

Southeast Arizona: Sky Island Winter Birding | Species List February 4 – 10, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



With guides Richard Fray and Bryan Calk and participants Randi, Jerome, Dick, Kay, Jody, Heidi, Mitch, Jean, Susan, and David

Compiled by Bryan Calk



Summary:

Sky island canyons, low deserts blanketed in saguaros, Chihuahuan desert grasslands, lakes, and wetlands set the backdrop for a rich week of winter birding in one of the most productive areas in the country. Some of our highlights were several species of hummingbird, thousands of Sandhill Cranes and waterfowl and a huge diversity of other birds at Whitewater Draw, Painted Redstart at Ramsey Canyon, and so many more. Beyond the birds, we enjoyed meeting new friends, eating delicious food, and learning about the rich culture and history of this region.

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/149231>

(I)= Introduced

Violet-crowned Hummingbird by Bryan Calk

BIRDS, 135 species

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*— Between 2-300 individuals staging at WD

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*— About 20 were mixed in with the Snow Geese at WD

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*— Rare for the area, two were at the far end of a group of Snow Geese

Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera*— One at Patagonia Lake State Park distantly, two at Whitewater Draw that gave great views in a close pond

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*— About a dozen at the Amado WTP, many at WD

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*— At least a pair at WD hanging in one of the front ponds

American Wigeon *Mareca americana*— A few good looking birds at the Amado WTP, one group at Canoa Ranch, and many at WD

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*— A few at Amado WTP and a few at WD

Mexican Duck *Anas diazi*— Two at Patagonia Lake State Park, and singles at WD and at the San Pedro House at the ephemeral pond

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*— Many at WD seen well

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*— A couple dozen at WD

Redhead *Aythya americana*— Great views of these on the main pond at Canoa Ranch

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*— Seen well through the scope at the Amado WTP

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*— Small groups at Amado WTP and PLSP

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola*— One female type that was constantly diving at WD

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser*— Good raft of these and some smaller groups all at PLSP

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*— Nice views at Amado WTP and lots including a couple very cooperative individuals at PLSP

NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae

Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii*— A couple seen only briefly and only by a couple of us, at the Amado Territory Inn

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS AND ALLIES: Phasianidae

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*— Many loitering around the Santa Rita lodge feeders

GREBES: Podicipedidae

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*— One at Canoa Ranch and a couple at PLSP, but most interesting was a juvenile bird with an adult at the San Pedro House

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*— A few extremely distantly at PLSP

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*— Seen daily, often in Palominas or when driving through other communities

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*— A couple at the Amado Territory Inn were the first, then seen at a few other spots

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*— One on the ground below the feeders at the Santa Rita Lodge

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*— One at PLSP

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*— Many seen throughout the tour, with good views at places like Paton's Center and the San Pedro House

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*— Seen abundantly throughout the tour, like at the Santa Rita Lodge and Whitewater Draw

CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae

Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus*— One seen briefly on our way out to WD and one at the San Pedro House, plus a few other sightings

HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae

Rivoli's Hummingbird *Eugenes fulgens*— One at the Santa Rita Lodge feeders and a couple at the Ramsey Canyon feeders but not seen well there

Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna*— One at Desert Meadows Park on day one, but maybe seen better at the Paton Center feeders

Costa's Hummingbird *Calypte costae*— Seen well at Desert Meadows Park where one was even building a nest; also at Canoa Ranch

Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cyananthus latirostris*— First seen at Desert Meadows Park, but also at Patagonia Lake State Park, the Paton's Center, and Ash Canyon

Violet-crowned Hummingbird *Leucolia violiceps*— Seen exceptionally well at the Paton's Center, also one coming to the feeder at Ramsey Canyon

RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae

Virginia Rail *Rallus limicola*— One heard at the San Pedro House ephemeral pond area from deep in the cattails

Sora *Porzana carolina*— Two seen exceptionally well walking the edge of the water at WD

American Coot *Fulica americana*— Seen at pretty much every water body we visited this week

CRANES: Gruidae

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*— At least 10,000 individuals came in for their midday roost at WD, first seen swirling high in the distant sky while watching the Bendire's Thrashers

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*— Several at Canoa Ranch and a couple at WD

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*— A couple dozen seen very well at WD walking the edges of a few of the ponds

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*— At least two seen sitting and flying around at WD

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*— One walking along the rocky and grassy edges of the pond at Canoa Ranch

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae

Double-crested Cormorant *Nannopterum auritum*— Gave fantastic comparison views with Neotropic at PLSP

Neotropic Cormorant *Nannopterum brasilianum*— one at PLSP and one at Canoa Ranch that was actively diving for and catching goldfish

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*— One at Amado WTP and at PLSP in the far corner of the lake near the cormorants

Great Egret *Ardea alba*— Improbably, one was fishing the tiny pond at the Amado Territory Inn, and one at the Amado WTP (may be the same individual)

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*— One seen as a fly-by at PLSP

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*— One fly-by at PLSP

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*— A couple at PLSP and one at the Paton's Center

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*— One soaring over Desert Meadows Park in Green Valley, and one as a seasonal rarity at WD

OSPREY: Pandionidae

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*— One at PLSP flying around seen a couple times

HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae

Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius*— A couple seen at Davis Pasture as we were seeking longspurs, then seen better at the WD area and at the San Pedro House

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*— The most dramatic showings at the San Pedro House and at Ash Canyon where they were hunting doves off the feeders

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*— One young bird at the San Pedro House along the trail through the grassy area between the river and the visitor center

Gray Hawk *Buteo plagiatus*— Two seen very well soaring over at the San Pedro House near the river

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*— Many seen throughout the tour, with good views at WD and the San Pedro House

BARN OWLS: Tytonidae

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*— At least four individuals seen roosting together at WD in an island of trees

OWLS: Strigidae

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*— One seen at Casa de San Pedro as it flew across the field, landing in a tall cottonwood tree. First detected as it was calling

WOODPECKERS: Picidae

Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*— One at our picnic spot in Madera Canyon

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus*— Several in Madera Canyon and coming to the Santa Rita Lodge feeders, also at Ramsey Canyon chasing an Arizona Gray Squirrel off their acorn stash

Gila Woodpecker *Melanerpes uropygialis*— Several seen throughout the week, like at Casa de San Pedro, PLSP, Paton's Center, etc.

Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Dryobates scalaris*— Seen well a few times, like at Paton's Center and at PLSP

Arizona Woodpecker *Dryobates arizonae*— One coming to the feeders at Santa Rita Lodge and a couple at Ramsey Canyon

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*— Good views at Ramsey Canyon, also at Ash Canyon and the San Pedro House were some less cooperative birds

Gilded Flicker *Colaptes chrysoides*— One seen well through the scope at the Brown Mountain Trailhead at Tucson Mountain Park

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*— Best encounter at San Pedro House where we saw a pair copulate in one of the world's largest Freemont Cottonwoods, also at WD and elsewhere while driving

Merlin *Falco columbarius*— One at WD

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*— One seen on a telephone pole as we were driving from Casa to Ramsey Canyon in the morning

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae

Hammond's Flycatcher *Empidonax hammondii*— One in a mixed flock of passerines at Ramsey Canyon

Gray Flycatcher *Empidonax wrightii*— One uncooperative bird at PLSP and another in a mixed flock along the trail to the river at the San Pedro House

Dusky Flycatcher *Empidonax oberholseri*— One hanging out behind the feeders at Paton's, foraging low

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*— A few seen during the tour, including good views at Canoa Ranch and WD

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya*— First at Canoa Ranch, but good views also at WD and Ash Canyon

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*— Great views at WD and Canoa Ranch where we got to see a variety of plumages

VIREOS: Vireonidae

Hutton's Vireo *Vireo huttoni*— One in a mixed flock at Ramsey Canyon that liked to stay high in the sycamore and oaks

SHRIKES: Laniidae

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*— A few seen on the roadsides while driving

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae

Mexican Jay *Aphelocoma wollweberi*— Several seen at Madera and Ramsey Canyon, and coming to the feeders at Ash Canyon

Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucus*— A couple seen in some agricultural fields near Elfrida just north of WD

Common Raven *Corvus corax*— Many seen throughout the week

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae

Bridled Titmouse *Baeolophus wollweberi*— First seen in Madera Canyon, but good views also had at Ash Canyon and Ramsey Canyon

PENDULINE TITS: Remizidae

Verdin *Auriparus flaviceps*— One of our first birds of the tour at Tucson Mountain Park, plus good views of them coming to the feeders at PLSP

LARKS: Alaudidae

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*— Several at Davis Pasture in Las Cienegas NCA plus a few along with the Chihuahuan Ravens and Mountain Bluebirds near Elfrida

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*— A few flying around PLSP

KINGLETS: Regulidae

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Corthylio calendula*— A few seen throughout the tour, including one at Ramsey Canyon that provided a nice comparison with Hutton's Vireo

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae

Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis*— One seen at Ramsey Canyon

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*— Several seen throughout the week with good views at the Santa Rita Lodge, Paton's Center, and Ramsey Canyon

CREEPERS: Certhiidae

Brown Creeper *Certhia americana*— One seen well at Ramsey Canyon creeping along a Sycamore

WRENS: Troglodytidae

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*— Mostly heard, but good views of one at PLSP and very briefly at WD

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*— Best views at Ash Canyon coming to the feeding area, but also at PLSP and Paton's Center

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*— First at Tucson Mountain Park singing from the top of a saguaro, but also hanging around Casa de San Pedro

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*— A few seen while driving through Green Valley and Tucson

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*—One found at the Amado Territory Inn was one of our rarest birds of the tour

Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre*— Several seen during the tour, with the most cooperative being an individual at Desert Meadows Park chilling on a prickly pear by the van

Bendire's Thrasher *Toxostoma bendirei*— Two seen together on a sideroad near WD

Crissal Thrasher *Toxostoma crissale*— Two seen perched up singing in a dry arroyo where we had stopped to try to get a view of a roadrunner

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*— One at Canoa Ranch

THRUSHES: Turdidae

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana*— A couple seen on the road to Ash Canyon on our second visit there

Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides*— A very large flock seen very distantly through scopes near WD, then a smaller flock seen much closer near Elfrida

Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi*— One at Casa de San Pedro, rare for the property, and one that didn't look too well at Ramsey Canyon

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*— Seen in small numbers at PLSP, Paton's Center, and Ramsey Canyon

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*— Many seen at the feeders we visited as well as in urban areas

PIPITS AND WAGTAILS: Motacillidae

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens*— A couple seen bopping along the edge of the water at WD

FINCHES: Fringillidae

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus*— Many seen during the tour, often at feeders

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus*— Seen well at the Paton's Center, Ash Canyon, and Ramsey Canyon feeders

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria*— Abundant throughout the tour, especially at feeders

LONGSPURS: Calcaridae

Chestnut-collared Longspur *Calcarius ornatus*— Dozens seen flocking around Davis Pasture of Las Cienegas NCA

Thick-billed Longspur *Rhynchophanes mccowni*— Uncommon – just a couple seen mixed in with the dominant Chestnut-collared Longspurs and Horned Larks at Davis Pasture

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae

Rufous-winged Sparrow *Peucaea carpalis*— First found at Desert Valley Park, with excellent views also at PLSP at the feeding area, singing

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*— Good numbers coming to the feeders at Ash Canyon, also at Ramsey Canyon and Paton's Center

Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri*— A few seen at WD while cruising the dirt roads, also one at Canoa Ranch in the cienega habitat

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata*— A couple at Tucson Mountain Park at our first stop of the tour, also a couple at Canoa Ranch

Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys*— Seen very well in the WD area a couple times, giving a nice comparison to similar sparrows nearby at times

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*— One at the Santa Rita Lodge feeders and one at Ash Canyon, of the Pink-sided subspecies

Yellow-eyed Junco *Junco phaeonotus*— A couple as we were leaving Ramsey Canyon in a juniper in the parking lot

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*— Seen abundantly during the tour, most numerous at the San Pedro House and WD

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*— One at PLSP was a continuing uncommon bird for the area

Vesper Sparrow *Pooecetes gramineus*— A good handful seen around WD while cruising the back roads by van

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*— A few around WD

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*— Seen very well at the San Pedro House and WD

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolni*— One single mixed in with a big flock of sparrows at WD and a few at the San Pedro House

Canyon Towhee *Melospiza fusca*— A few seen well at the San Pedro House, even right in the parking lot

Abert's Towhee *Melospiza aberti*— A couple at the Amado Territory Inn and at the San Pedro House down in the riparian area

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*— First seen at WD alongside the Bendire's Thrasher, but better views were at the San Pedro House

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*— One in the mixed flock on the walk down to the river at the San Pedro House, but also at the feeders at Ash Canyon on our second visit here

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae

Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta*— A few seen at WD in the ag fields surrounding the wildlife area

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*— A couple seen in the ag fields near the Mountain Bluebirds and Chihuahuan Raven

Hooded Oriole *Icterus cucullatus*— One adult male seen as we were about to load the van on our first morning of birding, seasonally rare

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*— Many seen at PLSP, WD, and at the San Pedro House all over the feeders and the cattails

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*— A flock of nearly 100 birds seen at WD

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*— Seen and heard very well at PLSP but also seen at a few other places

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae

Orange-crowned Warbler *Leiothlypis celata*— Singles at the Amado Territory Inn, Ash Canyon, and a couple at PLSP

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*— Seen exceptionally well at WD

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata*— Common during the tour with good views at places like Paton's Center and Ash Canyon

Townsend's Warbler *Setophaga townsendi*— Great views of a beautiful individual at the Santa Rita Lodge feeders

Painted Redstart *Myioborus pictus*— One stunning individual at Ramsey Canyon that gave us nice looks

CARDINAL-GROSBEAKS: Cardinalidae

Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava*— One seen well coming to the feeders at the Santa Rita Lodge, as well as our second visit to Ash Canyon

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*— Seen a few times during the tour, often at feeders

Pyrrhuloxia *Cardinalis sinuatus*— Great views at the feeders at Casa de San Pedro and the San Pedro House

Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena*— One giving partial views through the brambles at the Paton's Center

MAMMALS

Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana*— Seen well on our drive through the Sonoita grasslands

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*— The Coue's subspecies, seen on several occasions during the tour, including a mom with her young getting a drink at Ramsey Canyon

Collared Peccary *Pecari tajacu*— A small group came up on us as we were watching the feeders at Ash Canyon giving us excellent views

Coyote *Canis latrans*— One seen on our drive just outside Sierra Vista

Black-tailed Jackrabbit *Lepus californicus*— A couple seen hopping around the Amado Territory Inn and at Canoa Ranch

Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii*— Seen at WD area while driving back roads

Harris's Antelope Squirrel *Ammospermophilus harrisi*— Seen on our first day of the tour from the van

Rock Squirrel *Otospermophilus variegatus*— Seen a few times, including coming to the feeding area at PLSP

Arizona Gray Squirrel *Sciurus arizonensis*— A couple at PLSP and Paton's, plus a couple that attempted to raid an Acorn Woodpecker's granary at Ramsey Canyon

Cliff Chipmunk *Tamias dorsalis*—A couple seen at Ramsey Canyon

Yellow-nosed Cotton Rat *Sigmodon ochrognathus*—One or two seen rummaging through a brush pile along the fence at Ash Canyon

Botta's Pocket Gopher *Thomomys bottae*—One seen poking out of its hole and munching on some roots in a flowerbed at Ash Canyon