

# Texas' Big Bend | Species List

April 22 – 29, 2022 | with Naturalist Journeys



**With guides Dave Mehlman and Michael Good and participants:  
Betsy, Gene, Hal, Jon, Kate, Marcia, Midge, Phil, Ruth, and Steve**

Compiled by Dave Mehlman and Michael Good

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

(GO) = Found by guides only

(I) = Introduced

<https://ebird.org/me/tripreport/50913>

**BIRDS (140 species recorded, of which 2 were heard only and 4 were seen by guides only):**

## **DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae (3)**

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*—Found by the early birding team at Balmorhea Lake

**Mexican Duck** *Anas diazi*—A good number of individuals seen at the Marfa Settling Ponds on the last full day

**Blue-winged Teal** *Spatula discors*—Found at Balmorhea Lake and again at The Post

## **NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae (2)**

**Scaled Quail** *Callipepla squamata*—A small flock seen from the road on the drive into The Post

**Gambel's Quail** *Callipepla gambelii*—Found by the early birding team at Balmorhea Lake

## **GREBES: Podicipedidae (3)**

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*— Found by the early birding team at Balmorhea Lake

**Western Grebe** *Aechmophorus occidentalis*— Found by the early birding team at Balmorhea Lake

**Clark's Grebe** *Aechmophorus clarkii*— Found by the early birding team at Balmorhea Lake

## **PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (6)**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* (I)—Seen in El Paso and Marfa

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* (I)—Found on 4 days of the tour in several of the towns visited

**Inca Dove** *Columbina inca*—Found on both visits to Gage Gardens

**Common Ground-Dove** *Columbina passerina*—One flushed from the road in the Rio Grande Village Campground when on our way to the Nature Trail. Considered a rare species by eBird here.

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica*—Found on 4 days at several sites

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*— Found on 4 days at several sites

## **CUCKOOS: Cuculidae (1)**

**Greater Roadrunner** *Geococcyx californianus*—Always a favorite, seen on 3 days in Study Butte and in the Chisos Basin

## **NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae (1)**

**Lesser Nighthawk** *Chordeiles acutipennis*—One seen flying while in Davis Mountains State Park watching the Elf Owl

**SWIFTS: Apodidae (2)**

**White-throated Swift** *Aeronautes saxatalis*—Found and photographed at Rio Grande Village Nature Trail

**Chimney Swift** *Chaetura pelagica*—Seen flying above Santa Elena Canyon by some in the group

**HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (3)**

**Lucifer Hummingbird** *Calothorax lucifer*—Well seen at Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Black-chinned Hummingbird** *Archilochus alexandri*—Found on 3 days at Davis Mountains State Park and Gage Gardens

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird** *Selasphorus platycercus*—Several seen during the Chisos Mountains hike

**RAILS, COOTS, AND ALLIES: Rallidae (1)**

**American Coot** *Fulica americana*—Found at Balmorhea Lake and in the pond at The Post

**STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (2)**

**Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus*—Found at Sandia Wetlands Project

**American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana*—Found at Davis Mountains State Park

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

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*—Seen on 3 days at Sandia Wetlands Project, The Post, and Marfa Settling Ponds

**SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (8)**

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*—Found at Balmorhea Lake

**Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla*—Found at Balmorhea Lake and Marfa Settling Ponds

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla*—Found at Balmorhea Lake

**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*—Seen at Sandia Wetlands Project

**Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor*—One observed at the Marfa Settling Ponds

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*—Two seen on the dam at The Post

**Solitary Sandpiper** *Tringa solitaria*—Observed twice at Christmas Mountains Oasis in the big tank and again at a Settling Ponds

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*—Found at Balmorhea Lake

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

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*—Found at Balmorhea Lake

**CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (2)**

**Neotropic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*—Found at Balmorhea Lake

**Double-crested Cormorant** *Nannopterum auritum*—Big Bend National Park, Rio Grande Village Nature Trail

**IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae (1)**

**White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis chihi*—Found at Sandia Wetlands Project and Marfa Settling Ponds

**NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (2)**

**Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus*—Seen during the Rio Grande Village Nature Trail hike

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*—Commonly observed on many days of the tour, generally soaring overhead

**HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (7)**

**Northern Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*—Found on 2 days at The Post and once while driving from the Basin to Marfa

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus*—One observed during the Madera Canyon hike in the Davis Mountains

**Harris's Hawk** *Parabuteo unicinctus*—Seen at Rio Bosque Park, El Paso, in a brief stop on the way to the airport  
**Gray Hawk** *Buteo plagiatus*—Seen during the Rio Grande Village Nature Trail hike  
**Swainson's Hawk** *Buteo swainsoni*—Observed on 2 days, at Sandia Wetlands and once from the vans while driving  
**Zone-tailed Hawk** *Buteo albonotatus*—Seen during the Rio Grande Village Nature Trail hike  
**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*—Found on 3 days at several sites

#### **OWLS: Strigidae (2)**

**Elf Owl** *Micrathene whitneyi*—Found at its telephone pole roost/nest cavity in Davis Mountains State Park  
**Burrowing Owl** *Athene cunicularia*—Seen at Rio Bosque Park, El Paso, in a brief stop on the way to the airport

#### **KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae (1)**

**Belted Kingfisher** *Megasceryle alcyon*—Found at Balmorhea Lake

#### **WOODPECKERS: Picidae (4)**

**Acorn Woodpecker** *Melanerpes formicivorus*—Easily observed on several days in the Davis and Chisos Mountains  
**Golden-fronted Woodpecker** *Melanerpes aurifrons*—Found on 3 days in appropriate habitat with large cottonwoods such as The Post and along the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park  
**Ladder-backed Woodpecker** *Dryobates scalaris*—Seen on 4 days at Balmorhea Lake, Gage Gardens, and in the Chisos Basin  
**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*—Encountered on the Madera Canyon Trail hike, Davis Mountains

#### **FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (1)**

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*—Seen while driving along the highway on one day of the tour

#### **TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (9)**

**Gray Flycatcher** *Empidonax wrightii*—Seen on the Madera Canyon Trail hike  
**Cordilleran Flycatcher** *Empidonax occidentalis*—(GO) Found on the Laguna Meadows Trail hike, Chisos Mountains  
**Say's Phoebe** *Sayornis saya*—Found on 5 days at various sites, often around buildings or other structures  
**Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus*—Found on 3 days at several sites  
**Ash-throated Flycatcher** *Myiarchus cinerascens*—Found on 4 days at several sites  
**Brown-crested Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tyrannulus*—Seen in a big cottonwood at The Post  
**Cassin's Kingbird** *Tyrannus vociferans*—Many observed in Davis Mountains State Park on our visit there  
**Western Kingbird** *Tyrannus verticalis*—Found on 3 days, sometimes while driving in the vans from one site to another  
**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** *Tyrannus forficatus*—Seen once while driving along the highway and then again at Gage Gardens

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

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*—Seen once while driving from the vans along the highway

#### **VIREOS: Vireonidae (3)**

**Bell's Vireo** *Vireo bellii*—A pretty ubiquitous bird, especially by its song, found on 3 days at various sites  
**Hutton's Vireo** *Vireo huttoni*—One well observed by the group during the Laguna Meadows Trail hike, Chisos Mountains  
**Plumbeous Vireo** *Vireo plumbeus*—One found at The Post, presumably a migrant there

#### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (4)**

**Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay** *Aphelocoma woodhouseii*—Found on 2 days at Davis Mountains State Park  
**Mexican Jay** *Aphelocoma wollweberi*—Encountered most days in the Chisos Mountains  
**Chihuahuan Raven** *Corvus cryptoleucus*—Seen from the vans while driving between El Paso and Fort Davis  
**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*—Found on 4 days at several sites

### **CHICKADEES AND TITS: Paridae (2)**

**Mountain Chickadee** *Poecile gambeli*—(GO) Seen by Michael in the Chisos Mountains Lodge area

**Black-crested Titmouse** *Baeolophus atricristatus*—Found on 4 days in the Davis and Chisos Mountains

### **SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (4)**

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*—Several observed flying in and near Santa Elena Canyon

**Bank Swallow** *Riparia riparia*—Found at Balmorhea Lake

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*—Found on 4 sites throughout the tour

**Cave Swallow** *Petrochelidon fulva*—Found on 3 sites at several place during the tour

### **BUSHTITS: Aegithalidae (1)**

**Bushtit** *Psaltriparus minimus*—Seen on 2 days in the Davis Mountains and once in the Chisos Mountains

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

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula*—Found 3 times, at Davis Mountains State Park, Gage Gardens, and during the Laguna Meadows Trail hike in the Chisos Mountains

### **GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae (2)**

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea*—Found during the Laguna Meadows Trail hike in the Chisos Mountains

**Black-tailed Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila melanura*—One seen by Dave at Christmas Mountains Oasis

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

**Rock Wren** *Salpinctes obsoletus*—Found on 2 days in Big Bend National Park

**Canyon Wren** *Catherpes mexicanus*— Found on 2 days in Big Bend National Park

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*—One found at Gage Gardens on the second visit

**Bewick's Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii*—Seen or heard on 3 days at Davis Mountains State Park, The Post, and on the Laguna Meadows Trail hike in Big Bend

**Cactus Wren** *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*—Found on 3 days in Big Bend, where nesting near the Lodge

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

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

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

**Curve-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma curvirostre*—Seen at Gage Gardens on the first visit and at Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*—Found on 5 days at many sites, sometimes from the vans while driving

### **THRUSHES: Turdidae (4)**

**Eastern Bluebird** *Sialia sialis*—Found once at Cottonwood Campground, Big Bend

**Western Bluebird** *Sialia mexicana*—Seen on 2 days, first at McDonald Observatory and again at Gage Gardens

**Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus*—Found by some of the group at the Lawrence Wood Picnic Area, Davis Mountains; on the Laguna Meadows Trail hike; and at Gage Gardens on the second visit

**Wood Thrush** *Hylocichla mustelina*—A rarity in west Texas, this previously reported bird was seen by the group at Gage Gardens

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

**Phainopepla** *Phainopepla nitens*—First seen at Davis Mountains State Park and again at Gage Gardens

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

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* (1)—Found on 3 days when in or near towns

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

**American Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*—Found at Balmorhea Lake, The Post (where several were walking around on the grass), and Marfa Settling Ponds

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

**House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Seen on 5 days of the tour at various sites, especially at places with feeders

**Pine Siskin** *Spinus pinus*—Seen at the feeders at Davis Mountains State Park

**Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria*—Found on two days, first along Daniel's Ranch Road in Big Bend and again at Gage Gardens

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

**Cassin's Sparrow** *Peucaea cassinii*—One seen perched on a fence wire on the road into The Post

**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*—Seen on 4 days of the tour at several sites

**Clay-colored Sparrow** *Spizella pallida*—Found twice, first at Christmas Mountains Oasis and again at the Marathon prairie dog town

**Black-chinned Sparrow** *Spizella atrogularis*—(HO) Heard during the Laguna Meadows Trail hike

**Brewer's Sparrow** *Spizella breweri*—Found on the visit to Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Black-throated Sparrow** *Amphispiza bilineata*—Found on 5 days of the trip at many sites

**Lark Sparrow** *Chondestes grammacus*—Found at Sandia Wetlands and at The Post

**Lark Bunting** *Calamospiza melanocorys*—Two seen flying at the Marfa Settling Ponds

**Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis*—One, of the slate-colored race, seen at Santa Elena Canyon

**White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—Found on 3 days at The Post, Christmas Mountains Oasis, and Gage Gardens

**Vesper Sparrow** *Pooecetes gramineus*—Seen by the pond on the visit to Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*—One seen at The Post and found again at Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolni*—A very cooperative bird seen at one of the blinds at Davis Mountains State Park and seen again at Christmas Mountains Oasis and by Dave at Gage Gardens

**Canyon Towhee** *Melospiza fusca*—Found on 5 days at several sites, sometimes at very close range!

**Rufous-crowned Sparrow** *Aimophila ruficeps*—Found by Michael on the Laguna Meadows Trail hike

**Spotted Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*—Several found and heard during the Chisos Mountains hike

### **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: Icteriidae (1)**

**Yellow-breasted Chat** *Icteria virens*—(HO) A bird singing off in the distance at The Post was the only one of the trip

### **NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (9)**

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*—A single bird in a mixed flock of blackbirds at the Fossil Discovery Exhibit on our way out of Big Bend National Park

**Western Meadowlark** *Sturnella neglecta*—Found on the first day while early birding at Sandia Wetlands

**Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna*—Seen twice from the vans while driving through open grasslands and by the entire group during dinner at Chateau Wright Winery

**Orchard Oriole** *Icterus spurius*—Found at The Post

**Scott's Oriole** *Icterus parisorum*—Found on 6 days of the trip at several sites, especially in the Chisos Basin

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*—Several at the Marfa Settling Ponds

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*—Found on 4 days of the tour at several sites

**Brewer's Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*—Seen on 3 days at Balmorhea Lake, The Post, and at the Fossil Discovery Exhibit when leaving Big Bend

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*—Noted on 3 days of the trip in El Paso, The Post, and at the Marfa Settling Ponds

#### **NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (6)**

**Colima Warbler** *Oreothlypis crissalis*—(GO) Found by Michael on his extended hike at the top of the Laguna Meadows Trail in the Chisos Mountains

**MacGillivray's Warbler** *Geothlypis tolmiei*—A skulking bird seen by some at The Post

**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas*—Found twice, first at The Post and again at Gage Gardens

**Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga petechia*—(GO) One found by Dave at Gage Gardens

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*—By far the most commonly seen warbler; found at many sites; all appeared to be of the western, Audubon's race

**Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla*—Found on 5 days of the trip at several sites

#### **CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (9)**

**Hepatic Tanager** *Piranga flava*—Found in the Davis Mountains and in the Chisos Basin

**Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra*—Found on 4 days of the tour at most sites with appropriate cottonwood habitat, including The Post and Big Bend National Park

**Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis*—Observed at Davis Mountains State Park, The Post, and Gage Gardens

**Pyrrhuloxia** *Cardinalis sinuatus*—This lovely “desert cardinal” was found at Wild Rose Pass picnic area, The Post, Christmas Mountains Oasis, and in the Chisos Basin (where it seemed at an unusually high elevation)

**Black-headed Grosbeak** *Pheucticus melanocephalus*—Only found on the visit to the feeding stations at Davis Mountains State Park

**Blue Grosbeak** *Passerina caerulea*—Found on 5 days at many sites visited

**Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea*—One found on the hike into Santa Elena Canyon

**Varied Bunting** *Passerina versicolor*—A male observed at very close range on the feeder bucket at Christmas Mountains Oasis

**Painted Bunting** *Passerina ciris*—Found at Santa Elena Canyon and again at Gage Gardens

#### **MAMMALS (8 species recorded):**

**Desert Cottontail** *Sylvilagus auduboni*—The common “bunny rabbit” of the tour; found on three days

**Mexican Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus mexicanus*—Seen on one day from the vehicle

**Black-tailed Prairie Dog** *Cynomys ludovicianus*—Several seen at their burrows at the Marathon prairie-dog town

**Collared Peccary (Javelina)** *Tayassu tajacu*—A small group observed crossing the road in Rio Grande Village Campground

**White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus*—The common deer in the Chisos, these were easily seen on two days right in the Basin

**Mule Deer** *Odocoileus hemionus*—Found on two days in the Davis Mountains

**Pronghorn** *Antilocarpa americana*—Found on three days, twice in the grasslands near Fort Davis and a large number on the last day grazing at the Marfa Settling Ponds

**Black Bear** *Ursus americanus*—Seen by many in the Chisos Basin where several hang out around the Lodge and parking lot

#### **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (4 species recorded):**

**Western Coachwhip Snake** *Masticophis flagellum*—Found twice at Christmas Mountains Oasis and Gage Gardens

**Spiny Soft-shelled Turtle** *Apolone spinifera*—Seen basking at Rio Grande Village

**Gopher Snake** *Pituophis catenifer*—Found dead on road in the Davis Mountains

**Variable Skink** *Plestiodon multivirgatus*—

## **INSECTS (1 species recorded):**

**Arizona Sister** *Adelpha eulalia*—Numerous individuals flying during the Chisos Mountains hike

### **LOCATIONS AND NOTES:**

Day 1: April 22, 2022; early birding: Balmorhea Lake, Sandia Wetland Project, Balmorhea State Park, Wild Rose Pass picnic area; others: drive from El Paso to Fort Davis

Day 2: April 23, 2022; Davis Mountains State Park, Lawrence Wood Picnic Area, Madera Canyon Trail, Fort Davis

Day 3: April 24, 2022; The Post (Fort Peña Colorado Park), Gage Gardens, drive to Chisos Basin

Day 4: April 25, 2022; Dugout Wells, Rio Grande Village and nature trail, Daniel's Ranch, Boquillas Canyon

Day 5: April 26, 2022; Chisos Basin, Sotol Vista, Santa Elena Canyon, Cottonwood Campground, Christmas Mountains Oasis

Day 6: April 27, 2022; Chisos Basin, Chisos Mountains (Laguna Meadows Trail)

Day 7: April 28, 2022; Chisos Basin, Fossil Discovery Exhibit, Gage Gardens, Marathon prairie-dog town, Marfa Settling Ponds

Day 8: April 29, 2022; Marfa Settling Ponds; drive from Marfa to El Paso