

Southeast Arizona Winter Sampler | Species List

January 11 - 17, 2020 | Compiled by Bob Meinke



Guide: Bob Meinke

Special Assistant: Kelly Amsberry **Special Thanks:** Peg Abbott and Tom Wood
Participants: Beth Cataldo, Charlie and Martha Denkenberger, Hugh Evans, Debra Johnsen, John and Susan Matthews, Carol Tunncliffe, and Bruce Wendorff

(HO) = Heard only (distinctive enough to be counted even though not seen)

(I) = Introduced

BIRDS (123 species recorded, of which 2 were heard but not seen):

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (9)

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*—A flock was spotted on the far side of the open water at Whitewater Draw, mere distant blurs that were easy to distinguish once we had them in the scope.

Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera*—One of the common duck species at Whitewater Draw, we saw mostly males feeding in small groups.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*—Also common at Whitewater, males and females were pairing off as they churned through the water.

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*—A single pair was recorded at Whitewater Draw; possibly others were present but they were too far off for us to be sure (and the scope was focused on the Snow Geese).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*—Scattered small groups (males and females) were in the marshy areas at Whitewater, in the smaller impoundments.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*—Another common duck at Whitewater, an elegant species, seen both days we visited there.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*—In mixed flocks (again seen only at Whitewater) with pintails and shovelers; males were in splendid plumage.

Redhead *Aythya americana*—A few birds were present, diving in shallow water, the only diving duck seen near shore at Whitewater Draw.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*—Several were spotted in the scope as we watched the Snow Geese.

NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae (2)

Scaled Quail *Callipepla squamata*—Seen on three days. By far the best views (for the group) were had along a rural, unpaved road in the Sulphur Springs Valley, where a vocalizing flock played hide-and-seek with us as we birded the edge of some shrubby fields.

Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii*—Seen on several days, with close-up views at Casa de san Pedro. A beautifully patterned species.

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS AND ALLIES: Phasianidae (1)

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*—Several were seen by Kelly’s group (the ones who left early from Ramsey Canyon), associating with a group of White-nosed Coatis as they crossed the road together.

GREBES: Podicipedidae (2)

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*—A pair of birds was observed diving at Whitewater Draw both days we were there.

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*—A single, probably immature male was seen swimming near marsh vegetation at Whitewater—not observed by everyone in the group.

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (4)

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* (1)—Scattered flocks of this familiar, invasive species (the proverbial “flying rat”) were seen around buildings in the Sierra Vista area.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (1)—Depressingly well-established now across much of North America, this undesirable (and extraordinarily adaptable) non-native species was seen and heard most days during the trip.

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*—Only a couple of us caught a glimpse of a small flock in flight near BLM’s San Pedro House—the reddish underwings and short tails confirmed the ID.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*—Seen every day. A species that extends only into the southern U.S., it was a common sight near our lodgings at Casa de San Pedro.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*—Nearly as common as the preceding species during our tour, and more familiar to most of us, Mourning Doves seem to co-exist alongside White-winged in much of southern Arizona.

CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae (1)

Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus*—Some trips we search diligently for yet completely miss this species. So we were fortunate to spot multiple birds over four days, including some clear, close-up views.

HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (5)

Rivoli’s Hummingbird *Eugenes fulgens*—A single Rivoli’s was spotted by Charlie at the Ash Canyon feeders our second day out. Very limited U.S. distribution, frequents oak and pine woodlands in extreme southeast Arizona and southwest New Mexico.

Anna’s Hummingbird *Calypte anna*—Recorded at Casa de San Pedro, and also Ash Canyon, Bob Behrstock’s place, and the Paton Center. The most common hummingbird of the tour, with red-headed males in crisp plumage.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird *Selasphorus platycercus*—A single bird was seen repeatedly by several of us at the Ash Canyon feeders.

Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cyananthus latirostris*—Several birds were working the feeders at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia. Although long considered only a spring and summer breeding visitor in the U.S., observations now confirm that some birds are staying year-round in southern Arizona. Climate change?

Violet-crowned Hummingbird *Amazilia violiceps*—In a scenario similar to Broad-billed (above), this typically Mexican species (very rare in the U.S.) is now found throughout the year in selected areas near Patagonia and Nogales. We had great views of this target species at the Paton Center.



RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (2)

Sora *Porzana carolina*—A very confiding bird was seen on our second day at Whitewater Draw, casually rummaging under willows along the edge of one of the inner ponds. We had exceptionally close looks.

American Coot *Fulica americana*—Not especially common, but present both days at Whitewater Draw, mostly consorting with a Pied-billed Grebe.

CRANES: Gruidae (1)

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*—Sandhill Cranes are a major draw for visitors to Whitewater, and we were not disappointed. Roughly two hundred birds were feeding within 50 meters of us during one visit, and many more had congregated further out in a series of flocks. We also saw birds foraging in farm fields in the Sulphur Springs Valley. While we did not see the cranes flying into Whitewater to roost for the night, as we'd hoped, we did get remarkable views of birds in flight after a large flock was disturbed by an intruding helicopter (what was the pilot thinking!?). Not exactly as we'd planned it, but still an amazing sight!

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (1)

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*—Two stilts were seen in the distant scope views we had of the Snow Geese and Ring-necked Ducks at Whitewater Draw.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (1)

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*—Several Killdeer were seen foraging in the dry fields adjacent to the impoundments at Whitewater.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (4)

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*—A pair of birds were watched while they energetically scampered ahead of us, as we birded the edge of one of the inner ponds at Whitewater Draw. Not seen by most of the group.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*—A pair of these shorebirds were found at Whitewater in the emergent vegetation across from the main path, not far from where we parked.

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*—Same location as above, the snipe (which was actually quite nearby the trail) was all but invisible until it burst from hiding.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*—Two seemingly out-of-place birds were seen casually feeding in a small pond along the south entry road into Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. Clearly passing through in migration, they seemed quite content to have this unlikely spot all to themselves.



HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (2)

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*—A few birds were seen in flight in Sulphur Springs Valley, and one was also wading at Whitewater Draw.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*—Also at Whitewater, one bird was seen at a distance on our first day there.

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (2)

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*—Seen by a couple of us on the last day, as we craned our necks during our drive back into Tucson to the airport.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*—Equally uncommon as the Black Vulture on this tour, only a pair seen on our first day as we left Tucson. We were evidently a bit early for these guys.

HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (5)

Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius*—Relatively common, seen soaring just above the open fields near Hereford and Sierra Vista, as well as in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*—A single bird was seen near BLM's San Pedro House, during our walk along the river trail.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*—Encountered so often (every day), this species finally goaded us into counting the number of Red-tails we saw perched on utility poles during our drive back one afternoon from Whitewater Draw. While we technically reached 101 individuals during maybe 70 minutes of driving time, if we had started earlier in the day we almost surely would have exceeded 300.

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*—A possible sighting of this species was reported on our second day, near Ash Canyon.

Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis*—Our guide in Sulphur Springs Valley, Tom Wood, took us to some admittedly drab scenery that nonetheless resulted in some prime birding. This species, the largest of North American hawks, and generally rare throughout its range, was not uncommon in open fields here and we had some marvelous close looks. We saw both light- and dark-phase individuals.

OWLS: Strigidae (2)

Western Screech-Owl *Megascops kennicottii*—During a pre-tour scouting visit, Bob and Kelly could not find the reported Western Screech Owl near BLM's San Pedro House. Bracing for further disappointment, we were delighted to locate it during the group's visit. There it was, perched indifferently in a cottonwood cavity, looking about as disinterested as an owl can look as we scrambled around below for the perfect photo angle. Screech Owls—never really party animals after the sun comes up.

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*—Tom Wood takes credit for this one, having located the bird earlier in the week at its roost. Remarkably, the owl was still there on the day we arrived, and we spent a good 20 minutes sneaking closer and closer, cameras in tow. It was nothing if not cooperative.

WOODPECKERS: Picidae (6)

Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*—Individual birds were seen at the Amerind Foundation on our first day out of Tucson, and then later in Ramsey Canyon and at our Casa de San Pedro lodgings.

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus*—Viewed a few times at the Casa de San Pedro suet feeders, we also had prolonged looks at the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary, in Ramsey Canyon, and at Bob Behrstock's house (during our pizza fest). A striking species with a perpetually surprised look on its face.

Gila Woodpecker *Melanerpes uropygialis*—The most common woodpecker in southern Arizona, and it doesn't let you forget it. Seen and heard (repeatedly) each day, the vocal Gila Woodpeckers at Casa de San Pedro were active even before sunup.

Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Picoides scalaris*—Pointed out by Charlie on the grounds of the Amerind Foundation, and also seen at the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. The smallest woodpecker on the tour.

Arizona Woodpecker *Picoides arizonae*—We had hoped to see this rare species during our bird walk in TNC's Ramsey Canyon, and were rewarded at the end of the trail, just as the temperatures warmed. Mostly a Mexican species that barely crosses the border, it's the only brown-backed woodpecker in the U.S.

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*—Recorded on three days, this familiar species (for most of us) was seen in Ramsey Canyon and at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (3)

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*—A common raptor seen each day of the tour, often perched, but sometimes seen "kiting" over open fields in search of prey.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*—We had a reasonable look at a Peregrine Falcon during our day with Tom Wood in Sulphur Springs Valley, in open farm fields.

Prairie Falcon *Falco mexicanus*—Peg Abbott led our car caravan as we left the Amerind Foundation the first day, and took us on a side trip along the outskirts of Sierra Vista looking for Prairie Falcons. At least some of us saw a single bird sitting high on a large utility pole.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (4)

Gray Flycatcher *Empidonax wrightii*—One or two birds were seen near the parking lot at Kartchner Caverns after our tour there, perched on mesquite.

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*—Never in flocks but nonetheless common, we saw Black Phoebes each day of the tour, often in the vicinity of water or landscaping (such as the lawns at the Amerind Foundation, ponds at Whitewater Draw, and by the river near BLM's San Pedro House).

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya*—Seen most days, this was the first species we picked up at the Amerind Foundation, flycatching from the posts and fences on the open field near the parking area.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*—The first birds we saw were female, puzzling some of us with their sparrow-like, streaked plumage with just the merest hint of pink on the underside. The unmistakable males soon appeared, however, and we had close looks while birding at the Amerind Foundation.

VIREOS: Vireonidae (2)

Hutton's Vireo *Vireo huttoni*—One of the most common species seen while we birded in Ramsey Canyon. The plumage similarity between Hutton's Vireo and Ruby-crowned Kinglet is well known, and the presence of both species during our walk gave us the chance to compare and discuss.

Plumbeous Vireo *Vireo plumbeus*—Picked up by Kelly and her hiking partners, during their walk through the mesquite woodland just outside the Paton Center in Patagonia; identification was based on complete lack of any yellow in the plumage (eliminating Cassin's Vireo as an option).

SHRIKES: Laniidae (1)

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*—We hit the shrike jackpot, seeing multiple birds (prominently perched on wires, fences, bare mesquite branches, etc.) every day of the tour. A striking species.

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (3)

Mexican Jay *Aphelocoma wollweberi*—Mostly a Mexican species, as the name implies, this large jay is nonetheless common in southeast Arizona. We saw several raucous flocks when we birded the foothills of the Huachuca Mountains, getting close views at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary and in Ramsey Canyon.

Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucus*—Tom Wood graciously intervened as we debated the never-ending raven question posed by many visiting birders in southeast Arizona: which species is that, Common or Chihuahuan? Most birds we saw in Sulphur Springs Valley were deemed to be Chihuahuan, based on flocking behavior, affinity to agricultural fields, overall size, and certain bill features (not easy to see).

Common Raven *Corvus corax*—All the other many, many ravens we encountered were this species, which was seen throughout the trip.

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (1)

Bridled Titmouse *Baeolophus wollweberi*—A group favorite, this jittery little relative of the chickadees was seen several times, balancing in the low canopy of oaks and conifers in Ramsey Canyon, Ash Canyon, and later in mesquites at the Paton Center in Patagonia.

PENDULINE TITS: Remizidae (1)

Verdin *Auriparus flaviceps*—More than one of our group said this was a species they especially hoped to see, and thankfully we had several looks, actually beginning in Tucson near our hotel (before the tour even started)! Follow-up views were had at the Amerind Foundation, Casa de San Pedro, and Kartchner Caverns.

LARKS: Alaudidae (1)

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*—Unfortunately missed by most of the group, a small flock of Horned Larks crossed in front of the van when we departed Whitewater Draw one day. The birds were mixed in with a larger group of Vesper Sparrows.

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (2)

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*—This species (usually a passing migrant in southeast Arizona) was observed the second time we visited Whitewater Draw, flying over the main lagoon to the north of the main gravel path. Fewer than 10 birds were seen.

Violet-Green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina*—At least one Violet-green Swallow (with white saddle patches) was noted in the Tree Swallow flock (above). A very early migrant.

LONG-TAILED TITS: Aegithalidae (1)

Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus*—A small flock of this eternally restless little species was seen passing through the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. At least one bird was also briefly seen near Bob Behrstock's home.

KINGLETS: Regulidae (1)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*—A common winter resident in southern Arizona, we saw kinglets all but one of the days on the tour, often in mixed flocks with Bridled Titmouse, Hutton's Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, and others.

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (1)

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*—Another member of mixed feeding flocks, but unlike the kinglets, White-breasted Nuthatch is a year-round Arizona resident. This largely arboreal species was common and seen daily, with good views in Ramsey Canyon, Casa de San Pedro, and the Paton Center in Patagonia.

CREEPERS: Certhiidae (1)

Brown Creeper *Certhia americana*—The high-pitched, tinny call of this cryptic little songbird was heard before we finally located a pair of birds in Ramsey Canyon, skittering along the trunk of a large Emory Oak. Southeast Arizona birds are grouped in with populations that some authorities call the "Mexican Creeper," and which might actually be a different species from Brown Creeper. More study is evidently needed.

WRENS: Troglodytidae (5)

Canyon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus*—Peg was onto the wrens as we birded the picnic area at the Amerind Foundation. As we peered hopefully into the boulders a Canyon Wren was lured into view, and most of the group saw the bird at least briefly.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*—Surprisingly uncommon on the tour, only a single bird was seen, by the river during our walk in the riparian area near BLM's San Pedro House.

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*—At least some of the group had good looks at a pair of fidgety (but largely silent) Marsh Wrens among the sedges at Whitewater Draw.

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*—By far the most common wren of the trip, this mostly western species was seen and heard daily. Predictable views were had from the dining room at Casa de San Pedro each morning.

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*—This large, ebullient wren, a characteristic species of both the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts, was seen outside Kartchner Caverns as well as briefly at Casa de San Pedro. A few of the group also found the species near their hotel in Tucson.



STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (1)

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (I)—The specific name “*vulgaris*” is appropriate for European Starling, one of the most odious invasive species in North America. Thankfully not yet an overwhelming presence in much of southeast Arizona, we saw a couple of large flocks in Sierra Vista and Hereford.

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (3)

Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre*—Seen daily at Casa de San Pedro, where it was usually the first bird calling in the morning and the last at dusk. We had good looks at the species throughout the trip, the penetrating stare of its yellow eye a memorable feature.

Bendire’s Thrasher *Toxostoma bendirei*—Much more infrequent than the preceding species, and often missed on birding trips, Tom Wood knew a spot in Sulphur Springs Valley that he felt was worth checking. And good thing he did, as it was the only place where we saw this uncommon thrasher. Nice find!

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*—This species was spotted on just two days, i.e., a single bird at the Amerind Foundation and several birds in the Sulphur Springs Valley. Often common, but not on this tour.

THRUSHES: Turdidae (3)

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana*—Two bright birds were briefly seen just outside the Paton Center in Patagonia. Most of the group missed this one.

Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*—Two or possibly three silent birds were observed skulking through the streamside brush as we birded the lower reaches of Ramsey Canyon.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*—Although not especially common in southern Arizona, we didn’t anticipate seeing just a single American Robin on the entire tour! This “special individual” was located in Ramsey Canyon, not far from the Visitor Center.

SILKY-FLYCATCHERS: Ptilogonatidae (1)

Phainopepla *Phainopepla nitens*—Recorded on three separate days, i.e., in open country on the route from Bisbee to Whitewater Draw, in the Sulphur Springs Valley, and along the paved road between Casa de San Pedro and Hereford. Both black males and gray females of this taxonomically unique, crested flycatcher were seen, with most birds observed along the stretch of road that passes by the Thirsty Lizard.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (I)—Another vile interloper in North America, introduced House Sparrows were unfortunately well-established at Casa de San Pedro.

PIPITS AND WAGTAILS: Motacillidae (1)

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens*—A single, lonely bird was seen strolling at Cottonwood Tank, the large, created pond we visited (while looking for longspurs) at the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, during our last full day of the tour.

FINCHES: Fringillidae (3)

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Common and widespread, we saw House Finches each and every day. Remarkably successful for a native species.

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus*—A few birds were seen at Bob Behrstock’s place, and also at the Casa de San Pedro feeders as well as in Patagonia. Not nearly as common as the following species.

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria*—Seen every day but one, Lesser Goldfinch was a common sight on the feeders at Casa de San Pedro, Ash Canyon, and BLM’s San Pedro House near Sierra Vista.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (19)

Rufous-winged Sparrow *Peucaea carpalis* (HO)—The ‘bouncing ball’ song of this species was heard a couple times in the mesquite bosque near the Paton Center (Patagonia), but the birds were not located. A regionally endemic species, we had hoped to find this one.

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*—A daily occurrence, Chipping Sparrows were seen at many of the locations we visited.

Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri*—A few birds were spotted by Kelly and Tom Wood during our visit to Sulphur Springs Valley, affiliating with Vesper Sparrows. Not observed by most of the group.

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata*—A small flock of this species was seen moving between shrubs on the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (in from the highway a mile or so, and not far from our stop where the Pronghorns were observed).

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*—Viewed on three days, initially in the field north of Casa de San Pedro, and later as a minor component within mixed flocks around Whitewater Draw and in Sulphur Springs Valley.

Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys*—Only seen during our visit to Sulphur Springs Valley with Tom Wood, but the birds were very common there. Males were highly variable, as some (but not all) were already beginning to shift into their distinctive black-and-white breeding plumage.

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*—We first saw a few birds at the Amerind Foundation (seemed like an odd place), and then a group was seen later in Ramsey Canyon, foraging along the stream.

Yellow-eyed Junco *Junco phaeonotus*—Within the Ramsey Canyon flock of Dark-eyed Junco (above) were at least two Yellow-eyed Juncos (a resident species limited to southeast Arizona in the U.S.). Normally seen in the mountains, birds will occasionally shift to lower elevations in winter.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—Vying for the title of “most common winter sparrow in Arizona” is the White-Crowned, and our observations certainly back this up. Except for the more barren areas we visited, this species is typically the most visible songbird. We saw flocks every day.

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*—Common in eastern North America, but quite uncommon in the west, a few of us saw a single White-throated Sparrow in a brush pile at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia.

Vesper Sparrow *Pooecetes gramineus*—So was White-crowned Sparrow more common on the tour, overall, or was Vesper? Probably the former, but certainly in dry, open areas (such as near Whitewater Draw and in Sulphur Springs Valley) Vesper Sparrows were the overwhelming dominants.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*—A few birds were located at one location, along a roadside fencerow and perched on wires while we were in Sulphur Springs Valley.

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*—A single bird was seen under the willows at Whitewater Draw, as well as two birds at Cottonwood Tank on the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area.

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii*—One bird was slinking around flood debris along the San Pedro River during our hike there, and another was seen in a brush pile at the Paton Center in Patagonia.

Canyon Towhee *Melospiza fusca*—Seen on four days, this species was spotted at the Amerind Foundation, near our lodgings at Casa de San Pedro, outside Kartchner Caverns, and also in Patagonia.

Abert's Towhee *Melospiza aberti*—The most common towhee at Casa de San Pedro, we saw the species there four out of six days, often with several birds a day coming in to the feeders.

Rufous-crowned Sparrow *Aimophila ruficeps*—Only seen on rocky slopes near Montezuma Pass, by the group hiking with Peg and Kelly at Coronado National Monument on the second day of the tour.

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*—Recorded on three days, our best sighting of Green-tailed Towhee was had at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia.

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*—Our views of this species were confined to a handful of encounters with individual birds, including a pair scratching in the understory in Ramsey Canyon.



NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (6)

Note: *The two meadowlark species are very similar, and in the absence of vocalization can be hard to distinguish. Field identifications of Eastern and Western Meadowlarks in areas where their geographic ranges overlap (as in southeast Arizona), and the birds don't happen to be singing, is often problematic.*

Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta*—Since Western only winters in southeast Arizona, the large congregations of (presumably migratory) meadowlarks seen here in January are reportedly more apt to be this species. We saw several tight flocks of 20-40 birds sitting in mesquite on the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, which we called Western Meadowlark. We admittedly had limited looks at their tail feathers, but it seemed that only the outermost feathers were white.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*—Eastern Meadowlark (our birds are a distinctive subspecies often called "Lilian's Meadowlark") is a full-year resident in southeast Arizona, and is said to flock less in winter than Western. Individual birds seen feeding in Sulphur Springs Valley, with tail feathers (as seen in flight) that were mostly white throughout, were called Eastern Meadowlark (Tom Wood agreed).

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*—Seen most days of the tour, especially at Whitewater Draw, but also at the Amerind Foundation and flying overhead at Casa de San Pedro.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*—One bird was seen on a wire along the road near Elfrida, before we broke for lunch at the café.

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*—A couple Brewer's Blackbirds were observed pecking along the gravel walkway at Whitewater Draw on our second day there.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*—Seen once, flying overhead during our drive up to Kartchner Caverns, and that was it. Surprisingly uncommon during the tour, possibly this species shifts to lower elevations (like around Tucson) during the winter months.

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (4)

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata*—A single bird was seen at Casa de San Pedro, near the back feeders, and then we had close looks at another one (eating an orange, appropriately enough) at the Paton Center in Patagonia.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*—Several birds were seen on the two days we visited Whitewater Draw. We had nice views of two silent males perched up in the rushes just off shore. This area is at the very northern edge of the winter range for the species.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata*—Fairly common throughout the tour, though not many were seen on any given day. Easy to find at Casa de San Pedro most mornings. Most were the "Myrtle" subspecies.

Painted Redstart *Myioborus pictus* (HO)—The call of this species was heard very briefly in Ramsey Canyon during our morning walk there, but the birds were never seen.

CARDINAL-GROSBEAKS: Cardinalidae (4)

Northern (or Arizona) Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis superbus*—Seen every day of the tour, although most close-up sightings were had right at our lodgings, on the feeders and in the nearby trees and shrubs. This subspecies, occurring from southeast California and Arizona to adjacent Sonora, is larger and has a taller and bushier crest, than eastern U.S. birds. Both males and females were abundant.

Pyrrhuloxia *Cardinalis sinuatus*—Nearly as common as their cousin, the Northern Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxias are often less visible due to their more cautious and retiring nature. Best views were at the Casa de San Pedro feeders, and at Bob Behrstock's home during our pizza lunch.

Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena*—Scattered individuals were seen over four days, with particularly nice views at Whitewater Draw and at the Paton Center.

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*—A single male bird was seen by a few of the group, moving through the lower branches of trees at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia. A gorgeous species.

Mammals (8 species)

Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana*—Two herds (10-20 each) with males and females were seen grazing on the south end of the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. Fastest land mammal in North America.

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*—The animals we saw, representing a diminutive subspecies of White-tailed Deer found in Arizona, New Mexico, and Sonora, are locally called Coues Deer. We ran across these most days of the tour, with some sightings very close to our lodgings at Casa de San Pedro.

Coyote *Canis latrans*—One was seen from a distance by a few of the group, at the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area.

White-nosed Coati *Nasua narica*—It was truly a celebrated encounter, when Kelly, Beth, Susan, and John ran across a group of Coatis (along with some turkeys) nonchalantly crossing the road just outside the Ramsey Canyon Preserve. You just never know when you'll be at the right place at the right time!

Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii*—A small group was seen munching away near the back of the main building at Casa de San Pedro. Probably seen on multiple days, but for some reason only officially recorded for our last day of the tour.

Antelope Jackrabbit *Lepus alleni*—Several loping jackrabbits were seen out in the open in Sulphur Springs Valley, at the same location where we chased the elusive bevy of Scaled Quail.

Rock Squirrel *Otospermophilus variegatus*—A few of these were seen scampering about the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary, shamelessly pilfering from the seed feeders.

Arizona Gray Squirrel *Sciurus arizonensis*—This was the bushy-tailed squirrel we saw in the trees and understory in Ramsey Canyon, and later running around at the Paton Center in Patagonia. Too cute for words.



Reptiles (2 species)

Yarrow's Spiny Lizard *Sceloporus jarrovii*—One was seen sitting on a sunny rock at the end of our hike in Ramsey Canyon, near the Visitor Center.

Slevin's Bunchgrass Lizard *Sceloporus slevini*—A small very lizard, reported by John to be hanging out and catching some rays by the pit toilet at Whitewater Draw. Related to the much larger spiny lizard group, this poorly known species barely crosses over from Mexico. In the U.S. it is restricted to a few of the "Sky Island" mountain ranges and nearby valleys.

Thirsty Lizard—A singular reptile of questionable origin, its habitat was spotted on the two days we drove out to Whitewater Draw and Sulphur Springs Valley. Stopping for some late afternoon field work at this site was given strong consideration by the group, but ultimately we had to postpone this for another time.

Photos (Bob Meinke)

Female Anna's Hummingbird; Least Sandpiper; White-breasted Nuthatch; Vesper Sparrow; Arizona Gray Squirrel