

Utah: Birding & National Parks | Species List

May 16 – 24, 2022 | with Naturalist Journeys



With guides: Dave Mehlman and Kelly Vandenheuvel, and participants: Connie, Edith, Gary, Glenn-Marie, Jackie, Jean, Patricia, Raj, and Wayne

Compiled by Dave Mehlman

Summary: This tour featured a very nice combination of spectacular canyon country scenery in some of our most well-known national parks and birding and wildlife-watching at and in between these places. The weather varied greatly depending on location, elevation, and the particular day, with temperature extremes during the trip ranging from 25 to 105° F! Although there were many highlights (and many life birds!), a few to mention (in taxonomic order) include a breeding plumaged Common Loon at Jackson Flat Reservoir, some close-range observations of the unique powder blue-colored bill of male Ruddy Ducks, Pinyon Jays feeding on tent caterpillars, a Brown-headed Nuthatch nest, and Yellow Warblers galore. On the flip side, it was very curious and notable the lack of raptors (only 2 species and very few individuals) and wrens.

(GO) = Found by guides only

(I) = introduced

BIRDS (101 species recorded, of which 6 were seen by guides only):

LOONS: Gaviidae (1)

Common Loon *Gavia immer*—A breeding plumaged bird seen by all at Jackson Flat Reservoir on the first visit

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (9)

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*—Found on 4 days of the tour in many places with suitable water bodies; at a few places, adult pairs were with groups of goslings.

Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera*—One male seen on the second visit to Jackson Flat Reservoir

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*—Found on both visits to Jackson Flat Reservoir

American Wigeon *Mareca americana*—Found on the second visit to Jackson Flat Reservoir

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*—The most frequently encountered waterfowl species, these were found on 5 days at most suitable sites with bodies of water

Redhead *Aythya americana*—Found by Dave on the first visit and then by the group on the second visit to Jackson Flat Reservoir

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*—Found on both visits to Jackson Flat Reservoir

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*—(GO) Found by Dave with the scope at Jackson Flat Reservoir

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*—One male in the pond at Ruby's Inn (Bryce Canyon City) on 2 days and several individuals in the pond behind Boulder Mountain Lodge

NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae (1)

Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii*—Found at Grafton

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS AND ALLIES: Phasianidae (1)

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*—Found on 3 days, probably best at Capitol Reef National Park

GREBES: Podicipedidae (3)

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*—Found on both visits to Jackson Flat Reservoir

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*—Found with the aid of the scope on both visits to Jackson Flat Reservoir

Western/Clark's Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis/clarkii*—One found at a distance at Jackson Flat Reservoir on the second visit; too far to separate the two species

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (3)

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* (1)—Seen in Las Vegas when departing for Springdale!

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (1)—Found on at least 4 days of the tour when in lower elevation towns

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*—Seen at Jackson Flat Reservoir on the second visit

SWIFTS: Apodidae (1)

White-throated Swift *Aeronautes saxatalis*—Found on 4 days of the trip, often seen at canyon sites while flying past, sometimes at or below eye level

HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (1)

Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri*—Found on 3 days at various sites with feeders

RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (1)

American Coot *Fulica americana*—Found on 4 days at most sites with appropriate water bodies, such as Jackson Flat Reservoir

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (2)

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*—Several birds observed at a distance foraging at the edge of Jackson Flat Reservoir on the first visit

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*—A group of 4 seen standing in the water near the lunch pavilion at Jackson Flat Reservoir on the first visit

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (1)

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*—(GO) Only seen by Dave on the last morning at Ruby's Inn

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (2)

Phalarope spp.—A very distant flock of phalaropes seen out on the water at Jackson Flat Reservoir on the first visit; too distant to tell if Wilson's or Red-necked or both

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*—By far the most numerous and frequently seen shorebird of the tour, it was present around the edges of most lakes we visited; seen on 5 days, including once in the Fremont River at Capitol Reef National Park on a rock

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (2)

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*—One found on the shore at Jackson Flat Reservoir on the second visit

California Gull *Larus californicus*—Seen hanging out by the boat ramp on the first visit to Jackson Flat Reservoir

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (1)

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*—Several seen perched in trees on the first visit to Jackson Flat Reservoir

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (2)

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*—Seen by Dave in the Virgin River at Zion National Park and again by the entire group at Grafton, where many individuals were flying overhead, probably from a heronry
Great Egret *Ardea alba*—One seen at a distance with the scope on the first visit to Jackson Flat Reservoir

IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae (1)

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*—Good sized flocks seen on both visits to Jackson Flat Reservoir; on the second day the flock was feeding in an irrigated hay field by the entrance road

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (1)

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*—Found on 6 days at many sites while soaring

HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (1)

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*—Seen on 2 days, first at Zion National Park and then again at Grafton

WOODPECKERS: Picidae (2)

Hairy Woodpecker *Dryobates villosus*—One flew by the group at Grafton

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*—Several individuals put on quite a show, including sitting on the ground, at Fruita in Capitol Reef National Park

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (1)

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*—One seen at Grafton

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (9)

Western Wood Pewee *Contopus sordidulus*—Seen once at Bryce Canyon and again at Calf Creek Recreation Area

Hammond's Flycatcher *Empidonax hammondi*—One found during the walk on the interpretive trail at Red Canyon Visitor Center

Cordilleran Flycatcher *Empidonax occidentalis*—A very nice view of this difficult to identify species was had at Fruita in the picnic area

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*—Seen along the Virgin River in Zion National Park

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya*—Seen at Grafton and at Jackson Flat Reservoir

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*—Male and female seen at Grafton

Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens*—Seen on two days in various parts of Zion National Park

Cassin's Kingbird *Tyrannus vociferans*—(GO) One seen flying at Grafton by Dave

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis*—Seen on 5 days at several sites

VIREOS: Vireonidae (2)

Plumbeous Vireo *Vireo plumbeus*—Two well observed foraging in cottonwoods in Capitol Reef National Park at the Petroglyphs stop

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*—Found at Zion National Park on the walk between stops along the Virgin River

SHRIKES: Laniidae (1)

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*—One nicely perching bird at the entrance to the upper Grand Wash trailhead in Capitol Reef National Park

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (6)

Pinyon Jay *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*—Seen on 2 days, first at the La Quinta in Springdale and then again at Fruita, where a large flock was feeding on tent caterpillars in the cottonwoods

Steller's Jay *Cyanocitta stelleri*—Found on 3 days at high elevations at the North Rim of Grand Canyon and in Bryce Canyon

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay *Aphelocoma woodhouseii*—Seen once by Dave in Sprindale by the La Quinta, by most of the group at the Stone Hearth Grille in Tropic, and finally at Calf Creek Recreation Area
Black-billed Magpie *Pica hudsonia*—Seen on 2 days at Boulder Mountain Lodge and at Capitol Reef Resort
Clark's Nutcracker *Nucifraga columbiana*—Seen on 2 days at Bryce when along the rim
Common Raven *Corvus corax*—Found on all 7 days of the trip, pretty much at every site visited

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (1)

Mountain Chickadee *Poecile gambeli*—Seen on the Bristlecone Loop trail hike at Bryce Canyon

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (4)

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*—(GO) Seen by Dave flying over the pond at Ruby's Inn on the first evening there

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina*—Found on 5 days of the tour at most higher elevation sites

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*—Found on all three days near Ruby's Inn

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*—(GO) Seen by Dave while driving to Kanab from Springdale

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (2)

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*—Seen once by Dave near the east entrance to Zion and by the group on the Bristlecone Loop trail at Bryce

Pygmy Nuthatch *Sitta pygmaea*—One of the stars of the trip, Raj found a nest on the North Rim and the group saw it again on the Mossy Cave hike at Bryce

GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae (1)

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Polioptila caerulea*—Seen twice during our time at Capitol Reef National Park

WRENS: Troglodytidae (2)

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*—Encountered a few times when in Zion National Park

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*—One heard singing at Grafton

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (1)

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (1)—Found on 3 days of the tour when in towns or near human habitation

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (1)

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*—Seen at Grafton

THRUSHES: Turdidae (3)

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana*—Found on 4 days of the tour in Zion, Grafton, and Bryce Canyon

Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi*—A pair very well seen by some in the group when drinking from a leaky water pipe at Bryce Canyon

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*—Found on every day of the tour at most sites, often on grass lawns near our hotels

SILKY-FLYCATCHERS: Ptiliogonatidae (1)

Phainopepla *Phainopepla nitens*—Several individuals of both sexes seen well at Grafton

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (1)—Found on 6 days of the tour in and near towns

FINCHES: Fringillidae (4)

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Found on 4 days of the tour, generally in or near towns at lower elevations

Cassin's Finch *Haemorhous cassinii*—Both sexes observed at close range at Jacob Lake Inn

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus*—Found twice, first at Jacob Lake Inn and again at Ruby's Inn (not sure about the connection between Inns and Siskins, but we'll investigate!)

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria*—Found at Zion on 2 days, but by far the best viewing was at the feeder at Calf Creek Recreation Area

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (8)

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*—This normally quite common species was only found at the rest stop near the east entrance to Zion on the way out of the park

Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri*—Found in the sagebrush at Jackson Lake Reservoir on both visits

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*—Excellent views of a perching bird at Grafton

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*—Several individuals of the Gray-headed form seen at the North Rim, Grand Canyon National Park

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—Seen at Calf Creek Recreation Area

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*—Decent views of this sparrow were had along the Virgin River at Zion

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo chlorurus*—Seen by most of the group on the ground at Bryce Canyon

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*—Seen on one day in Zion, in Bryce, and at Calf Creek Recreation Area

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: Icteriidae (1)

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*—This "former warbler" was found at Calf Creek Recreation Area and at Capitol Reef National Park

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (7)

Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*—Seen on all days at Ruby's Inn by the lake and at the pond behind Boulder Mountain Lodge

Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta*—Seen and heard at Capitol Reef Resort

Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii*—A group favorite, these were seen on 4 days at several sites with cottonwood riparian habitat

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*—Found on 3 days in appropriate wetland habitat, such as at Jackson Flat Reservoir and by the lake at Ruby's Inn

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*—Seen on 2 days at Calf Creek Recreation area and in Capitol Reef National Park

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*—Seen very well by the group on all the days at Ruby's Inn

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*—Found at Jackson Flat Reservoir on the first visit

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (6)

Lucy's Warbler *Leiothlypis luciae*—Seen at Grafton

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*—(GO) Found by Dave on one morning at Ruby's Inn

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*—By far are most regularly encountered warbler, these were seen on 6 days of the tour at pretty much every site with tall cottonwoods

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata*—Individuals of the Audubon's form were seen on 2 days at high elevation forested sites at the North Rim and Bryce Canyon

Grace's Warbler *Setophaga graciae*—This lovely warbler of the Ponderosa Pine was found near the east entrance to Zion and at Bryce Canyon

Black-throated Gray Warbler *Setophaga nigrescens*—Only found on 1 day, but 2 times that day, at stops on the way to the east entrance to Zion; a true pinyon-juniper habitat specialist

CARDINAL, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (3)

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*—Found on the first 2 days of the tour, first in Zion National Park while hiking along the Virgin River, and then again at Grafton

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana*—Found on 4 days of the tour, probably a combination of breeding birds and migrants, at Grafton, Jacob Lake Inn, Cannonville, and Capitol Reef Resort

Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus*—Found on 3 days of the tour, first at Zion and again at Cannonville and in Capitol Reef National Park

MAMMALS (11 species recorded):

Bighorn Sheep *Ovis canadensis*—A small group seen on the side of the road when leaving Zion through the east entrance

Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus*—Found on 3 days of the tour at several sites, generally at slightly lower elevations and many times while driving

Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii*—The common “bunny rabbit” of the tour, these were seen on several days at a few sites

Utah Prairie Dog *Cynomys parvidens*—Well seen at an established colony inside Bryce Canyon National Park

Yellow-bellied Marmot *Marmota flaviventris*—Found at Fruita in Capitol Reef National Park

White-tailed Antelope Squirrel *Ammospermophilus leucurus*—Seen in Grand Wash at Capitol Reef National Park

Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel *Callospermophilus lateralis*—Observed regularly at Bryce Canyon

Rock Squirrel *Otospermophilus variegatus*—Found on 3 days of the tour, they were most readily seen (and quite tame) in Zion National Park

Uinta Chipmunk *Neotamias umbrinus*—The common and regularly seen small rodent at Bryce Canyon

Hopi Chipmunk *Neotamias rufus*—Several of these were running around the rocks and feeding under the feeder at Calf Creek Recreation Area

Muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*—One seen in the lake at Ruby’s Inn

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (4 species recorded):

Common Side-blotched Lizard *Uta stansburiana*—Seen well and photographed on the Grand Wash hike in Capitol Reef National Park

Common Sagebrush Lizard *Sceloporus graciosus*—One photographed by Dave at Grand Canyon National Park, North Rim

Yellow-backed Spiny Lizard *Sceloporus uniformis*—One seen on a tree at Grafton

Canyon Tree Frog *Dryophytes arenicolor*—Several of these were observed sitting on a rock at the Middle Emerald Pool, Zion National Park

LOCATIONS AND NOTES:

Day 1: May 17, 2022: Springdale, Zion National Park (Grotto, Zion Lodge, Riverside Trail, Emerald Pools, Big Bend)

Day 2: May 18, 2022: Springdale, Grafton, Zion East Entrance, Checkerboard Mesa, Jackson Flat Reservoir, Kanab

Day 3: May 19, 2022: North Rim, Grand Canyon National Park, Jacob Lake Inn

Day 4: May 20, 2022: Jackson Flat Reservoir; Red Canyon Visitor Center, Dixie National Forest; Bryce Canyon National Park (Sunset and Sunrise Points); Ruby’s Inn

Day 5: May 21, 2022: Ruby’s Inn, Mossy Cave, Bryce Canyon National Park, Tropic

Day 6: May 22, 2022: Ruby’s Inn; Tropic; Cannonville Visitor Center, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument; Escalante Interagency Visitor Center; Boulder Mountain Lodge; Calf Creek Recreation Area; Capitol Reef Resort, Torrey

Day 7: May 23, 2022: Capitol Reef Resort, Capitol Reef National Park (Petroglyphs, Grand Wash, Fruita, Scenic Drive)