



Field Guides Tour Report

Arizona Nightbirds & More II 2014

May 8, 2014 to May 12, 2014

Chris Benesh

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



The view of Cave Creek is one of the most inviting natural landscapes. (Photo by guide Chris Benesh)

Spring is an amazing time to spend birding in southeast Arizona. Few places offer such a rich assortment of birds and other critters. Although this trip was focused on nightbirds, we managed to see an assortment of other cool things along the way. Our short tour was focused on just three locations with nights in Tucson and Portal. Of course, the nightbirds took center stage, from our first encounter with Elf Owl up on Mt. Lemmon to the handsome Burrowing Owl we saw just before settling in to our Tucson motel on the final evening. We managed a respectable eight species of owls plus four nightjars (two heard) as well.

Some beautiful weather during the trip made it all the more enjoyable. My thanks to Portal guide Dodie Logue for helping us with a few of our targets and to all of you for making the trip so enjoyable. Good birding to all!

--Chris

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)

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*)

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*)

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*)

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*)

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*)

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*)

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – Nesting in Huachuca Canyon where we spent time seeking the wren.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*)

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – One seen soaring over Mt. Lemmon on the first evening of the trip.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*)

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*Calidris bairdii*)

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*)

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*)

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*)

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) [I]

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*)

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*)

Strigidae (Owls)

FLAMMULATED OWL (*Psiloscoptes flammeolus*) – Well heard and seen in flight in the Catalinas.

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops kennicottii*) – Good views in Portal.

WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops trichopsis*) – We connected with this species near Portal after a couple of near misses in the Catalinas.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – A few good looks on this trip.

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – Terrific views of one in lower Miller Canyon.

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – First seen in the Catalinas and again in Portal.

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – Last bird of the trip was this handsome find near our hotel.

SPOTTED OWL (*Strix occidentalis*) – We saw the female peering out from her nest cavity in Miller Canyon.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – Night looks on our way down from Mt. Lemmon and then again on the final evening.

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – We could not get this one to show well for us. [*]

BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR (*Antrostomus ridgwayi*) – Good audio of the stakeout bird along Proctor Road. [*]

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrostomus arizonae arizonae*) – Great views of one on the first evening and again the following night near Portal.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*)

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*)

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*)

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*)

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*)

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus latirostris*)

WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD (*Hylocharis leucotis*) – Good views of a male and female at Beatty's feeders in Miller Canyon.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

ELEGANT TROGON (*Trogon elegans*) – A beautiful male seen along Cave Creek.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*)

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*)

ARIZONA WOODPECKER (*Picoides arizonae*)

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*) – A singing bird seen near East Turkey Creek.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*)

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*)

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*)

PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax difficilis*)

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*)

BUFF-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) – After a bit of searching, we eventually connected with a couple of these.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*)

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*)

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*)

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

Vireonidae (Vireos)

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*)

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*)

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*)

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*)

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)

WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (WOODHOUSE'S) (*Aphelocoma californica woodhousei*) – One came in right to Portal.

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*)

CHIHUAHUA RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*)

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*)

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – Good looks at a few of these in the high country of the Chiricahuas.

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*)

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*) [*]

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (*Psaltiriparus minimus*)

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – The identification of this species complex was featured in a recent issue of Birding Magazine 46(3):26-32. Potentially more than one species involved. Stay tuned.

PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*)

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (MEXICAN) (*Certhia americana albescens*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*)

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) [*]

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*)

SINALOA WREN (*Thryophilus sinaloa*) – After a great deal of searching, we connected well with this ABA rarity in Huachuca Canyon. Quite a rarity in the ABA area with but four records.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (MEXICAN) (*Sialia sialis fulva*)

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*)

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes townsendi*)

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*)

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*)

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – Several good looks at this species around Rodeo.

CRISSAL THRASHER (*Toxostoma crissale*) – We were really lucky to encounter a pair of these in Rodeo. A tough species to see well.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Ptilonotidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*)

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – Several great views on the trip beginning with those on Mt. Lemmon.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*)

LUCY'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis luciae*)

VIRGINIA'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis virginiae*)

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

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

GRACE'S WARBLER (*Setophaga graciae*)

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*)

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*)

HERMIT WARBLER (*Setophaga occidentalis*)

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*)

RED-FACED WARBLER (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – Always a crowd pleaser!

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*)

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) [*]

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (*Pipilo chlorurus*)

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*)

RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*)

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*)

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*)

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*)

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolnii*)

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – A local rarity seen at Bob Rodriguez's feeders.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (MOUNTAIN) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*)

YELLOW-EYED JUNCO (*Junco phaeonotus*)

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC TANAGER (*Piranga flava*)

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*)

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – Wow, these were everywhere this trip. Great looks at several feeding in mulberries right in Rodeo.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*)

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*)

LAZULI BUNTING (*Passerina amoena*)

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – A couple of these at Willcox.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*)

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*)

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*)

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*)

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*)

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [I]

MAMMALS

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*)

CLIFF CHIPMUNK (*Tamias dorsalis*)

ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*)

NAYARIT FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) – Better known as the Mexican Fox Squirrel.

ARIZONA GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus arizonensis*)

ABERT'S SQUIRREL (*Sciurus aberti*) – Tassel-eared Squirrel seen on Mt. Lemmon. [I]

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*)

COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*)

MULE DEER (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 160 bird taxa and 11 mammal taxa