, Kites and Eagles (7)

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* (1)—immature perched on a utility post along Hwy 90 at Valentine

Accipiter sp. (1) — brief view of flying accipiter at Gage Gardens.

Common Black Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus* SP (1)—adult perched by its nest in the cottonwoods at Rio Grande Village; another flying over the RGV Nature Trail.

Gray Hawk *Buteo plagiatus* SP (1)— brief view of adult in flight over Daniel's Ranch.

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*(6)—frequent over grassland and shrub desert habitats throughout.

Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus* SP (2)— singletons over the Pinnacles Trail and the Limpia Hotel in Fort Davis.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* (4)— scattered individuals, some showing characteristics of the southwestern *fuertesi* ssp.

Tytonidae: Barn-owls (1)

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* (1)— roosting in tree at Gage Gardens.

Strigidae: Owls (2)

Elf Owl *Micrathene whitneyi* SP (1)— brief views at dusk of two at Davis Mountains State Park.

Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia* (1)— at least 4 among the prairie dog burrows on the Marathon grasslands.

Alcedinidae: Kingfishers (1)

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon* (2)—at the Post pond in Marathon.

Picidae: Woodpeckers (3)

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus* SP (4)— frequent in wooded areas throughout.

Golden-fronted Woodpecker *Melanerpes aurifrons* SP (3)—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* (3)—scattered singletons; our most memorable view was of one harassing a passing Zone-tailed Hawk in the Chisos Mountains.

Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers (14)

Western Wood-Pewee *Contopus sordidulus* (1)—our only sightings were in the Davis Mountains.

Least Flycatcher *Empidonax minimus* (1)— along the road leading to the Post.

Gray Flycatcher *Empidonax wrightii* (1)— at least 3 along the Madera Canyon Trail and at the Lawrence Wood Picnic Area in the Davis Mountains.

Dusky Flycatcher *Empidonax oberholseri* (2)—migrants along the Chisos Mountains loop and at Sam Nail Ranch.

Cordilleran Flycatcher *Empidonax occidentalis* (1)— along the Chisos Mountains loop.

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans* (1)— along the RGV Nature Trail.

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* (5)—frequent in all grassland habitats, but our best views were in the grounds of Chisos Mountain Lodge.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus* SP (4)—happily fairly common, particularly in the cottonwoods at the Post.

Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens* (4)— frequent in brushy habitats throughout the area.

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus* SP (1)— at Cottonwood campground.

Tyrannus sp (1)— brief views of a perched Couch's/Tropical Kingbird along Hwy 90.

Cassin's Kingbird *Tyrannus vociferans* SP (2)—our only sightings were at the Post and Gage Gardens in Marathon and at the Lawrence Wood Picnic Area.

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis* (3)—the common lowland kingbird.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus* (1)— two presumed migrants at the Post.

Laniidae: Shrikes (1)

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus* (2)— singletons along Hwy 90 and at Fort Davis.

Vireonidae: Vireos (4)

Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii* (4)— frequent in bushy habitats, particularly along washes, with memorable views of birds. at two nests at Christmas Mountain Oasis - but generally more often heard than seen!

Gray Vireo *Vireo vicinior* SP (1)— spectacular scope views of one at Lower Burro Mesa Pour-off.

Hutton's Vireo *Vireo huttoni* (1)—several in high elevation woodland on the Chisos Mountains loop.

Plumbeous Vireo *Vireo plumbeus* (3)—seen in both the Davis and Chisos Mountains.

Corvidae: Crows and Jays (4)

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

Mexican Jay *Aphelocoma wollweberi* SP (2)—numerous in the Chisos Mountains.

Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucus* SP (5)—numerous in desert scrub and grassland areas, particularly along Hwy 90 between Van Horn and Marfa.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* (5)—widespread at higher elevations in both the Chisos and Davis Mountains.

Hirundinidae: Swallows and Martins (1)

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (4)— frequent throughout at lower elevations.

Paridae: Tits and Chickadees (1)

Black-crested Titmouse *Baeolophus atricristatus* SP (3)— the common parid throughout the area.

Remizidae: Penduline Tits (1)

Verdin *Auriparus flaviceps* (3)— frequent in shrubby habitats, with particularly memorable views of one constructing a nest at Dugout Wells.

Aegithalidae: Long-tailed Tits (1)

Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus* (3)— cooperative flocks of these delightful birds along the Chisos Mountains loop and at Davis Mountains State Park.

Sittidae: Nuthatches (1)

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis* (2)— sightings both along the Chisos Mountains loop and at the Lawrence Wood Picnic Area in the Davis Mountains.

Troglodytidae: Wrens (4)

Rock Wren *Salpinctes obsoletus* (2)— our most memorable view was of one on the cliffs at Lower Burro Mesa.

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

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii* (1)— our only sightings were along the Chisos Mountains loop.

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

Poliophtilidae: Gnatcatchers (2)

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila caerulea* (1)— several seen in pine-oak woodlands on the Chisos Mountains loop.

Black-tailed Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila melanura* SP (1)— our only sightings were in shrub desert habitat at Christmas Mountain Oasis.

Regulidae: Kinglets (1)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* (4)— we came across this common migrant in wooded areas at both low and high elevations.

Turdidae: Thrushes (4)

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis* (2)— singletons at Rio Grande Village and the Cottonwood Campground.

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana* (1)— two at the Lawrence Wood Picnic Areas.

Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi* (2)— singletons at Davis Mountains State Park and at the Lawrence Wood Picnic Area.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* (1)— our only sighting of this uncommon migrant was of one at Gage Gardens.

Mimidae: Mockingbirds and Thrashers (3)

Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre* (2)— frequent in lowland areas throughout.

Crissal Thrasher *Toxostoma crissale* **SP** (1)— wonderfully close views of one on the Laguna Meadows Trail.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* (7)— abundant throughout at low to mid elevations.

Sturnidae: Starlings and Mynas (1)

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

Motacillidae: Wagtails and Pipits (1)

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens* (1)— our only sighting was near the Fossil Discovery Exhibit in Big Bend.

Bombycillidae: Waxwings (1)

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum* (1)— singleton at Sam Nail Ranch.

Fringillidae: Finches (5)

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus* (5)— frequent in mid to low elevations throughout.

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus* (3)— first seen at the Gage Gardens but particularly common in Davis Mountains State Park with one flock of around 35 birds.

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria* (3)— small numbers at Gage Gardens, by the Rio Grande in Big Bend and in the Davis Mountains.

Emberizidae: New World Sparrows (14)

Cassin's Sparrow *Peucaea cassinii* **SP** (HO-1)— singing at the Marathon grasslands.

Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum* (1)— at Davis Mountains State Park.

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina* (3)— common and widespread throughout.

Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida* (1)— two at Davis Mountains State Park.

Black-chinned Sparrow *Spizella atrogularis* **SP** (HO-1)— singing along the Madera Canyon Trail.

Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri* (2)— several along the road from Marathon to the Post; two at Christmas Mountain Oasis.

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata* (4)— frequent in shrub desert habitat.

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus* (2)— small flocks at the Post, Gage Gardens and Cottonwood Campground.

Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys* (2)— flocks of 10 on the Marathon grasslands and c30 at Christmas Mountain Oasis.

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* (3)— all the individuals seen at both Big Bend and in the Davis Mountains were of the Gray-headed group.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* (2)— small numbers at Marathon and Christmas Mountain Oasis.

Canyon Towhee *Melospiza fusca* (2)— particularly good views around Chisos Mountains Lodge.

Rufous-crowned Sparrow *Aimophila ruficeps* **SP** (3)— frequent at Big Bend, Christmas Mountain Oasis and in the Davis Mountains.

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus* (3)—singletons seen along the Chisos Mountains loop, at Madera Canyon and in Davis Mountains State Park.

Icteriidae: Yellow-breasted Chat (1)

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens* (2)— our initial sightings were at the Post, but our best were of birds singing on territory at Sam Nail Ranch.

Icteridae: New World Blackbirds (9)

Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus* (1)— adult male on wet grasslands at Marfa.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna* (3)— widespread in grasslands throughout.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius* (1)— small numbers at the Post and Gage Gardens.

Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii* (4)— our first encounters were of birds in cottonwoods close to water at the Post. and Cottonwood Campground, but we later saw them at higher elevations in the Davis Mountains.

Scott's Oriole *Icterus parisorum* **SP** (3)— singletons at Gage Gardens, Dugout Wells and Christmas Mountain Oasis.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* (3)— small numbers in several wetland habitats.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater* (5)— widespread in the lowlands, including several at Dugout Wells.

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus* (3)— singleton at Sam Nail Ranch.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus* (2)— our only sightings after arriving in the Big Bend area were at Gage Gardens.

Parulidae: New World Warblers (11)

Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla* (1)— a frustratingly brief view of a waterthrush at Gage Gardens was presumably of the Louisiana Waterthrush (a rare spring migrant in the Trans Pecos) that had been seen and well documented from here a few days earlier.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* (1)— good views of one at Davis Mountains State Park.

Colima Warbler *Oreothlypis crissalis* **SP** (1)— we came across at least five on the Chisos Mountains loop with our best views at the head of the Laguna Meadows Trail.

Lucy's Warbler *Oreothlypis luciae* **SP** (1)— at Cottonwood Campground.

Nashville Warbler *Oreothlypis ruficapilla* (2)— singletons at Christmas Mountain Oasis and Davis Mountains State Park.

MacGillivray's Warbler *Geothlypis tolmiei* (1)— at Sam Nail Ranch.

Tropical Parula *Setophaga pitiayuma* **SP** (1)— wonderful views of this known rarity in the cottonwoods at the picnic grounds on Daniel's Ranch Road.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata* (4)— common and widespread (all Audubon's other than a single Myrtle at Gage Gardens).

Townsend's Warbler *Setophaga townsendi* (1)— several on the Chisos Mountains loop.

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla* (4)— frequent both at Big Bend and in the Davis Mountains.

Slate-throated Redstart *Myioborus miniatus* **SP** (1)— prolonged views of this exquisite known rarity in riparian woodland at the junction of the Boot Canyon and Juniper Trails.

Cardinalidae: Cardinals and Grosbeaks (9)

Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava* **SP** (3)— frequent in higher woodlands in both the Chisos and Davis Mountains, but our best views were of a pair persistently fluttering at the restaurant windows of Chisos Mountain Lodge each day we were there.

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

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* (2)— singletons at Cottonwood Campground and the Lawrence Wood Picnic Area.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis* (3) — common and widespread.

Pyrrhuloxia *Cardinalis sinuatus* **SP** (4)— frequently seen in the lowlands, particularly in shrub desert habitat.

Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus* (3)—common in mid and high elevation wooded areas throughout.

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea* (1)— our only sighting was of an adult male singing on territory at Christmas Mountain Oasis.

Varied Bunting *Passerina versicolor* **SP** (2)— memorable views were of three at Sam Nail Ranch and two at Christmas Mountain Oasis.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* (2)— singletons at Daniel's Ranch and the Lawrence Wood Picnic Area.

Passeridae: Old World Sparrows (1)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (3)— just seen in urban and suburban areas, including Gage Gardens.

MAMMALS (9)

Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii*

Black-tailed Jackrabbit *Lepus californicus*

Rock Squirrel *Spermophilus variegatus*

Black-tailed Prairie Dog *Cynomys ludovicianus*

Collared Peccary (Javelina) *Tayassu tajacu* **SP**

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*

Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus*

Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana*

Nutria *Myocastor coypus*

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (8)

Eastern Collared Lizard *Crotaphytus collaris*

Short-lined Skink *Eumeces tetragrammus* **SP**

Chihuahuan Spotted Whiptail *Aspidoscelus exsanguis* **SP**

Marbled Whiptail *Cnemidophorus marmoratus* **SP**

Western Coachwhip *Masticophis flagellum*

Plain-bellied Watersnake *Nerodia erythrogaster*

Red-eared Slider *Trachemys scripta*

Texas Spiny Softshell *Apalone spinifera* **SP**