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**With guide Peter Burke, and clients Sue, Joyce, Gordon, Freddie, Will and Barbara**

Compiled by: Peter Burke

**Summary:**

Southeast Arizona and its sky islands are home to many species of birds and mammals found nowhere else in the U.S. This unique and fragile ecosystem is the northern limit for Mexican Chickadee, Blue-throated Mountain-gem, Arizona Woodpecker, and many more. It also provides important wintering ground for Sandhill Cranes and other waterfowl as well as grasslands that support sparrows and meadowlarks.

Our group arrived in Tucson and bee-lined south to Patagonia to visit the famous feeders at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds before checking into the Sonoita Inn and enjoying a pleasant drive through the Elgin Grasslands before dinner. The next morning we had excellent views of the local Pronghorn herd on our way to Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. In the afternoon we visited the Ramsey Canyon Preserve and its crazy Acorn Woodpeckers, then settled in for a two-night stay at the delightful Casa de San Pedro. Next up was the impressive wetlands at Whitewater Draw – renowned for its wintering Sandhill Cranes. Peg met us there and took us out into the Sulphur Valley to look for raptors and sparrows and we enjoyed a pleasant picnic lunch in the town of Elfrida. After another lovely night at the Casa, we packed the van and set out for the feeders at the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. Then we checked into our home for the remainder of the tour, Cave Creek Ranch, just outside the booming metropolis of Portal! From the Ranch, we explored the Coronado National Forest, Chiricahua National Monument and local hotspots around Portal, Paradise and nearby Rodeo, New Mexico. Our final birding stop was at Lake Cochise on the edge of the Twin Lakes Golf Course in Wilcox.

Following is a list of species seen on the trip or you can review the individual eBird checklists along with an interactive map in the eBird Trip Report compiled by Peter: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/82885>.

**BIRDS: 138 Species**

**DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae**

**Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*—Five birds observed on the far side of Whitewater Draw, although difficult to appreciate with 20,000+ Sandhill Cranes around!

**Cinnamon Teal** *Spatula cyanoptera*—A few females at Whitewater Draw and then lovely drake and hen in morning light viewed from the observation deck at Lake Cochise in Wilcox on our final day.

**Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata*—Many seen at Whitewater draw as well as Lake Cochise.

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera*— Many seen at Whitewater draw as well as Lake Cochise.

**American Wigeon** *Mareca americana*—Good numbers at Lake Cochise.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*— Many seen at Whitewater draw as well as Lake Cochise.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*— Many seen at Whitewater draw as well as Lake Cochise.

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas crecca*— Good numbers at Lake Cochise.

**Redhead** *Aythya americana*—A pair was pointed out by Peg at Whitewater Draw.

**Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris*—A few were discovered at the Willow Tank with Dave Jasper and then a few posed for photos at Lake Cochise. All females at both locations.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*—Good numbers at both Whitewater Draw and Lake Cochise, where a handsome male dozed…denying us a view of his bright blue bill.

**NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae**

**Scaled Quail** *Callipepla squamata*—One group scurried away from the van as we drove through the fields in the Sulphur Valley.

**Gambel’s Quail** *Callipepla gambelii*—Pleniful at Cave Creek and at Dave’s feeders!

**Montezuma Quail** *Cyrtonyx montezumae*—Two females were briefly seen along the Portal-Paradise Road and then flushed along with two previously unseen birds as we attempted to get better looks. While it would have been nice to get better looks, it was an extremely fortuitous encounter as these birds are notoriously difficult to find. Also notable was the fact that Dave had just mentioned that he had never seen Montezuma Quail on that road in his 31 years living there!

**PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS AND ALLIES: Phasianidae**

**Wild Turkey** *Meleagris gallopavo*—Gould’s Turkey (Meleagris gallopavo mexicana) is the largest subspecies of Wild Turkey with a range limited to northern Mexico into southeast Arizona. It was a delight to see so many on this trip, especially at the Cave Creek Ranch.

**GREBES: Podicipedidae**

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*—Several found at Whitewater Draw and Lake Cochise

**Eared Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*—Seen diving at Whitewater Draw and at close range at Lake Cochise.

**PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*—Seen primarily in towns we passed through.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*—Widespread and observed nearly every day, we had the chance to appreciate how much larger these are than the White-winged and Mourning doves.

**Inca Dove** *Columbina inca*—A few pairs seen at Casa de San Pedro and Cave Creek Ranch.

**Common Ground-Dove** *Columbina passerina*—Peg got us all onto one that flushed as we entered Whitewater Draw, which was fortunate as these are not “common” in late fall/winter months!

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica*—Plentiful!

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*—Plentiful!

**Band-tailed Pigeon** *Patagioenas fasciata* – Three individuals found on the road to Chiricahua Monument identified by their black-tipped yellow bill and bright white collar above glistening blue-green feathers on the nape. These were flagged as rare in eBird but were likely just late elevational migrants.

**CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae**

**Greater Roadrunner** *Geococcyx californianus*—After startling a few with the van, we were finally able to get good looks at one in the Sulphur Valley. After that, it was mostly whoever was riding shotgun that was able to get a quick look as one crossed the road.

**HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae**

**Rivoli’s Hummingbird** *Eugenes fulgens*—Two males were coming to the feeders at Ramsey Canyon.

**Anna’s Hummingbird** *Calypte anna*—The most abundant hummer of the trip, we saw these whenever we stopped at feeders.

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird** *Selasphorus platycercus*—Just one found at the Ramsey Canyon feeders, as Peter pointed out the characteristic trill the males make in flight due to their notched wing feathers.

**Broad-billed Hummingbird** *Cyananthus latirostris*—While not abundant, we did manage to find a few lingering individuals at Patons and from several locations in the Chiricahuas.

**Violet-crowned Hummingbird** *Leucolia violiceps*—Several were seen and photographed at Paton’s.

**Blue-throated Mountain-gem** (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – The largest hummingbird that nests in the U.S., were treated to two males patrolling the feeders at Cave Creek Ranch -- one of the highlights at this location. Catching their brilliant, sapphire-colored gorgets vexed the photographers in our group!

**RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae**

**Virginia Rail** *Rallus limicola*—Heard grunting and tick-ticking in the reeds at Whitewater Draw and later seen by Barbara in a very special, up-close-and-personal encounter!

**Sora** *Porzana carolina*—Heard first at Whitewater and then two were calling from the marshes at Willow Ponds. Sora are heard far more often than seen, and despite several attempts to lure one into sight, this was the case for our group.

**American Coot** *Fulica americana*—Abundant at Whitewater draw as well as Lake Cochise and a few were seen at Willow Ponds.

**CRANES: Gruidae**

**Sandhill Crane** *Antigone canadensis*—One of the highlights of the trip was getting to see and hear thousands of Greater and Lesser Sandhills at Whitewater Draw. Peg identified a juvenile Greater and helped us all hear its high-pitched vocalizations that stood out from the din of so many calling adults. And of course, later we were treated to an informative presentation by Kathy who spent many years observing Crane behavior as a volunteer at Bosque del Apache NWR.

**STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae**

**American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana*—A group of 10 made two passes over Lake Cochise but never landed.

**PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae**

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*—We heard Killdeer at Whitewater and Lake Cochise, but Susan spotted one at the Willow Ponds, and then another. Later four birds flushed from that location, proving how camouflaged they can be!

**SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae**

**Long-billed Curlew** *Numenius americanus*—Peter heard one give its distinctive flight call at Lake Cochise, but we were unable to locate it.

**Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla*—A dozen took off from one of the obscured puddles and flew across Lake Cochise without landing.

**Wilson’s Snipe** *Gallinago delicata*—There were at least six, maybe more scattered in the shallows around lake Cochise and we were able to see them make short, awkward flights in the marsh just before we departed.

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*—Peg found one in flight at Whitewater which proved to be the only one we would see all week. The low, stiff-winged flight style is distinctive.

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*—A few were heard and briefly seen in flight at Lake Cochise.

**GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae**

**Bonaparte’s Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*—The only gull we saw all week was a winter-plumaged individual at Whitewater Draw.

**HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae**

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*—Surprisingly scarce on this tour, we managed to see one flyover at Whitewater Draw and then a second was spotted hunkered down on the far side of Lake Cochise.

**NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae**

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*—Most vultures had migrated be the time we arrived, but we did manage to find a few lingering in the Sulphur Valley and on our way to the Chiricahua Monument.

**HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae**

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*—Those who didn’t dawdle at Jackie’s feeders were treated to the sight of an adult Golden Eagle in flight on the lower Paradise Road being harassed by two Red-tailed Hawks.

**Northern Harrier** *Circus hudsonius*—Abundant in the grasslands and along the edges of large bodies of water.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus*—A juvenile male erupted from the tangle of trees as we observed a group of Yellow-eyed Juncos feeding on our drive to the Chiricahua Monument.

**Cooper’s Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii*—A few were observed, all sub-adults I believe, including one perched behind the office at Cave Creek Ranch.

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*—Numerous, particularly along roadsides. By far the most abundant raptor of the tour.

**WOODPECKERS: Picidae**

**Red-naped Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*—We were fortunate to see many of these beautiful woodpeckers throughout the week.

**Acorn Woodpecker** *Melanerpes formicivorus*—While abundant, it’s nevertheless impossible not to appreciate the business of these colorful and gregarious woodpeckers as they toil away, caching acorns for the winter months!

**Gila Woodpecker** *Melanerpes uropygialis*—We were treated to close-up of this southwest desert specialty. For many it was a highlight of the trip to see and listen to these highly social woodpeckers as they jockeyed for position at the Casa feeders.

**Ladder-backed Woodpecker** *Dryobates scalaris*—A pair were seen feeding on the ground at

**Arizona Woodpecker** *Dryobates arizonae*—We had wonderful opportunities to study males and females at close range at Cave Creek and in Paradise at Jackie’s feeders. One of the SE Arizona specialties!

**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*—The western, red-shafted variety was abundant and seen daily.

Hairy Woodpecker Picoides villosus – A male visited the Cave Creek feeders.

**Red-naped x Red-breasted Sapsucker** – Seen and photographed in the Chiricahua Monument!

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** – A rare sighting in the Chiricahuas, a juvenile was feeding at Jackie’s house. As Dave pointed out, juvenile Red-naped would have molted into adult plumage by this time or year, whereas juv. Yellow-bellied retain their brown color through the winter.

**FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae**

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*—Common and widespread throughout the valley.

**Prairie Falcon** *Falco mexicanus*—Sharp-eyed Susan spotted a perched bird on a tower outside Elfrida. The bird promptly sped off exposing the characteristic dark axillaries (armpits) while in flight.

**TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae**

**Hammond’s Flycatcher** *Empidonax hammondii*—One identified just down the road from Jackie’s house in Paradise.

**Gray Flycatcher** *Empidonax wrightii*—Joyce noticed this flycatcher when we stopped at a small watering hold in the Cienega Grasslands, and we were all able to observe its characteristic downward tail flicks.

**Dusky Flycatcher** *Empidonax oberholseri*—One seen and photographed by Peter at the feeders at Casa de San Pedro, and a second observed on the road to East Turkey Creek in Cave Creek Canyon.

**Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans*—Several seen and heard at Whitewater Draw, at the little pond behind Casa de San Pedro, and in the wetlands behind Lake Cochise.

**Say’s Phoebe** *Sayornis saya*—Surprisingly common on this trip, we had many opportunities to observe this smartly active flycatcher, often in close proximity to Black Phoebe.

**Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus*—Several bright males posed for photographs at Whitewater Draw and on our final day we had the opportunity to view an equally stunning female.

**Cassin’s Kingbird** *Tyrannus vociferans*—We found several actively feeding in the grasslands around Elgin. More surprising were three seen at Cave Creek Ranch on Tuesday and then another found in downtown Portal on Wednesday.

**VIREOS: Vireonidae**

**Hutton’s Vireo** *Vireo huttoni*—Two viewed on our drive from Cave Creek Ranch to Paradise.

**SHRIKES: Laniidae**

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*—Not always an easy bird to see, but abundant on our trip and seen nearly every day!

**CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae**

**Steller’s Jay** *Cyanocitta stelleri*—Frustratingly difficult to get the group on, we had several fleeting encounters with this jay when we ascended into the Ponderosa Pine zone.

**Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay** *Aphelocoma woodhouseii*—Many were coming into the feeders at Dave’s. It’s interesting that this species and Mexican Jay seem to avoid one another. Dave said that he seldom gets Mexican Jays at his feeders, and Reed noted that the Scrub-Jays seldom come over the hill the the feeders at Cave Creek.

**Mexican Jay** *Aphelocoma wollweberi*—Common and quite vocal at most of our feeder stops.

**Chihuahuan Raven** *Corvus cryptoleucus*—We were able to enjoy a close study of one pair that was perched on the corral in the Las Cienegas NCA, giving their diagnostic, crow-like croaking calls. Later we encountered large groups in and around the pecan groves in Rodeo. Common Ravens are rarely seen in groups larger than six, so this was another means of identifying these southwest desert specialists.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*—Seen throughout the week in flight and perched along the roads.

**TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae**

**Bridled Titmouse** *Baeolophus wollweberi*—Our best looks at this incredibly cute titmouse were at the Cave Creek feeders.

**Juniper Titmouse** *Baeolophus ridgwayi*—We had our first at Jackie’s feeders and then noticed one coming to the feeders at Cave Creek as well.

**Mexican Chickadee** *Poecile sclateri*—The Chiricahuas is the only place in the ABA region where this chickadee breeds, so it was a must-see on our trip. It’s found in the higher elevations, yet in spite of making several stops on the way to and from the Chiricahua Monument, we did not encounter any until our last day along the road from Portal to Paradise!

**PENDULINE TITS: Remizidae**

**Verdin** *Auriparus flaviceps*—One made a brief visit to the feeders at Cave Creek. On our last day, some of the group went in search of Crissal Thrasher and were fortunate to find one Verdin that came in for wonderfully close up observation.

**LARKS: Alaudidae**

**Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*—Several dozen adults and juveniles were working the area in front of the corral at the Las Cienegas grasslands.

**SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae**

**Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor*—Two found perched on the wires at Lake Cochise outside Wilcox.

**Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*—A lone juvenile was also perched on the wires at Lake Cochise.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*—Three somewhat disheveled birds, likely first-year, were on the wires as we drove in. Will got photos and I’ll add these to eBird since the sighting was flagged as rare, likely just getting late in the season for swallows.

**KINGLETS: Regulidae**

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Corthylio calendula*—Southern Arizona is the wintering ground for these tiny, busy little kinglets. We saw and, more often, heard them flitting through the pines, often mixed with other songbirds.

**NUTHATCHES: Sittidae**

**White-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta carolinensis*—We encountered this species nearly every day, in large part because of its distinctive call that sounds like laughter. This is the Rocky Mountain subspecies, distinguished by its clean white face, dark back and dark gray flanks.

**CREEPERS: Certhiidae**

**Brown Creeper** *Certhia americana*—We saw several nice examples of this Mexican subspecies with a dark brown rump and smudgy gray breast.

**WRENS: Troglodytidae**

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*—One was in the parking lot at the Ramsey Canyon feeders, peeking out from a prickly pear cactus. A second was heard as we were searching for Mexican Chickadee on the road to Paradise.

**Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris*—Although quite loud, Marsh Wrens can be tricky to see as they tend to stay deep in the reeds. We had many opportunities to appreciate their rich and complex vocalizations and, for those who were patient, quick looks as they moved restlessly through the wetlands.

**Bewick’s Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii*—Perhaps best seen around the feeders at Casa de San Pedro, we nevertheless came across this species at many of our stops.

**Cactus Wren** *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*—The birds at Casa de San Pedro really put on a show for us. We were able to watch them nest building and later learned that their nests are also used through the chilly winter months.

**MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae**

**Curve-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma curvirostre*—Although common throughout the week, we never tired of watching these southwest desert specialists move through the cactus or stealing seed below the feeders. When we birded in and around Rodeo, we were able to see the Chihuahuan subspecies, which differs from the Sonoran by having a darker back with more contrasting white wing bars and a noticeably longer bill along with a dark orange iris.

**Bendire’s Thrasher** *Toxostoma bendirei*—Very similar to Curve-billed, we had one chance to find Bendire’s when we were out with Peg in the Sulphur Springs Valley. Sure enough, one was seen and later posed for photos to the delight of the group.

**Crissal Thrasher** *Toxostoma crissale*—A few of us ventured out into the mesquite on Wednesday afternoon to try a second time for this notoriously shy and elusive thrasher. We were rewarded as one of the two we saw uncharacteristically perched high in a mesquite and sang as we slowly moved in for photos.

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*—One or two seen at the entrance to Las Cienegas, and others heard at various stops.

**THRUSHES: Turdidae**

**Western Bluebird** *Sialia mexicana*—Several sightings in the Chiricahuas, notably on the road to Paradise.

**Townsend’s Solitaire** *Myadestes townsendi*—We had several chances to see this melodious thrush up close, particularly after lunch in Portal.

**Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus*—Only one bird was seen, pointed out by Dave as we searched for Mexican Chickadee.

**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*—A significant influx into the Chiricahuas was somewhat unusual for the area.

**WAXWINGS: Bombycillidae**

**Cedar Waxwing** *Bombycilla cedrorum*—Small flocks seen (and heard for those who can detect their high-pitched flight calls) over Cave Creek and Portal.

**SILKY-FLYCATCHERS: Ptilogonatidae**

**Phainopepla** *Phainopepla nitens*—One male was perched on the wire as we drove to Rodeo for breakfast.

**OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*—It was fun watching Dave zap the House Sparrows that were taking over his feeders.

**PIPITS AND WAGTAILS: Motacillidae**

**American Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*—There are usually a few along the dike at Whitewater Draw in winter and we were able to watch four in flight and listen to their distinctive flight calls that gives the species its name.

**FINCHES: Fringillidae**

**House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Common throughout the week.

**Pine Siskin** *Spinus pinus*—Just one found in a mixed flock above East Turkey Creek.

**Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria*—Seen whenever we visited feeders.

**NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae**

**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*—One of the more common sparrows at this time of year.

**Black-chinned Sparrow** *Spizella atrogularis*—A Chihuahuan desert specialist, this sparrow is difficult to find without the local knowledge of a pro like Dave! We saw two, possibly three in a drainage along the road from Paradise to Portal.

**Brewer’s Sparrow** *Spizella breweri*—A large flock by the coral at Las Cienegas was our first sighting of this long-tailed but otherwise inconspicuous sparrow. We later had nice scope views at the Willow Tank in Portal.

**Clay-colored Sparrow** *Spizella pallida*—When we stopped to admire Gamble’s Quail that was perched on a fencepole on a road outside Elfrida, there was a handsome Clay-colored perched on the fence next to it, but only seen by those in the front of the van unfortunately.

**Black-throated Sparrow** *Amphispiza bilineata*—A striking sparrow, we enjoyed several perched high in the mesquite near the Portal fire station.

**Lark Sparrow** *Chondestes grammacus*—One was perched on a yucca stalk right next to a Brewer’s Sparrow at the coral in Las Cienegas.

**Lark Bunting** *Calamospiza melanocorys*—A large flock was working the weeds on the side of the road outside Elfrida, however, the group’s attention quickly turned to a Bendire’s Thrasher and I’m not sure everyone had the chance to view Colorado’s state bird!

**Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis*—Two were found near the East Turkey Creek and later one came into the feeders at Jackie’s.

**Yellow-eyed Junco** *Junco phaeonotus*—We stopped on the road to the Chiricahua Monument when we came upon a small flock of these busy little sparrows, seldom seek outside of southeast Arizona.

**White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—A common wintering sparrow, we saw and heard these at many locations throughout the week.

**Vesper Sparrow** *Pooecetes gramineus*—On several occasions we were able to get a Vesper in the scope so the group could appreciate the bold white eye ring, snappy red shoulder banners and bright pink legs.

**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*—We only saw a few of these, one at the Willow Tank in Portal was cooperative and gave people time to appreciate the boldly streaked flanks and crisp, thin eye ring, although it lacked the yellow above the lores. Then at Lake Cochise we had dozens in the weeds along the perimeter road.

**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*—One of our first birds in the scope, we took some time at the Paton Center to appreciate the pale, reddish sonoran subspecies.

**Lincoln’s Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolnii*—One popped up behind the feeders at Casa de San Pedro and a second, spotted at Whitewater Draw, provided better looks for the group.

**Chestnut-collared Longspur** *Calcarius ornatus*—A flock circled and circled the Willow Ponds, but never settled down for a drink.

**Canyon Towhee** *Melozone fusca*—A pair of smart-looking Canyon Towhees were out scratching in the dust along with the Cactus Wrens and Curve-billed Thrashers at the entrance to Casa de San Pedro.

**Abert’s Towhee** *Melozone aberti*—While the hummers stole the show at Paton’s, we did have the chance to admire an adult Abert’s Towhee that perched a few times in the wood pile. This turned out to be our only encounter with this species.

**Green-tailed Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*—Moments after Joyce announced that she would really, really like to see a Green-tailed Towhee, we were blessed with one and then a second in the reeds at the small pond behind the feeders at Casa de San Pedro. Yay!

**Spotted Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*—We heard many on our drive up to the Monument and then, as we were finishing up our picnic, one flew in right next to our table and immediately got to scratching, doing the classic two-footed dance of the towhee.

**NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae**

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*—Maybe 10,000? More? Regardless, none will forget the awesome spectacle of the murmurating blackbirds at Whitewater Draw!

**Chihuahuan Meadowlark** *Sturnella lilianae*—Formerly “Lilian’s” subspecies of Eastern Meadowlark, it was promoted to full species in 2022 based on research by Johanna Beam when she was an undergraduate at the University of Colorado Boulder! This was the only species of meadowlark we identified on this trip, and we were able to get great scope views showing the comparatively pale color with grayish tones on the back along with the distinctive buzzy call note.

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*—Common wherever there was water.

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*—One seen when we were in the Sulphur Springs Valley with Peg.

**Brewer’s Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*—As we were leaving Lake Cochise I misidentified a female Brewer’s Blackbird, thinking it was a cowbird. Then we saw a few more Brewer’s including at least one nice, glossy blue-black male with its bright yellow eye in with the grackles. I wish we’d had time to get out and see those birds better!

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*—Several individuals or small groups throughout the week and then the one larger flock we saw at Lake Cochise.

**NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae**

**Orange-crowned Warbler** *Leiothlypis celata*—One seen on our first day at Paton’s.

**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas*—A few females/first-year males at Whitewater.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*—By far the most common warbler, most were Audubon’s, grayer overall with yellow throats that don’t wrap around the neck and little to no white eyebrow.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler** *Setophaga nigrescens*—One was seen although it was backlit and moving quickly in the leaves, making it difficult to see.

**Townsend’s Warbler** *Setophaga townsendi*—One seen at Ramsey Canyon and then a bright male came into the feeders at Cave Creek for Barbara!

**Painted Redstart** *Myioborus pictus*—Another SE Arizona specialty that didn’t disappoint!

**CARDINAL-GROSBEAKS: Cardinalidae**

**Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis*—Nice to see the southwestern subspecies with its tall crest.

**Pyrrhuloxia** *Cardinalis sinuatus*—Another target species for the trip, we had many opportunities to study them, often side by side with cardinals.

**Lazuli Bunting** *Passerina amoena*—One female was seen off and on in the fields just outside the gate at Casa de San Pedro.

**MAMMALS**

**Pronghorn** *Antilocapra americana*—We started off the trip with a nice herd right outside the Sonoita Inn!

**White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus*—The Coues desert subspecies were certainly plentiful. This is the second smallest of the White-tailed Deer, only the Key Deer is smaller.

**Collared Peccary** *Pecari tajacu*—Javelina is the local name and they are regulars at Cave Creek.

**Coyote** *Canis latrans*—It was neat to see one hunting in the ag fields in the Sulphur Spgs. Valley, showing off those jump moves.

**White-nosed Coati** *Nasua narica*—Another Cave Creek regular, Will pointed out that it was sleeping way out on a branch of the tree in front of the office one afternoon.

**Desert Cottontail** *Sylvilagus audubonii*—We found a few hopping along the edges of the dry mesquite.

**Harris’s Antelope Squirrel** *Ammospermophilus harrisii*—Sue IDed the first on our drive to the Monument. Later we saw a few at Dave’s feeders.

**Rock Squirrel** *Otospermophilus variegatus*—I think this was the first squirrel we identified at Paton’s feeders with the rust-red tail and neat white eye ring.

**Arizona Gray Squirrel** *Sciurus arizonensis*—Also at Paton’s and in the Chiricahuas.

**Apache Fox Squirrel** *Sciurus nayaritensis*—a.k.a. Mexican Fox Squirrel, this is the only large tree squirrel in the Chiricahuas.

**Cliff Chipmunk** *Tamias dorsalis*—With its long tail and bright rufous lines on the white face, a real stunner.

**Hooded Skunk** *Mephitis macroura*—Up to four seen outside the Cave Creek office most evenings.

**REPTILES**

**Yarrow’s Spiny Lizard** *Sceloporus jarrovii*—Seen on the rocks in Chiricahua National Monument. (This is what we were thinking was Collared Lizard.)

**Black-tailed Rattlesnake** *Crotalus molossus* —A gorgeous green morph, this was the Mexican subspecies (C. m. nigrescens). Pointed out at the last minute by Joyce, we all got to get nice photos and watch as it digested its dinner.

**Grand Canyon Black Tarantula** *Aphonopelma Marxi—*A few spotted on the road in Chiricahua National Monument, and then a smaller one (male?) found in Portal by the fire station.

**CHIRICAHUA LEOPARD FROG** *Rana chiricahuensis*—We made the hike to the ponds up in Ramsey Canyon where this endangered frog breeds.