

Southeast Arizona: Sweetheart Birding | Species List

February 11 – 15, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



With guide **Dave Krueper** and participants **Ann Marie, Debbie, Ellen, and Mary**



Following is the AZSE SWB 23 Tour Annotated Checklist totals. We did well, particularly given the weather challenges that we faced, and we were able to observe and study the representative species found in each of the life zones that we visited. Two of the obvious favorite areas were the pine-oak woodlands of the Huachuca Mountains and the Chihuahuan grasslands and scrublands of the Sulphur Springs Valley. Highlights were plentiful and included several “lifers” for many! We all appreciated the infectious enthusiasm from the clients and the birding opportunities that we shared in this wonderland. Enjoy the annotated checklist and the images!

-Dave Krueper-

ANNOTATED AVIAN SPECIES LIST

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*. Fairly common to common winter resident to the Sulphur Springs Valley (SSV), we found nearly 450 in the wetlands at Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area (WDWA) on 12 Feb 2023.

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*. Nine were seen in direct comparison with the larger Snow Geese on 12 Feb 2023 and the lack of “grin patch” on the bill was clearly seen.

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*. Uncommon to rare winter visitor to southeastern Arizona, we were pleased to find an adult and a distant immature at the WDWA on 12 Feb 2023.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*. We found 15-20 individuals on each of the days that we visited WDWA.

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*. We found 6-15 individuals on each of the days that we visited WDWA.

American Wigeon *Mareca americana*. Several were found within the mixed waterfowl flocks on each visit to WDWA.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*. A common winter resident, we observed 10-20 individuals on each visit to WDWA.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*. A common winter resident, we observed 10-20 individuals on each visit to WDWA. The vertical white stripe on the males was very evident.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*. A nice addition to the waterfowl checklist was seeing three at WDWA on 12 Feb 2023. The male was viewed with the scope, and we could all study the gorgeous colorations on the head and bill.

Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii*. We were able to get great views of both male and females at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds, as well as at WDW and at the Casa de San Pedro.

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*. Great views of 15 very accommodating individuals while at Ramsey Canyon Preserve. After this once-common species was extirpated early in the 19th century, the re-establishment effort by AZ Game & Fish Department has been a success and we can now find them throughout the Huachuca and Chiricahua mountains and occasionally along the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA).

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*. Common permanent resident throughout communities and rural areas of North America, we found them daily while in the Patagonia, Sierra Vista and the Bisbee areas.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*. Plentiful throughout our trip, we found several in the Sulphur Springs Valley, the Sierra Vista Wastewater Treatment Facilities and near the San Pedro House.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*. Fairly common (although declining steeply in some areas of the Southwest), we admired nine individuals at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds on 11 Feb 2023.

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina*. Two were observed at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds on 11 Feb 2023.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*. We observed scores daily while in Patagonia, Sierra Vista, Hereford, Bisbee and in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*. Seen daily throughout the trip.

Rivoli's Hummingbird *Eugenes fulgens*. An uncommon over-wintering resident, we found one at the Ramsey Canyon Preserve.

Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna*. We found two at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds as well as a male at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary.



Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cyananthus latirostris*. We admired an adult male at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary just before it started to snow.

Violet-crowned Hummingbird *Leucolia violiceps*. Somewhat rare in the winter months, we were delighted to catch some quick views of this species while at Ramsey Canyon Preserve.

Sora *Porzana carolina*. We observed several at WDWA on 12 and again on 14 Feb 2023. Skulky little devils!

American Coot *Fulica americana*. Common throughout southern Arizona, we viewed scores of this species at WDWA on 12 and 14 Feb 2023.

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*. A highlight of the trip, we admired up to 4,200 individuals on both 12 and 14 Feb 2023 while at the wetlands and agricultural fields in the Sulphur Springs Valley. Of interest is that the genus, *Antigone*, is from the Greek myth where Antigone (daughter of King Laomedon of Troy) was transformed into a stork or crane by the goddess Hera! Seriously, I did not make this stuff up!!

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*. Common throughout southern Arizona, we found several daily at WDWA and in dry agricultural fields in the adjacent area.

Mountain Plover *Charadrius montanus*. We found at least six on two different days near the WDWA. This species winters in the southwest U.S. and northern Mexico and breeds in shortgrass prairies further north.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*. We found up to 11 individuals at WDWA. Look at those striking white back markings while in flight!

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*. Wow, several of us had great views of this elusive species while at WDWA. In the past this was known as Common Snipe, but a recent name change (split with the Eurasian species) has now designated this in honor of Alexander Wilson.

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*. Rare winter vagrant to SE Arizona, we were fortunate to see one fly over the pond at WDWA on 14 February 2023.

Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius*. We observed several females and one male over the course of several days on the tour, primarily in grassland and shrubland habitats within the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*. We observed several in the pine-oak woodlands in the Huachuca Mountains as well as several along the San Pedro River.

Gray Hawk *Buteo plagiatus*. We heard this beautiful raptor calling on several occasions along the San Pedro River on one or more of our morning or evening walks. The San Pedro River and adjacent grassland/mesquite habitats harbors the highest total individuals in the United States, with approximately 50-75 pair nesting annually.



Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*. We observed this species daily on our excursions, particularly in the Sulphur Springs Valley. One might ask why the specific epithet *jamaicensis*? It was first described to science based on specimens from Jamaica in the Caribbean!

Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*. A great find, we had one high in the cottonwoods at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds on the afternoon of the first day. Uncommon, secretive and local in the winter in southern Arizona.

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus*. Always a crowd favorite, we found a family group of five at Ramsey Canyon Preserve on 13 February 2023.

Gila Woodpecker *Melanerpes uropygialis*. We saw or heard this species many times daily on our forays throughout the tour.



Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Dryobates scalaris*. We observed several daily in the Sulphur Springs Valley, along the San Pedro River, and in the foothills of the Huachuca Mountains.

Arizona Woodpecker *Dryobates arizonae*. We scored when we discovered one at the Ramsey Canyon Preserve. Great views and good photos were obtained!

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*. The western "Red-shafted" Flicker is the one that we saw and heard throughout the tour. Gilded Flicker is the species found in Sonoran Desert habitats near Tucson, but we did not find any on the first and last days of the tour near the Tucson airport.



American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*. Our smallest falcon species in North America. We observed several throughout the tour, primarily in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Dusky Flycatcher *Empidonax oberholseri*. A true surprise, we found one calling and then singing while on the road near the Paton Center for Hummingbirds. It is a rare winter resident to southern Arizona.

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*. We found this species to be fairly reliable while birding at the lowland sites, particularly near water such as along

the San Pedro River and at WDWA.

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya*. We enjoyed seeing this species daily in the grasslands and scrublands of the Sulphur Springs Valley as well as in the San Pedro River Valley.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*. We observed this species on several occasions, but particularly at WDWA in the Sulphur Springs Valley. The genus says it all: *Pyro* (fire) *cephalus* (head) Firehead!



Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*. We had great views of this dapper little “raptor” on many occasions, particularly in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Mexican Jay *Aphelocoma wollweberi*. We observed a family group up close and personal while visiting the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. Such a great bird!!

Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucus*. Seen at WDWA on 12 February 2023.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*. We observed pairs or small groups throughout the trip.

Bridled Titmouse *Baeolophus wollweberi*. Truly a delightful sprite, we admired several at Ramsey Canyon Preserve and at Ash Canyon Sanctuary.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Corthylio calendula*. A common winter resident throughout southern Arizona, we saw or heard this species daily in a wide variety of habitats.

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*. We saw this species on multiple occasions, particularly along the San Pedro River and in the oak woodlands in the foothills of the Huachuca Mountains, where there are larger, more developed trees.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*. We heard one while at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds.

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*. We heard and saw this species on several occasions while in the Sulphur Springs Valley at WDWA.

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*. We enjoyed seeing this species on numerous occasions while at Casa de San Pedro, WDWA and at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary.



Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*. We were able to admire this species daily at the Casa de San Pedro as a pair was nesting / roosting in the large yucca near the back entrance.



Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre* We observed this species daily. We found one to be especially cooperative while at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds, with full song and blazing yellow eyes right in front of us while walking the road.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*. We found one while at the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary feeders just before it started to snow!

Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides*. What a delight!! We observed 60 + of these wintering beauties while in the Sulphur Springs Valley on several occasions. The eye-popping cerulean / cobalt blue of the males was magnificent!

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*. Heard or seen on most days of the tour.

Phainopepla *Phainopepla nitens*. In an ironic twist of fate, after missing this species on the main tour, while being sidetracked on the I-10 detour toward the airport, we found one right alongside the road which allowed for great views! I guess we were lucky to have been side-tracked!

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. Seen or heard daily throughout the tour.

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens*. We saw or heard several at WDWA.

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus*. Seen daily.

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus*. We found one at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds on the first afternoon that turned out to be our only sighting for the tour!

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria*. We saw or heard many on each day of the tour. Great views were gained while at the Paton Center and at Ash Canyon.

Chestnut-collared Longspur *Calcarius ornatus*. An irregular and irruptive winter resident to the grasslands of southern Arizona, we had several flocks fly over us while in the Sulphur Springs Valley on 12 February 2023.

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*. We recorded several at Whitewater Draw and at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary.

Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri*. We found them to be a difficult species to study on this tour. We found a few at both WDWA and along the SPRNCA on two occasions.

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata*. We found several at WDWA in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*. We had great views of several at WDWA and along the trail on the SPRNCA.

Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys*. We were able to view one male perched on a shrub while near WDWA on 12 February 2023.

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*. We found only two while on the tour, both at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*. We found this species in a wide variety of habitats throughout the tour, especially at WDWA and within the SPRNCA.

Vesper Sparrow *Pooecetes gramineus*. We were able to gain great views of several accommodating individuals on the trail down to the river in SPRNCA.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*. We viewed several individuals at WDWA on 14 February 2023.

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*. Nearly extirpated from the area in the early 20th Century, the local population *M. m. fallax* subspecies rallied after the removal of cattle within the SPRNCA and increased from less than one bird per acre to over 60 birds per acre along the riparian areas of the SPRNCA.

Canyon Towhee *Melospiza fusca*. We observed several at the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary, the SPRNCA and at WDWA.

Abert's Towhee *Melospiza aberti*. We viewed several while visiting the Paton Center for Hummingbirds and at Casa de San Pedro. The black bandit mask is striking!

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo chlorurus*. We found and heard several during the tour, particularly at Casa de San Pedro and WDWA.

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*. Heard and seen while at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary and at the SPRNCA.

Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*. A real treat! This must have the longest scientific name of any bird species in North America. On a whim, we turned into the Sierra Vista Wastewater Treatment Plant to look for Peregrine Falcon (nix) but found nearly 100 adult males on the roof of the treatment facility building. Very nice views!

Chihuahuan Meadowlark *Sturnella liliana*. Aha! NEW SPECIES!! The American Ornithological Society recently split and elevated this distinctive subspecies from Eastern Meadowlark to full species status. We saw several flash by us across the road as well as some fly-overs in the grasslands on several days of the tour.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*. We found them daily in the lower elevations along the SPRNCA, at WDWA and at the Sierra Vista Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*. One or two were heard flying over the Casa de San Pedro, and we were able to see several others while at the Sierra Vista Sewage Treatment Plant.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*. We found an obliging male in the Safeway parking lot on the first day, and then several others in Sierra Vista and at the SV Wastewater Treat Facility.

Orange-crowned Warbler *Leiothlypis celata*. Uncommon in winter in southern Arizona (and a real target for the Christmas Bird Count), we found one while at the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*. Uncommon to rare winter visitor to wetlands, we found two while at WDWA on 14 February 2023.

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*. Certainly one of the most unexpected and unusual discoveries was an overwintering bird seen at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds. Accidental in winter at best, this was discovered the day before our visit and unknown to us, had been reported earlier in the morning. WOW! Great bird for the area!

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata*. We found these at nearly each stop daily. Most were in drab basic plumage, but one male showed some signs of transitioning into alternate dress.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*. We located several on our visit. The pair at the Casa de San Pedro were most accommodating!

Pyrrhuloxia *Cardinalis sinuatus*. We had great views of this species while at Casa de San Pedro, the San Pedro House and at Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. The gray and red colors of the male just seem to be so complimentary....

Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena*. We were surprised and VERY pleased to see three males while at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds. Not in the snappiest of plumage, the males nonetheless were quite dapper!

