

Arizona Sky Island Winter Birding

With Naturalist Journeys | Species List



January 9 – 15, 2022

With guides Mason Flint, Richard Fray (Tucson/Green Valley area), and Peg Abbott and participants Catherine, Christy, David, Rebecca, Karen, Leah, Maleyne, Michael, Gary, and Patricia

(G) = Seen by Guide Only
(I) = Introduced
(HO) = Heard only



Vermilion Flycatcher by David Friedman

Summary: 121 species of birds and 5 species of mammals were seen on this winter trip.

eBird Trip Report: [AZSE JAN 22 - eBird Trip Report](#)

BIRDS (121 species recorded):

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*— We saw a dozen of these unique ducks at the Palo Duro Ponds near Nogales.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*— A flock of 50-60 were seen on the far side of the large pond at Whitewater Draw. Despite our best efforts, we were unable to pick out any Ross's Goose mixed with the flock.

Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera*— One or two seen at Whitewater Draw in the smaller pond near the entrance during two of our visits.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*— One of the more common duck species, seen at Amado WTP, Palo Duro Ponds, and at Whitewater Draw.

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*— About a dozen at the Palo Duro Ponds near Nogales and a handful at Whitewater Draw.

American Wigeon *Mareca americana*— Good numbers at the Canoa Ranch Conservation Park, Palo Duro Ponds, and at Whitewater Draw.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*— Scattered small groups (males and females) in a few locations. We saw a few darker birds but no confirmed Mexican Duck sightings.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*— We saw this elegant duck at Canoa Ranch Conservation Park, Palo Duro Ponds, and Whitewater Draw.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*— Good numbers of these tiny ducks at Whitewater Draw.

Canvasback *Aythya valisineria* – We saw more than two dozen at Canoa Ranch Conservation Park and a handful at Palo Duro Ponds where we compared them to nearby Redhead.

Redhead *Aythya americana*— A handful at Canoa Ranch Conservation Park and Palo Duro Ponds.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*— Almost a dozen at Amado WTP and smaller numbers at Palo Duro Ponds and Whitewater Draw.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*— At least two birds at Palo Duro Ponds.

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola* – Just a couple each at Amado WTP and Canoa Ranch Conservation Park. A few in the group noted rough similarities to nearby Ruddy Duck.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyjura jamaicensis* – Almost a dozen each at Amado WTP and Canoa Ranch Conservation Park.

NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae

Scaled Quail *Callipepla squamata*— We were surprised to see 16 on Lower Elgin Road. This sighting was unusual enough that the eBird reviewer required us to provide documentation.

Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii* – We saw at least three at the Amado Territory Ranch just before sunset after a long day of birding.



Scaled Quail by Leah Moffatt

PARTRIDGES AND PHEASANTS: Phasianidae

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*— More than a dozen were grazing under the feeders at Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

GREBES: Podicipedidae

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* – Surprisingly, we only saw 1 at Whitewater Draw but we may have missed others because we were distracted by so many ducks.

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* - One each at Canoa Ranch Conservation Park and Whitewater Draw.

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* (I)— We saw a handful at Madera Highlands Park but might have missed others mixed in among the doves at other locations.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (I)— We saw at least a few in multiple locations including Canoa Ranch Conservation Park, Santa Gertrudis Lane, and Casa de San Pedro.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*—One at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia.

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*— A few of us saw one by the pond near the entrance at Whitewater Draw during our first visit.

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti* - Peg and one or two of us saw this uncommon dove in the same location as the Common Ground-Dove at Whitewater Draw.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*— This is a dove seen on multiple days that we may have under-counted. We saw individuals and small numbers in multiple locations including Desert Meadows Park, Santa Gertrudis Lane, and Casa de San Pedro.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*— Probably the most common dove, seen every day in multiple locations.

CUCKOOS: Cuculidae

Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus*— We caught glimpses of this charismatic bird near the old schoolhouse in the Sulphur Springs Valley and some hear another at Casa de San Pedro.

HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae

Rivoli's Hummingbird *Eugenes fulgens* – We saw this one or two of this large hummingbird at Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon, Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary, and Ramsey Canyon.

Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna* – Individuals at multiple locations including Paton Center for Hummingbirds, Casa de San Pedro, Bob Behrstock's house, Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary, and Ramsey Canyon.

Costa's Hummingbird *Calypte costae* – We were treated to good looks at this small hummingbird at Desert Meadows Park and Canoa Ranch Conservation Park.

Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cyananthus latirostris* – Most of us caught glimpses of at Desert Meadows Park and all had great, close-up looks at Paton Center for Hummingbirds.

Violet-crowned Hummingbird *Amazilia violiceps* – A very cooperative bird posed for us at Paton Center for Hummingbirds.

RAILS AND ALLIES: Rallidae

Sora *Porzana carolina*— (HO) A few of us heard one respond to Mason's clapping at the pond near the entrance at Whitewater Draw.

American Coot *Fulica americana*— Many encountered in ponds throughout the week.

CRANES: Gruidae

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*— Thousands seen during three stops at Whitewater Draw. Cathie Sandell pointed out how to distinguish the Greater and Lesser subspecies near the entrance road.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*—Singles and small numbers at Palo Duro Ponds and Whitewater Draw.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*— Large numbers provided good views at Whitewater Draw.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*— Small flocks foraging in the large pond during two of our visits to Whitewater Draw.

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*— A few of us heard one winnowing during one late afternoon stop at Whitewater Draw.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*— A few feeding along the path by the large pond at Whitewater Draw.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*— Seen flying during our first stop at Whitewater Draw.

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*—Some of us caught a glimpse of one along the road as we left the Palo Duro Ponds.

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*— Only confirmed sightings were two soaring high at the Palo Duro Ponds.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*— Just a few seen all week including one near Santa Rita Lodge, two at Santa Gertrudis Lane, and another at the Palo Duro Ponds.

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus*— Seen at a few locations including Canoa Ranch Conservation Park, Whitewater Draw, and Casa de San Pedro. We may have undercounted this bird!

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*—Good looks at Canoa Ranch Conservation Park and one "guarding" the feeders at Amado Territory Ranch.

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*— One confirmed sighting seen by some in the group at Casa de San Pedro.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* – By far the most common raptor, seen in multiple locations during the trip. In the Sulphur Springs Valley, they seemed to be one perched on every 2-3 utilities poles.

Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis* – Distant but satisfying views of this large buteo tussling with a Red-tailed Hawk during our drive through the agricultural fields in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

OWLS: Strigidae

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*— Some in the group hear two hooting at night while at Casa de San Pedro but all had amazing views of the bird perched near the road during our drive in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

WOODPECKERS: Picidae

Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis* – Individuals at Amada Territory Inn and Ramsey Canyon.

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus* – More than a dozen of this clown-faced woodpecker at Santa Rita Lodge, and others at Bob Behrstock's house and Ramsey Canyon.

Gila Woodpecker *Melanerpes uropygialis* – The most common woodpecker in southern Arizona. Seen and heard every day, often in large numbers.

Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Dryobates scalaris*— Seen in several locations including Santa Gertrudis Lane, Paton Center for Hummingbirds, and Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary.

Arizona Woodpecker *Picoides arizonae* – We were fortunate to see this rare species twice, once at Santa Rita Lodge and again at Ramsey Canyon. This, the only brown-backed woodpecker in the U.S., is mostly a Mexican species that barely crosses the border into southeast Arizona.

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus* – Seen in ones or twos in a few locations including Casa de San Pedro and Ramsey Canyon.

Gilded Flicker *Colaptes chrysoides* – Thanks to Richard we all got good looks at Tucson Mountain Park (Gates Pass), our only stop with Saguaros, their preferred habitat.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*— Good numbers on multiple days including more than a dozen during our drive through the agricultural fields in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*— One at Madera Highlands Park.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*— One brief fly-by when we were standing by the stream at Santa Gertrudis Lane.

Prairie Falcon *Falco mexicanus* – At least some in the group got brief looks at this large falcon with “hairy armpits” near the entrance to Whitewater Draw.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*— Seen perched and flycatching close to water level in several locations including Amado WTP, Whitewater Draw, and along the San Pedro River near the Bed & Breakfast.

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* – Seen almost every day, flycatching from posts and fences near open fields.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*— We saw this stunning flycatcher in a few locations with great, close-up looks at Whitewater Draw.

Cassin's Kingbird *Tyrannus vociferans* – We got good looks at Madera Highlands Park where we were able to see the small white throat patch offset by the gray head and breast.

VIREOS: Vireonidae

Hutton's Vireo *Vireo huttoni*—We saw three or four during our visit to Ramsey Canyon where we were able to compare them to similar Ruby-crowned Kinglets nearby.

SHRIKES: Laniidae

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*—Large numbers providing fleeting looks during our drive in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae

Mexican Jay *Aphelocoma wollweberi*—Another mostly-Mexican species, we saw more than a dozen at the feeders at Santa Rita Lodge and a few at Bob Behrstock's house.

Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucus*— After seeing many Common Raven and debating possible Chihuahuan sightings, we finally got fairly looks at a large group of this difficult-to-identify species in an agricultural field in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* – Seen in good numbers at multiple locations.

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae

Bridled Titmouse *Baeolophus wollweberi* – We had good looks at this cute, charismatic bird in the oaks at Santa Rita Lodge, Bob Behrstock's house, Ash Canyon, and Ramsey Canyon.



Bridled Titmouse by David Friedman

PENDULINE TITS: Remizidae

Verdin *Auriparus flaviceps*—We got looks at this desert bird at Tucson Mountain Park (Gates Pass) and Desert Meadows Park during our first two days.

LARKS: Alaudidae

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* – Surprisingly difficult to find this year, we saw just a handful of this usually common species during our drive on Lower Elgin Road after we met up with Peg.

LONG-TAILED TITS: Aegithalidae

Bushtit *Psaltiriparus minimus* – We saw a nice flock of this tiny species that's almost never seen solo during our lunch at Bob Behrstock's house.

KINGLETS: Regulidae

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*—We saw a few of this common winter resident in a few locations, usually in mixed flocks.

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis* – Another bird often seen in mixed flocks, we had good views at Santa Rita Lodge, Paton Center for Hummingbirds, and Ramsey Canyon.

GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae

Black-tailed Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila melanura*—Along with Gilded Flicker, this was another desert species that Richard helped find in the Saguaro zone at Tucson Mountain Park (Gates Pass) on our first day.

WRENS: Troglodytidae

Rock wren *Salpinctes obsoletus* – A few in the group got distant glimpses of this aptly named wren (they like rocks!) at Tucson Mountain Park (Gates Pass).

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*—We got better looks at this drab wren at Tucson Mountain Park (Gates Pass) and again at Casa de San Pedro.

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*— We had fleeting glimpse of this often noisy but elusive bird at Whitewater Draw.

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*—Seen near the feeders at Santa Rita Lodge and again at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary.

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*— Seen by everyone in the group at Tucson Mountain Park (Gates Pass) and by some in the group at Casa de San Pedro.

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (I)—We saw a large flock of this invasive (but surprisingly attractive) species one morning at the Amado Territory Ranch and likely missed others during the trip.

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae

Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre*— Commonly heard signing their lovely musical song and seen most days.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*—Seen in ones or twos during the week at Casa de San Pedro, Ramsey Canyon, and in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

THRUSHES: Turdidae

Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides*—Surprisingly our only bluebird during the trip, we saw a few on Lower Elgin Road in the field near where we saw the Scaled Quail.

Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus* – One quick look at this shy species at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds.

SILKY-FLYCATCHERS

Phainopepla *Phainopepla nitens* – We had good looks at this most northerly species in the small family of “silky flycatchers” that includes only four species.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (I)— Another introduced species common in many North American cities, we saw several at Casa de San Pedro and individuals elsewhere.

PIPITS AND WAGTAILS: Motacillidae

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens* – We saw a single bird foraging near Least Sandpiper in the mostly dried pond inside the path at Whitewater Draw.

FINCHES: Fringillidae

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus* – Common and seen most days in a variety of habitats.

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria*— The most common finch during our trip, we saw many at Madera Highlands Park, Santa Rita Lodge, and Ransey Canyon.

Lawrence’s Goldfinch *Spinus lawrencei* – During our first few days west of the Santa Rita Mountains we had good looks and large numbers of this erratic wanderer that mainly breeds in California and winters in Baja and southeast Arizona.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Emberizidae

Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum* – A few of us had distant, unsatisfying looks at this small, flat-headed sparrow early one morning at Casa de San Pedro.

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerine* – Seen on four days including a dozen one morning at Casa de San Pedro.

Brewer’s Sparrow *Spizella breweri* – We saw several of this sparrow with few field marks in grassy areas at Canoa Ranch Conservation Park, Whitewater Draw, Casa de San Pedro and other stops.

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata* – We had great looks at this stunning sparrow during our first stop at Tucson Mountain Park (Gates Pass) and again near the feeders at Casa de San Pedro.

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus* – We saw this sparrow with its striking head pattern in a few spots with large numbers in the fields by Casa de San Pedro.

Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys* – Despite fairly large numbers, we had frustratingly fleeting glimpse of flocks of this distinctive sparrow during our drive in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* – The dearth of juncos – Dark-eyed and Yellow-eyed – during the trip was notable. A few of us saw one individual of this often-common species at Bob Behrstock's house.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* – Seen in good numbers on several days including many less distinctive immature birds with brown crown stripes.

Vesper Sparrow *Pooecetes gramineus* – Possibly more common than White-crowned, at least in the fields at Casa de San Pedro where we had as many as 24 one morning.

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia* – We saw just a few of this musical species at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds and Whitewater Draw. We likely missed others.

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii* – Great views of this small, grayish sparrow in multiple locations including Canoa Ranch Conservation Park, Paton Center for Hummingbirds, Whitewater Draw, and Casa de San Pedro.

Canyon Towhee *Melospiza fusca* – Another species seen at our first stop at Tucson Mountain Park (Gates Pass) and again at Casa de San Pedro.

Abert's Towhee *Melospiza aberti* – We saw this large, blackish-faced sparrow at Desert Meadows Park, Santa Gertrudis Lane, and Casa de San Pedro.

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo chlorurus* – Seen on two days with our best looks at this large sparrow with rufous cap at Canoa Ranch Conservation Park.

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus* – Just one at Bob Behrstock's house.

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae

Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus* – Along with the return of the Sandhill Cranes at dusk, the spectacle of the huge flocks of Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Whitewater Draw was one of the highlights of the tour.

Note: *Western and Eastern Meadowlark are very similar. In the absence of vocalization, they can be difficult to distinguish in areas where their ranges overlap. In my eBird lists I defaulted to "Meadowlark sp" except in places where I felt confident in the ID, noted below.*

Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta* – Large congregations of Meadowlarks seen in January in southeast Arizona are more likely to be Western. We had good numbers and reasonable looks at the Palo Duro Ponds near Nogales with limited white in the tail that seemed good for Western.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna* – Eastern Meadowlark seen in southeast Arizona belong to a distinct population ("Lillian's" Meadowlark). At Casa de San Pedro, some of us were fortunate to see several vocalizing (high-pitched, clear whistles) and in flight with noticeably more white on their tail feathers that confirmed them as Eastern.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* – This is another species that we likely under-counted, particularly at Whitewater Draw where the huge numbers of Yellow-headed Blackbird made picking them out more difficult. There were several at the Palo Duro Ponds and likely many more at Whitewater.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater* – One at the Amado WTP and a flock of 5 or 6 at the Amado Territory Ranch.

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* – A few of us saw one sneaky bird flitting in the cattails at Whitewater Draw.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata* – We saw good numbers on several days but the large numbers at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary (24 on my eBird checklist) was notable.

Townsend's Warbler *Setophaga townsendi* – One during our walk up Ramsey Canyon.

CARDINAL-GROSBEAKS: Cardinalidae

Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava* – This species breeds in southeastern California, Arizona, New Mexico and southwest Texas but most winter south of the U.S. We were lucky to see a pair near the feeders at Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*— Somewhat surprisingly, we saw just one at Casa de San Pedro before we drove back to Tucson for our flights home.

Pyrrhuloxia *Cardinalis sinuatus*— Good looks at this Northern Cardinal relative at Casa de San Pedro and Whitewater Draw.

Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena*— At least five at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds.

MAMMALS (5 species recorded):

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus* – Several on our drive up to Ramsey Canyon.

Coyote *Canis latrans* – Gary and Patricia saw one hunting at the Palo Duro Ponds near Nagoles. Several of us heard them yelping at night at the Amado Territory Ranch and Casa de San Pedro.

Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii* - Individuals here and there including near Canoa Ranch Conservation Park and Casa de San Pedro.

Arizona Gray Squirrel *Sciurus arizonensis* – This bushy-tailed squirrel was seen at the Santa Rita Lodge, Ramsey Canyon, and Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary.

Collared Peccary (aka Javalina) *Tayassu tajacu* – We saw a small “squadron” at the Amado Territory Ranch and another (cow-peccary) near Casa de Pedro.