



Field Guides Tour Report

ARIZONA WINTER SPECIALTIES 2014

Dec 27, 2014 to Jan 2, 2015
Dave Stejskal & Tom Johnson

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



These American Wigeon were just a few of the many thousands of waterfowl that pour into the scattered ponds and lakes of southern Arizona during the winter months. For a desert tour, we did pretty well, notching 22 species of waterfowl! Photo by guide Tom Johnson.

This holiday tour is designed to sample the unique winter birding offerings of southern Arizona. While many birders know about the legendary desert and mountain birding of southeastern Arizona in spring and late summer, winter is frequently overlooked. The legions of raptors, waterbirds, sparrows, and desert specialties provide excellent subject material for a short winter trip.

The group met in Phoenix, our home for the first two nights of the tour. We headed straight out for an afternoon walk along the paths at Gilbert Water Ranch, seeing a desert surprise in the form of a Brown Pelican flying along the van as we passed Tempe Town Lake. The hedges and water at Gilbert Water Ranch provided our first looks at desert birds like Gambel's Quail, Curve-billed Thrasher, and Abert's Towhee, and we even found a rare Cackling Goose mixed in with a flock of Canadas.

The sun rose on us the next morning well west of Phoenix in the arid desert flats near Buckeye as we searched for some of the best songsters of the trip - the thrashers. Mid-winter actually marks the advent of breeding activity for desert thrashers, and we found Le Conte's, Bendire's, and Crissal Thrashers quite readily, with a few Sagebrush Sparrows added in for good measure. The agricultural fields nearby contributed Ferruginous Hawk and a large flock of Long-billed Curlews before we headed to check some more lush, upland desert scrub for Bell's Sparrows. The winter status of Bell's and Sagebrush Sparrows in Arizona (or anywhere, really) hasn't been fully clarified, but we were pleased to find several interior Bell's Sparrows after a short romp through the brush. Buoyed by our success, we headed back to Phoenix to visit with the Rosy-faced Lovebirds of Encanto Park before calling it a day.

Day 3 found us focusing on the arid Santa Cruz Flats between Tucson and Phoenix. Highlights here included an excellent flock of 78 Mountain Plovers on a sod farm, scope views of McCown's Longspurs, a Great Horned Owl in a tamarisk, Crested Caracaras standing around on the ground, and a gorgeous Prairie Merlin hunting wasps and dragonflies in the blue sky above us. We cruised on down to Tucson and ended the day with Lawrence's Goldfinches in a weedy field, large flocks of male Yellow-headed Blackbirds going to roost, and a handsome adult Lewis's Woodpecker that alternated between eucalyptus and palm perches.

We had an early start to Day 4 that took us south to the San Rafael Valley near the headwaters of the Santa Cruz River. Here, we scoured the quiet roadsides in these pristine grasslands in search of Baird's Sparrow. Though we heard quite a few Baird's calling, it took a while before we found "the one" that sat still in the open for us to admire at length. We then visited the very active feeders at the Paton's House in Patagonia and ended the day with some great mixed flocks in the lakeside mesquite bosque at Patagonia Lake State Park, where we found two rare Black-capped Gnatcatchers along with Cassin's and Plumbeous Vireos and other songbird goodies.

The following day, we headed east along I-10 to the vast Sulphur Springs Valley. Starting in Willcox, we worked our way south to the impoundment at Whitewater Draw, finding lots of ducks, raptors (more Ferruginous Hawks), and a surprisingly large flock of hundreds of Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs near Kansas Settlement. The Sandhill Cranes at Whitewater Draw were farther away than we'd hoped, but we did enjoy watching the large flocks coming in from the north and landing at the edge of the lake. Closer views were had of Cinnamon Teal and rare-in-winter Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks.

The transition from 2014 to 2015 was a cold one in the Tucson area, and we noticed plenty of snow up in the mountains as we donned our jackets and began birding on January 1st near Green Valley. We found some unusual waterbirds including Pacific Loon and Greater White-fronted Goose before heading to Tubac to walk along the riparian corridor of the Santa Cruz River in search of a Sinaloa Wren that Dave had found here, just one of a few records for the US. We heard the wren calling and singing, but never were able to see it; however, we did have splendid looks at a close, calling Greater Pewee, and then we stumbled into a megaflock of around 250 (!) quacking Chihuahuan Ravens, with a few Commons mixed in for comparison. After a quick retreat from snowy Madera Canyon (full of kids and sleds!), we took a very interesting walk along the trail in Florida Canyon. Here we had great views at three more Black-capped Gnatcatchers, heard a Winter Wren (an Eastern vagrant here) calling, and also had a nice run-in with Cactus Wrens and Black-chinned Sparrows.

It would have been tough to pack too much more into our week in southern Arizona. While there weren't too many Mexican rarities around this winter, we did have many excellent views of some tough and beautiful birds. Dave and I really enjoyed the tour, and we hope to see you back again, either for an Arizona tour in the warmer months or for some other destination entirely.

Thanks,

Tom Johnson

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – Two of these goofy-looking tree ducks were snoozing on a small island at Whitewater Draw in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*) – Two at the Green Valley Water Treatment Plant were in the company of two Snow Geese. These are unusual in southern Arizona in winter.

SNOW GOOSE (*Chen caerulescens*) – We saw a flock of about 100 Snow/ Ross's Geese at Whitewater Draw - most were certainly Snow Geese. Later, we saw two Snow Geese with two Greater White-fronted Geese at Green Valley Water Treatment Plant.

ACKLING GOOSE (*Branta hutchinsii*) – One fairly stocky individual was loafing with Canada Geese on a lake at the Gilbert Water Ranch on the first evening of the tour.

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – Generally uncommon in southern Arizona, we ran into most of ours around the Phoenix metro area, including a large flock at the Gilbert Water Ranch.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*) – Common; seen in many locations.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Common; seen in many locations.

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – These dark Mallards are most common in extreme southern Arizona. We saw a few Mexican/ Northern Mallard intergrades as well.

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*) – We found these attractive small ducks at Patagonia Lake State Park and Whitewater Draw.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – Common; seen in many locations.

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*)

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*)

CANVASBACK (*Aythya valisineria*) – Our best views came at Benson Water Treatment Plant and the Faria Dairy near Kansas Settlement.

REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*) – We saw a flock of these divers at the Benson Water Treatment Plant; another single was at the Green Valley Water Treatment Plant.

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*)

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – Common; seen in many locations.

BUFFLEHEAD (*Bucephala albeola*) – Two were at the Coachline Gravel Pits in NW Tucson.

HOODED MERGANSER (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) – We saw a few at Gilbert Water Ranch and another flew over at Arrowhead Ranch during our Eurasian Wigeon search.

COMMON MERGANSER (*Mergus merganser*) – A few of these slender, large divers were scattered around in the Phoenix and Tucson areas, and we saw another at Faria Dairy in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*) – One female was at the golf course pond in Benson.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – Common; seen in many locations.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*)

Gaviidae (Loons)

PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia pacifica*) – One was a rare sighting on a small golf course pond near Green Valley.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – We found these only in the Phoenix area, where a few were at Gilbert Water Ranch as well as on ponds near Buckeye.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – One was spotted during our drive to our first birding outing. The bird was flying over Tempe Town Lake, and is a long term resident here, presumably after arriving from the Gulf of California.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*)

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – A few were in agricultural ponds near Buckeye; one that flew past at Whitewater Draw was unusual for southeastern Arizona in winter.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – A flock of 20 circling near Buckeye marked a notable count for the area. This species is increasing rapidly in southern Arizona.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – We found these around water at Gilbert Water Ranch and at ponds in agricultural areas near Buckeye.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) – Widespread in open areas, especially grasslands.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – One of these small Accipiters circled over us at the Santa Cruz Flats; another played peek-a-boo along the Anza Trail near Tubac.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – Common in desert lowlands; we saw these on most days.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – At least two of these huge raptors circled with vultures near Buckeye on our second day.

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – During our lovebird stop at Encanto Park in Phoenix, one of these handsome hawks was perched atop a pole along the driving range. We even got to hear its harsh, raspy calls.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Common and widespread; we saw a mix of light and dark morph birds.

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (*Buteo regalis*) – Our first was perched on a utility t-bar near Buckeye. During our drive through the Sulphur Springs Valley, we found at least 10 more, including a handsome dark morph bird perched on an irrigator. These impressive hawks were a distinctive highlight of our raptor list.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) – We had fantastic looks at an unwary bird along the mesquite trail at Patagonia Lake State Park; another was calling from the marshy edge of the golf course pond at Benson.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – One was sneaky and hard-to-spot in one of the smaller ponds at Whitewater Draw.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Common and widespread; we saw these every day.

Gruidae (Cranes)

SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*) – One of the great delights of the Sulphur Springs Valley was seeing large flocks of cranes at Whitewater Draw and in nearby fields. We estimated 3500 in the large mass along the edge of the lake at Whitewater. Hearing their rattles and chortling calls carrying over the cold wind made this a truly memorable experience.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – These gangly shorebirds were at Gilbert Water Ranch and in a flooded field in the northern part of the Santa Cruz Flats.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Common and widespread; we saw these every day of the tour.

MOUNTAIN PLOVER (*Charadrius montanus*) – A flock of 78 made our day at a sod farm in the Santa Cruz Flats. When we pulled onto a side road for scope views, several of the birds ran over to the close edge of the fields, making for some splendid views.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) – A large flock of 136 were feeding with yellowlegs and other shorebirds in a recently flooded field near Buckeye.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Arizona's common winter peep.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – These chunky, gray dowitchers were at the Gilbert Water Ranch and in flooded fields near Buckeye and in the Santa Cruz Flats.

WILSON'S SNIBE (*Gallinago delicata*) – We found these in several spots; perhaps our best views were at the Long-billed Curlew field near Buckeye.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Everywhere, especially around people. This bird has taken over southern Arizona in the last fifteen years. [I]

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – Nice views at these at Paton's House in Patagonia and a few other stops; declining significantly in southern Arizona.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*)

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – Two were fussing at each other along the canal near Buckeye; Saint spotted another one while we were driving near Green Valley later in the tour.

Strigidae (Owls)

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops kennicottii*) – One responded to Dave's imitation in broad daylight in Tubac.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – One was in a nesting/ roosting tree in the Santa Cruz Flats; another two were found in late afternoon in the trees at Whitewater Draw.

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – A highlight for many - Kelly spotted our first near Buckeye, and then we were fortunate to find several more in the Santa Cruz Flats.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*) – The common hummer of this tour (come back in the summer for much greater diversity!), Anna's breed early, and we enjoyed hearing their grating songs at many of our stops.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – Good views along the Anza Trail in Tubac.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*)

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

LEWIS'S WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes lewis*) – Stunning! We saw three of these unique woodpeckers, and got to see their bizarre crow-like flight and spectacular colors - one adult was at Jacobs Park in Tucson; another two were on pecan trees near Green Valley.

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

GILA WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – Everywhere! Very common in the desert.

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) – One called and revealed itself briefly during our lunch break in the Santa Cruz Flats.

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*)

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – More widespread and common than Gilded Flicker here in winter; we saw these handsome woodpeckers on most days.

GILDED FLICKER (*Colaptes chrysoides*) – Wow! One flew right past us at the Buckeye "thrasher spot", showing off its dull yellow wing linings and gray face. A desert specialty.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – We found a group of 7 standing around on the ground in the southeastern part of the Santa Cruz Flats.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – Common throughout the lowlands.

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – We saw these several times; three were of the pale Prairie subspecies *richardsoni*, but we also saw a very dark individual at the Faria Dairy in the Sulphur Springs Valley. It seemed very dark for a Taiga Merlin, but perhaps not quite right for a typical Black Merlin. We decided to leave that one as a Taiga/ Black in our notes.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – One was at the Gilbert Water Ranch on the first afternoon of the tour.

PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*) – Our best view was of one circling high over the Long-billed Curlew flock near Buckeye on the second day. We even traded scope views of this handsome falcon.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)

ROSY-FACED LOVEBIRD (*Agapornis roseicollis*) – Well-established in the Phoenix area (and recently added to the ABA checklist), these little parrots showed up right on cue when we pulled in to Encanto Park. [I]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*)

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*) – One showed off its long primary projection and nervous twitching along the Anza Trail in Tubac.

GRAY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax wrightii*) – We found this distinctive *Empidonax* species tail-dipping both at Patagonia Lake State Park and along the Anza Trail in Tubac.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – This was the *Empid* that we heard making "whit" calls with the relatively short primary projection and long-appearing tail in the mesquite bosque at Patagonia Lake State Park; another was at the Sinaloa Wren spot along the Anza Trail near Tubac.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*)

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – This was a nice rarity from the East; Patagonia Lake State Park occasionally attracts this species in winter, but otherwise it is quite rare in Arizona.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*)

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Increasing as a winterer in southern Arizona; we saw these incredible little tyrants on most days.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Widespread; seen most days along the roadsides.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – We found the species both at Patagonia Lake and in Tubac; both times we saw a Plumbeous Vireo in the company of a brighter Cassin's Vireo, oddly enough.

CASSIN'S VIREO (*Vireo cassinii*) – These bright "Solitary" Vireos weren't being very solitary when we found them - they were hanging out with Plumbeous Vireos at Patagonia Lake and in Tubac. The stronger contrast and brighter olive and yellow colors help to distinguish Cassin's from the duller Plumbeous Vireo.

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*)

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*)

CHIHUAHUA RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – A startlingly large flock of ~250 descended on the large trees on the west side of the Santa Cruz River during our Sinaloa Wren walk near Tubac. We were able to compare the duck-like quacks of the smaller Chihuahuans to the more varied calls of the larger Common Ravens.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*)

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*)

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*)

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – We found this distinctive-sounding subspecies of White-breasted Nuthatch at Paton's House in Patagonia and in Florida Canyon.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – One bounced around on the rock ledges along the trail in Florida Canyon.

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)

WINTER WREN (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) – We heard the Song Sparrow-like "chimp-chimp" calls of one of these Eastern vagrants in Florida Canyon while looking for Painted Redstarts and Elegant Trogons. Though Dave was able to make a recording of one of its growl calls, we couldn't quite convince it to pop into view. [*]

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*)

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – Surprisingly, our only views came of a small group on the rocky (and cactus-covered) slopes of lower Florida Canyon on the last afternoon.

SINALOA WREN (*Thryophilus sinaloa*) – Despite our best efforts, we couldn't see this long-staying bird, which called (the ratchet-like growl) and sang from the bed of the Santa Cruz River south of Tubac. Dave found this individual in September 2013 and it has built several nests along a short stretch of the river bed; it is just the fourth record of the species in the US. [*]

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*)

BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila nigriceps*) – Normally a very rare visitor from Mexico to thornscrub and hackberry thickets on slopes in Arizona, we found this species twice. Two were with a mixed flock of songbirds at Patagonia Lake and three were working along the trail in Florida Canyon, offering very close views to the group.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – We found small flocks at our lunch spot in Harshaw Canyon and also at the Florida Canyon corral.

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – This is the common and widespread thrasher of lowland southern Arizona. Some of our best views came on the first afternoon at Gilbert Water Ranch near the flock of mockingbirds.

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – Two of these chatterboxes sat up and serenaded us with their beautiful, cascading song as we watched through the scopes at the Buckeye "thrasher spot".

LE CONTE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma lecontei*) – One of these gorgeous sand-colored, dark-eyed thrashers sat up and sang for us at the Buckeye "thrasher spot"; after we had our fill, it was joined by another individual and we got to see them running full-tilt across the ground between bushes. Later, we found another pair across the road while searching for Sagebrush Sparrows.

CRISSAL THRASHER (*Toxostoma crissale*) – Two of these large, scythe-billed thrashers sat up pretty much right where our van was parked at the Buckeye "thrasher spot". All we had to do was walk away in search of other birds and then return - presto!

SAGE THRASHER (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) – During our hunt for Bell's Sparrow southwest of Buckeye, one of these odd, streaky thrashers popped up and sat atop a bush for some good views. They are winter visitors here.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Common and widespread; a group of 12 feeding on fruit at Gilbert Water Ranch seemed like a

huge flock for this species.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [H]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*)

Ptiliogonatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAIÑOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – These sleek, red-eyed silky-flycatchers were perched up along the road to Madera Canyon on our last day. The abundant desert mistletoe fruit here was the big attractant for these wandering specialists.

Calcariidae (Longspurs and Snow Buntings)

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (*Calcarius ornatus*) – We found a large flock of these chattering longspurs hiding in a grassy field edge near Kansas Settlement in the Sulphur Springs Valley. It was amazing how well they hid upon landing, but we were able to key in nicely on some adult males with mostly black underparts.

MCCOWN'S LONGSPUR (*Rhynchophanes mccownii*) – Our first views were of a group that flew in to drink briefly at a flooded field in the northern Santa Cruz Flats. Then, our best looks came at the sod farms with the Mountain Plovers; we had scope views of the stout, chunky-billed longspurs mixed in with Horned Larks. We also saw a large flock mixed with Chestnut-collared Longspurs in the Sulphur Springs Valley, though those stayed quite far away.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*)

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*)

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*)

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*)

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*)

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (*Pipilo chlorurus*)

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – A male skulked in the brush at Gilbert Water Ranch on the first afternoon of the tour.

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – We had some nice looks near the Cactus Wrens and Black-chinned Sparrows in Florida Canyon.

ABERT'S TOWHEE (*Melospiza aberti*) – We had good looks on most days, including many on the trails at Gilbert Water Ranch. Even though this species is common in southern Arizona, its world range doesn't extend far beyond the borders of the state, making it a real specialty here.

RUFIOUS-WINGED SPARROW (*Peucaea carpalis*) – After brief views of a couple birds, we found one that sat in the open for us along the Anza Trail near Tubac.

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*)

BREWER'S SPARROW (*Spizella breweri*) – These were moving through the brush near the Buckeye "thrasher spot".

BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW (*Spizella atrogularis*) – One sat up for some of the group in Florida Canyon on the last afternoon.

VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*)

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*)

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*)

BELL'S SPARROW (MOJAVE) (*Artemisiospiza belli canescens*) – We made a special effort to find these recently split sparrows southwest of Buckeye. Their strongly contrasting malar streaks and smooth-colored backs helped us to separate them from Sagebrush Sparrows. The winter range of this taxon is still being delineated as the ID issue wasn't clarified until recently (and it's still a bit murky!).

SAGEBRUSH SPARROW (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*) – Our best looks were at the "thrasher spot" west of Buckeye, where we saw these odd sparrows running with their tails cocked up (thrasher-like, even); eventually some perched up, offering good views at their weak malars and streaked backs, which helped us to separate them from canescens Bell's Sparrows.

LARK BUNTING (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) – Flocks of dozens to hundreds were scattered along roadside fences in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)

BAIRD'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus bairdii*) – Our big target in the beautiful grasslands of the San Rafael Valley - after hearing a few and seeing some in flight, we hit the jackpot with a bird that paused on open ground, allowing us to ogle it very nicely.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*)

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*)

SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*) – One chipped and popped up for us at the Gilbert Water Ranch. This is a scarce wintering bird in southern Arizona.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (MOUNTAIN) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – We found a few of these dark-lored, pink-billed White-crowned Sparrows at Gilbert Water Ranch and near Benson. They were vastly outnumbered by Gambel's White-crowned Sparrows during our tour.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (GAMBEL'S) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) – Most of the White-crowned Sparrows that we found were of this subspecies (also called "West Taiga"). These were the pale-lored, orange-billed individuals.

DARK-EYED JUNCO (*Junco hyemalis*)

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*)

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – We found these snub-billed cardinals only at the feeders at Paton's House in Patagonia.

LAZULI BUNTING (*Passerina amoena*) – A few overwintering birds competed for our attention with Pyrrhuloxias and other feeder birds at Paton's House in Patagonia.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*) – We saw small roadside flocks of these in agricultural areas, both in the Buckeye area and in the Sulphur Springs Valley.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S) (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – We saw and heard this distinctive subspecies of Eastern Meadowlark in the San Rafael Valley during our Baird's Sparrow quest.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – Though we did see several flocks numbering in the thousands flying to roost in NW Tucson, our best looks were of about 200 birds at close range in the cattle feedlots at the Faria Dairy in the Sulphur Springs Valley

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – Our best looks were at the feeders at Paton's House in Patagonia, where we compared the siskins with Lesser Goldfinches on the feeders. Another siskin was in Florida Canyon on the last afternoon of the tour.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*)

LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH (*Spinus lawrencei*) – Three revealed themselves with quiet tinkling calls in a weedy field near Marana. An adult male circled us at length.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) **[H]**

MAMMALS

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*)

ROUND-TAILED GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*)

ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus arizonensis*)

ARIZONA COTTON RAT (*Sigmodon arizonae*)

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 172 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa