

Texas' Big Bend: Birding & Wildlife | Species List

April 28 – May 5, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



With Guides Dave Krueper and Greg Butcher and participants Alan, Susan, Dick, Steve, Dede, Alice, Art, and Chris

Compiled by Greg Butcher

eBird Trip Report: To see the bird report for the trip on eBird, go to <https://ebird.org/tripreport/125016>
You might want to review the notes below along with the eBird trip report (linked above).

Photo Gallery: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/LEM8dABmDa2z7P4m9>

Itinerary:

Fri., Apr. 28	Drive to Lake Balmorhea & Fort Davis
Sat., Apr. 29	Davis Mountains: Madera Canyon Trail & McDonald Observatory
Sun., Apr. 30	Davis Mts. SP, The Post SW of Marathon, & Big Bend National Park
Mon., May 1	Big Bend National Park: Rio Grande Village
Tues., May 2	Big Bend NP: Water Treatment, Lost Mine, & Basin Loop Trails
Wed., May 3	Big Bend NP: Sam Nail Ranch, Burro Mesa Pour-off, Cottonwood Campground, & Santa Elena Canyon
Thurs, May 4	Christmas Mountains Oasis to Prairie Dogs & the Gage Hotel
Fri., May 5	From Marathon to El Paso for Departures

Summary: We enjoyed 4 major habitat types: the Chihuahuan Desert, the Davis Mountains, the Chisos Mountains, and the Rio Grande Riparian Area. The area we visited is often called the Trans-Pecos because we were west of the Pecos River. In addition to targeting West Texas breeding birds, we picked up a number of migrants moving through at the height of springtime. We added some interesting mammals such as Collared Peccary and Pronghorn, a couple of snakes, and a Bullfrog.

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: ANATIDAE

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* — Just one Canada Goose on our first day at Lake Balmorhea – there would have been more geese and ducks during the winter.

Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera* — A few gorgeous males at Lake Balmorhea.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* — A big group of shovelers at Lake Balmorhea, including many colorful males.

Gadwall *Mareca strepera* — From a distance, Gadwalls are plain gray, but close-up, they show very interesting patterns. We had a few at Lake Balmorhea.

American Wigeon *Mareca americana* — We had a few wigeons at a distance at Lake Balmorhea.

Mexican Duck *Anas diazi* — We had a few Mexican Ducks over the river at Rio Grande Village. Both sexes look like female Mallards.

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola* — We had a pair of Buffleheads at Lake Balmorhea.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* — This was by far the most common duck at Lake Balmorhea; I estimated 140.

NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae

Scaled Quail *Callipepla squamata* — Good old Cottontop! We had birds on 4 different days.

Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii* — HO. This bird was heard at Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend.

GREBES: Podicipedidae

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* — We had 4 grebe species at Lake Balmorhea. This small species has a black ring around its beak during the breeding season. We only saw one.

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* — This species is “eared” with bright yellow feathers contrasting with a black head and neck. We saw 2 individuals at Lake Balmorhea.

Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis* — Western and Clark’s are the large similar-looking grebes of the west. We had great comparative looks at Lake Balmorhea. This is the dark-faced species.

Clark's Grebe *Aechmophorus clarkii* — See above. This species has a white forehead that includes the red eyes.

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae

Eurasian Collared-Dove (I) *Streptopelia decaocto* — This non-native species has spread from Florida to Alaska. We had it in 4 different places, including 2 spots within Big Bend.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca* — We had good looks at this species at Rio Grande Village and again at Dugout Wells in Big Bend.

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina* — Sometimes it pays to be the driver. We flushed this species while driving to Santa Elena Canyon, but only Greg got to see it.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* — This species was everywhere including 2 big flocks in the Davis Mountains between 50 and 100 individuals.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* — We saw this species at 8 different locations, but always in small numbers.

CUCKOOS: Cuculidae

Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus* — Who doesn’t love a Roadrunner? We saw them at 6 different locations. One of my favorite moments of our trip was when we had a Roadrunner and a (Wily) coyote in view at the same time at Rio Grande Village.

NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae

Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis* — We had a quick view from the van a couple of times in the early morning.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor* — We had several views of this species in the early morning at Rio Grande Village and Dugout Wells.

SWIFTS: Apodidae

White-throated Swift *Aeronautes saxatalis* — We had quick views of this black-and-white bird at 4 different places in Big Bend. Swifts look like swallows, but have stiffer wingbeats.

HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae

Lucifer Hummingbird *Calothorax lucifer* — Christmas Mountains Oasis is the go-to place for this species. One male hled court for almost all of our visit there.

Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri* — We saw this species on 5 different days, both in the Davis Mountains and in Big Bend.

RAILS, COOTS, AND ALLIES: Rallidae

American Coot *Fulica americana* — It looks like a duck, but it isn’t! We had 50 at Lake Balmorhea, and a couple later in the trip.

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* — Very elegant! We had 4 at Lake Balmorhea.

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana* — Did someone get a photo of the 40 avocets all lined up at Lake Balmorhea?

LAPWINGS AND PLOVERS: Charadriidae

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* — We saw only one of this usually common species – at Lake Balmorhea.

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* — This was the common gull at Lake Balmorhea – I estimated 20.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* — There was one immature of this species mixed in; it's larger than the Ring-bills.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri* — There were quite a few fishing at Lake Balmorhea.

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* — We saw a couple at Lake Balmorhea.

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* — We had several Great Blues near Rio Grande Village.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* — There were 3 elegant Snowy Egrets at Lake Balmorhea.

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* — Pretend you're alive! There were Turkey Vultures everywhere!

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae

Gray Hawk *Buteo plagiatus* — We had great looks at a pair near the nest in Cottonwood Campground.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* — Just one Red-tail this trip, at Dugout Wells in Big Bend.

Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis* — We had good looks at this bird on the Madera Canyon Trail in the Davis Mountains. It's a wintering bird there, so our bird was on his/her way north.

OWLS: Strigidae

Elf Owl *Micrathene whitneyi* — We had good luck with this species: at Davis Mountains State Park, Dugout Wells in Big Bend, and Christmas Mountains Oasis.

WOODPECKERS: Picidae

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus* — This is my favorite woodpecker! We had it twice at Davis Mountains State Park and at least twice in the Chisos Basin in Big Bend.

Golden-fronted Woodpecker *Melanerpes aurifrons* — We heard and saw this woodpecker several times; I estimated 6 in Rio Grande Village.

Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Dryobates scalaris* — This was the common woodpecker everywhere, every day!

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus* — We had one on the Madera Canyon Trail in the Davis Mountains.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae

Western Wood-Pewee *Contopus sordidulus* — We had this gray-green flycatcher at 3 places in Big Bend and at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* — This flycatcher likes open areas with shrubs. We saw it at 7 different sites throughout the trip.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus* — Now that's the definition of red (the males anyway)! We had a dozen individuals at 4 places.

Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens* — This is the common dry woodland flycatcher, and we saw it every day at almost every site.

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus* — This can be a tough bird to tell from Ash-throated, but Dave helped

us ID 2 at Rio Grande Village and 2 more at Cottonwood Campground.

Cassin's Kingbird *Tyrannus vociferans* — This species is darker gray than Western Kingbird and more common in the Davis Mountains, where we saw at least 3.

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis* — Outside of the Davis Mountains, we saw this species almost daily. Luckily for us, it likes to perch in the open.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus* — When we drove up northeast of Marathon, one of our best rewards was a pair of Scissor-tails perched on a fence.

VIREOS: Vireonidae

Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii* — This species likes thorn-scrub, and we were in a lot of thorn-scrub! I estimated 34 individuals at 8 sites.

Plumbeous Vireo *Vireo plumbeus* — Plumbeous is Latin for gray, but it doesn't mention the cool white eye-ring and line in front of the eye. We had an individual on the Madera Canyon Trail.

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus* — We had one warbling at Sam Nail Ranch.

SHRIKES: Laniidae

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus* — No Burrowing Owl, but we did have a Loggerhead Shrike at the Marathon Prairie Dog Town.

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay *Aphelocoma woodhouseii* — We had good experiences with this species at Davis Mountains State Park.

Mexican Jay *Aphelocoma wollweberi* — Several of us saw this species from our rooms at Chisos Mountains Lodge. It was also common along 3 trails in the park.

Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucus* — This species used to be called White-necked Raven, and we saw the white neck in the wind at the Marathon Prairie Dog Town.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* — This is the raven of the mountains, and we saw this species in both the Davis and Chisos Mountains.

CHICKADEES AND TITS: Paridae

Black-crested Titmouse *Baeolophus atricristatus* — We had one at Davis Mountains State Park, then 5 individuals at 3 places in Big Bend.

PENDULINE TITS: Remizidae

Verdin *Auriparus flaviceps* — Another thorn-scrub specialist like Bell's Vireo, we had 16 individuals at 7 different sites.

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* — We had a couple near Rio Grande Village along the river.

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina* — We had one on the Madera Canyon Trail in the Davis Mountains.

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia* — We had 2 fly by at Lake Balmorhea. This is a small brown swallow with a dark throat band and a white chin.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* — This is the world's most ubiquitous swallow and the only one in North America with a long forked tail. They were widespread the first few days, but we didn't have any in Big Bend.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* — There were swallows everywhere nesting at the Gage Hotel, including Barn, Cliff, and Cave.

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva* — We had these at the Gage Hotel. They look a lot like Cliff Swallows, but Cliffs have a much darker throat. Cave Swallow numbers and range have been increasing a lot in southwest Texas.

BUSHTITS: Aegithalidae

Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus* — Bushtits are like small, unmarked chickadees, but they're in their own family. We had a few in the Davis Mountains and a few more in Chisos Basin of Big Bend.

KINGLETS: Regulidae

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* — Kinglets are among the most active birds on the planet. We had a couple of these at Sam Nail Ranch.

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis* — This is a widespread species in the eastern U.S., but is restricted to oaks in the west. We had one on the Madera Canyon Trail in the Davis Mountains.

GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Polioptila caerulea* — This is the widespread species in the U.S. We saw it at 3 different places in Big Bend, at higher elevations.

Black-tailed Gnatcatcher *Polioptila melanura* — This species is restricted to the southwestern U.S. and northwestern Mexico. Breeding males have a black cap; otherwise, they look a lot like Blue-grays. We had this species at lower elevations in Big Bend and at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

WRENS: Troglodytidae

Rock Wren *Salpinctes obsoletus* — A couple of us had a Rock Wren at Fort Davis National Historic Site, but I think everyone got good views at Burro Mesa Pouroff. We also had them below the Chisos Basin Campground and at Christmas Mountain Oasis.

Canyon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus* — We had a bunch at Burro Mesa Pouroff. What a song!

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii* — More of a mountain bird than I expected, we had a couple in the Davis Mountains and a couple more in Big Bend.

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* — By far our most common (and largest) wren, we had this species at 7 different places in Big Bend and at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae

Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre* — We had this thrasher at lower elevations in Big Bend and at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

Crissal Thrasher *Toxostoma crissale* — We had this thrasher at higher elevations in Big Bend – one below the Chisos Basin Campground and one on the trail above our rooms at the lodge. The two species are similar, but Crissal is darker gray and has distinctive black and white moustache stripes.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* — We had a mocker with us every day and almost every place!

THRUSHES: Turdidae

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana* — We had a Western Bluebird on the Madera Canyon Trail in the Davis Mountains.

Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi* — We saw a few of the last of this species before they head north for breeding – we saw one in the Davis Mountains and 3 in Big Bend.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* — I didn't record a robin! I can't remember the last time I went birding for a week and didn't see a robin! (They're primarily a winter species here.)

WAXWINGS: Bombycillidae

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum* — This species usually travels in flocks so it was surprising to see just one near Rio Grande Village.

SILKY-FLYCATCHERS: Ptilonotidae

Phainopepla *Phainopepla nitens* — We had a quick distant view of this charismatic species while walking back from Burro Mesa Pour-off.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae

House Sparrow (I) *Passer domesticus* — No Rock Pigeons or European Starlings on this trip, but we did have 2 pairs of House Sparrows – one at Lake Balmorhea and another at our hotel in Fort Davis.

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus* — We had House Finches almost every day and every place, but not at the highest elevations.

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus* — There were a lot of Pine Siskins at Davis Mountains State Park, but nowhere else on our trip.

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria* — American Goldfinch is a wintering species here, but Lesser Goldfinch is more common. We had it almost every day and almost everywhere.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae

Cassin's Sparrow *Peucaea cassinii* — Not a very charismatic bird, but a good southwestern specialist, we saw and heard one in the grasslands at Sotol Vista in Big Bend.

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina* — One of North America's most ubiquitous sparrows, we saw them almost everywhere on our trip, and I hear them almost every day at home in northern Virginia.

Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida* — We added a closely related Clay-colored at Christmas Mountains Oasis, just before it was due to leave for its more northern breeding grounds.

Black-chinned Sparrow *Spizella atrogularis* — We had this species at Burro Mesa Pour-off. It is an odd, very gray sparrow. Only the breeding males have the black chin.

Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri* — A close relative of Clay-colored and Chipping Sparrows, this can be a tough ID. All 3 species breed farther north. We were able to compare this species to Clay-colored at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata* — The dramatic black throat and lores make this sparrow a stand-out among the sparrows. It is a desert sparrow, so we saw many of them (but only on the last few days), both in Big Bend and at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus* — Another good-looking sparrow (sometimes called "Harlequin"), we saw this species both in the Davis Mountains and Big Bend. We had 8 at Cottonwood Campground!

Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys* — This is another wintering species on its way north to breed. We had a large flock fly by at Christmas Mountains Oasis, then a few individuals hung out in the large water tank next to the viewing area.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* — Yet another wintering species, we saw one in the Davis Mountains and a small group at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis* — This is primarily an eastern wintering species, so I was surprised to find 2 individuals on our trip: one known individual at Davis Mountains State Park and then a surprise at The Post, southwest of the Gage Hotel in Marathon.

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii* — This is another wintering sparrow. We saw it in the Davis Mountains and again at Christmas Mountains Oasis. It looks superficially like a Song Sparrow (which we didn't see), but has a tan band across the breast instead of the back breast spot of the Song Sparrow.

Canyon Towhee *Melospiza fusca* — This species has a small southwestern range, but we were in the heart of it and saw it at 8 different locations in both the Davis Mountains and Big Bend.

Rufous-crowned Sparrow *Aimophila ruficeps* — This is another southwestern specialist. It looks superficially like a Chipping Sparrow, but behaves very differently and has a white mustache. We had 13 individuals at 4 different places in Big Bend.

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo chlorurus* — A good-looking green-and-gray sparrow with a cinnamon-colored cap, this species was in the Davis Mountains, Big Bend, and Christmas Mountains Oasis.

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus* — Formerly lumped with Eastern Towhee, as Rufous-sided Towhee, the rufous sides continue to be the best fieldmark on an otherwise back-and-white bird. We saw one at Davis Mountains State Park and several on the loop trail above our cabins in Chisos Basin in Big Bend.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: Icteriidae

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens* — The chat is one of my favorite songsters. There are long pauses between phrases, and each phrase is very different from the one that came before. We saw one at The Post southwest of Marathon and saw and heard many at different places in Big Bend. I counted 7 at Sam Nail Ranch!

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae

Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus* — This is a gorgeous bird, especially the male, but as I recall, we only saw two individuals in flight. My nephew just texted about a big colony of breeding Yellow-heads in Montana.

Chihuahuan Meadowlark *Sturnella liliana* — We saw 3 individuals at the Prairie Dog Town northeast of Marathon. They used to be lumped with Eastern Meadowlark, but now the birds in the southwestern U.S. are called Chihuahuan after the desert we were in.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius* — We had a couple at the post and then at 2 different places in Big Bend.

Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii* — I studied Bullock's Orioles in grad school, so I always enjoy seeing them. We had one at The Post southwest of Marathon, one at Christmas Mountains Oasis, and several at Big Bend in between.

Scott's Oriole *Icterus parisorum* — This species is a southwestern specialist, so it makes sense that it was the most common oriole we saw. We saw the first one at Davis Mountains State Park. One hung out near our cabins at Chisos Mountain Lodge, and we had several others in Big Bend.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* — We saw this wetlands-loving species at Lake Balmorhea and near the stream at The Post southwest of Marathon.

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus* — We saw 5 of these small, red-eyed blackbirds at Rio Grande Village.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater* — This widespread blackbird was widespread during our tour. We had it at 8 different locations from beginning to end.

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus* — This was one of the most common of the wintering birds we saw. We had it at 5 different locations in Big Bend.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus* — This species keeps increasing in the southwestern United State. We had 5 individuals, one at Lake Balmorhea, 3 in Big Bend, and one at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata* — We timed our trip to catch migrants, and Orange-crowned was one – it winters in Mexico and breeds farther north in the U.S. and Canada. We caught up with 2 individuals in Big Bend.

Lucy's Warbler *Oreothlypis luciae* — On the other hand, Lucy's Warbler breeds along the Rio Grande River, and we saw one just across the entrance to Cottonwood Campground right by the river.

Nashville Warbler *Oreothlypis ruficapilla* — Another migrant, Nashvilles were seen in the Davis Mountains and in Big Bend.

Virginia's Warbler *Oreothlypis virginiae* — This species breeds in the southwestern United States. We had one individual at Dam Nail Ranch in Big Bend.

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia* — This is a widespread breeder in the U.S. and Canada, but a migrant in Texas, wintering in Central and South America. We had one at The Post sw of Marathon and one at Dugout Wells in Big Bend.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata* — We saw this species almost every day and almost every place. As far as I know, all the individuals we saw were of the Audubon's (western) subspecies. It used to be considered a separate species from the Myrtle (eastern) subspecies, but there are many hybrids where the two subspecies overlap in Canada, so ornithologists now consider that they are a single species with regional color variation.

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla* — Almost as ubiquitous as Yellow-rumps, Wilson's were seen from the beginning to the end of our trip.

CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae

Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava* — We only saw one of this species, but most of us had a glorious look at a male along the Madera Canyon Trail in the Davis Mountains.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra* — Summer Tanagers look similar to Hepatic Tanagers, but they are a much brighter red – and they were more common on our tour. We had one bird in the Davis Mountains, one at The Post southwest of Marathon, and 13 individuals at 4 different places in Big Bend.

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* — One of our prettiest birds, the male of this species is red, yellow, and black. We saw 8 individuals at 5 different locations.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis* — I think of cardinal as an eastern bird, so I forgot we would see it in Texas. (It's in Arizona too.) We had a dozen individuals at Davis Mountains State Park and at 4 different locations in Big Bend.

Pyrrhuloxia *Cardinalis sinuatus* — We did really well with the “desert cardinal”! Our first one was at The Post southwest of Marathon, and our last was at Christmas Mountain Oasis. In between, we had birds at 4 different spots within Big Bend.

Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus* — These males are an attractive black, white, and cinnamon, with a beautiful robin-like song. We had them at Davis Mountain State Park, two places in Big Bend, and Christmas Mountains Oasis.

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea* — Who can forget the flocks of gorgeous Blue Grosbeaks all over the ground at The Post (southwest of Marathon)? In addition, we had singles at Davis Mountains State Park, two places in Big Bend, and at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena* — We cleaned up on the buntings – 4 species! This is the typical western one. We had one at The Post southwest of Marathon and one at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea* — At first we thought this individual at Sam Nail Ranch was a hybrid, but when Dave looked at his photos, he realized that it was an Indigo Bunting in an immature plumage. Indigos change colors twice a year, young birds look different from old birds, and males differ from females, so there are a lot of plumages to keep track of! (Plus, hybrids with Lazuli Buntings aren't very rare.)

Varied Bunting *Passerina versicolor* — We had a drop-dead gorgeous look at a male south of Chisos Basin Campground, then another individual at Christmas Mountains Oasis.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* — The Spanish name for this species is “siete colores” or “seven colors”. Many people think it's the most beautiful bird in North America. We were near the western edge of its breeding range and were lucky to see 6 different individuals in Big Bend.

MAMMALS

Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus auduboni* — We saw quite a few of these in Big Bend.

Rock Squirrel *Spermophilus variegatus* — We had at least one in Chisos Basin of Big Bend.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog *Cynomys ludovicianus* — We saw quite a few about 10 miles northeast of Marathon, but the colony wasn't as big or as dense as I expected.

Collared Peccary (Javelina) *Tayassu tajacu* — We had several good close looks at this species in Big Bend.

Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus* — We had Mule Deer on at least 5 different days.

Pronghorn *Antilocarpa americana* — I thought we were going to miss Pronghorn, but we got good close looks on our drive to the Prairie Dog Town northeast of Marathon.

Bighorn Sheep *Ovis canadensis* — Well, I THOUGHT they were Bighorn Sheep, but . . .

Aoudad (Barbary Sheep) (I) *Ammotragus lervia* — they were Aoudad! We were close to a herd of a dozen at Davis Mountains State Park, then we saw 3 above Burro Mesa Pouroff in Big Bend. I had never seen them before!

Coyote *Canis latrans* — At Rio Grande Village, Wiley Coyote ignored the Roadrunner, but there they were, side by side.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Common Side-blotched Lizard *Uta stansburiana* — We saw several of these in the desert at Big Bend.

Chihuahuan Spotted Whiptail *Aspidoscelus exsanguis* — ()

Red Racer, subspecies of Coachwhip Snake *Masticophis flagellum* — We had great looks at a large individual sunning

himself at the entrance to Sam Nail Ranch.

Big Bend black-headed snake (*Tantilla cucullata*) – We picked one up along the trail south of Chisos Basin Campground.

American Bullfrog *Lithobates catesbeianus* — We had one by the Rio Grande River near Cottonwood Campground.

Tarantulas *Aphonopelma spp.* – There were lots of tarantulas in Big Bend, especially on the roads in the early morning.