



Field Guides Tour Report

Arizona Nightbirds & More I 2016

Apr 29, 2016 to May 3, 2016

Dave Stejskal

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



There can be many distractions on a hike up the Huachuca Mountains' Miller Canyon, where we try to find a day-roosting Spotted Owl. This extraordinarily confiding Northern Pygmy-Owl right next to the trail was one of our distractions this year! (photo by guide Dave Stejskal)

Southeast Arizona in late spring can have fantastic weather, but it's usually the windiest season. I think we dodged a bullet on the first run of this short tour this year, as it was very windy right before the trip started and right after it ended -- but we hit it just right! Temperatures were pretty pleasant too, especially in the Huachuca and Chiricahua mountains.

We seemed to have hit it just right for the birds, too! This short itinerary, which packs quite a lot into just four days of birding, is designed to get as many of the numerous nightbird species that are found in the myriad habitats of Southeast Arizona as possible. We did really well with those, as well as all of those other species that account for the "...& More" portion of this fun little tour.

We started this one out with a run to the border west of Nogales -- after a quick detour to see our first 'night bird', a stakeout Burrowing Owl near the Tucson Airport. After close encounters with a lovely Five-striped Sparrow at the bottom of California Gulch and an unexpected Gila Monster on the road above, we had a tasty picnic supper and then managed to get a look at a rare Buff-collared Nightjar a little farther downstream! We followed up with a wonderful encounter with a tiny Elf Owl and a nearby Western Screech-Owl before heading back to our Tucson hotel. On the way, we had our first close encounter with Lesser Nighthawks, which were feeding in the bright lights of a U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint. What a fantastic first evening that was!

The following morning, we were off to the Huachuca Mountains and Miller Canyon. Our next owls were daytime encounters -- first with super-close views of a responsive Northern Pygmy-Owl as we hiked up canyon, and then a retiring and thoroughly hidden Spotted Owl (which we saw thanks to the help of local photographer/naturalist Charles Melton). It was quite a hike up to the spot where we eventually saw the Spotted Owl, but it sure was worth it! The canyon was full of widespread montane species, which we would encounter again at our next venue -- the lofty Chiricahua Mountains.

Our two nights in the Chiricahuas were productive ones, with our only looks at Flammulated Owl and Whiskered Screech-Owl, as well as supplemental views of Northern Pygmy-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Western Screech-Owl, and Lesser Nighthawk. That Flam gave us the most trouble, but we ended up with stellar views of a responsive bird on a 'last ditch' try at a lower site. Our daytime hours were rewarding as well, with fine views of such special birds as Elegant Trogon, Mexican Chickadee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, and Red-faced and Olive warblers. A quick stop at Willcox en route to Tucson and Madera Canyon filled up our lists with a bunch of missing waterbirds and other miscellanea, and our final evening together in Madera Canyon proved to be very pleasant; unfortunately, we couldn't dig out those troublesome Common Poorwills and Mexican Whip-poor-wills. Still, it was a nice place to finish up this wonderful, short tour!

Thanks to all of you for joining me this year on this short itinerary. I really had a blast birding with all of you, and sharing some of my favorite birds and places in this intriguing state. I hope the rest of 2016 is full of new birds for all of you and look forward to our next travels!

Cheers,

-- Dave

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*) – A stop at Willcox and the ponds there on and just south of the golf course produced the lion's share of our waterbirds on this short trip, including a few of these lingering migrant ducks. [b]

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*) – A few at Willcox [b]

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – The dark tail on both sexes helps to distinguish this form from hybrids between this one and the 'Northern' Mallard (of which there are many here in s. Arizona!).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – At Willcox on our last afternoon. [b]

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*) – Willcox had a few. [b]

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – Willcox again. [b]

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – At least one drake at Willcox. [b]

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – This one was lingering late at Willcox. [b]

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – A few out in the middle of the large lake at Willcox. [b]

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – Most of the birds we saw at Willcox on the final afternoon were migrants headed north, but a few pairs breed in the small golf course pond a short distance away.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – We found at least one of these along Stateline Rd. in New Mexico on our final morning together and then got a bunch more at our stop at Willcox later the same day.

GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*) – Loads of these charismatic quail at the feeders near Portal.

MONTEZUMA QUAIL (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) – A pair of these ran off of the road in front of us and we managed some poor looks as they scurried up the hill on the other side. A tough bird to see well!

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Wild Turkeys were extirpated from most of Arizona last century, but they've done well after a reintroduction program started in the 1980's. [I]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – At least one bird at Willcox on the last afternoon. [b]

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – A few lingering migrants on the big lake at Willcox. [b]

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – Several at Willcox were seen well enough to eliminate the very similar Glossy Ibis (which I saw there a couple of weeks before the tour). [b]

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – A daily feature of this tour.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – One high in the Chiricahuas on our final morning was a rare treat - I rarely seem them in this range.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – A quick flyby along the road up to Onion Saddle in the Chiricahuas. Getting a little late for this one. [b]

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – One was flushed off of a nest while we tried to see that Ringtail in the Chiricahuas. [N]

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – We stumbled upon a lovely adult perched just off of the road on our drive into Madera Canyon on the final afternoon.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – Including a gorgeous light-morph bird perched right next to the road just outside of Portal on our way to our hotel on Day 2.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – A lovely adult soared overhead on our drive up to the top of the Chiricahuas on our final day together.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Another Willcox waterbird. Also seen at Whitewater Draw.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Shorebird diversity was pretty good on this year's visit to Willcox on our final day together. This distinctive wader often breeds at this spot in very small numbers - one of the few shorebird species to do so.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Most of the birds we saw at Willcox were migrants and would soon leave, but several pairs were clearly sitting on eggs at the margins of the big lake. [N]

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

SNOWY PLOVER (*Charadrius nivosus*) – A rare migrant at Willcox on the last afternoon. [b]

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – A couple of migrants hanging out with the other shorebirds at Willcox. [b]

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Another shorebird that breeds at Willcox.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – The first half of May is the migration peak for this one. [b]

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) – A single at Willcox. [b]

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Still modest numbers of these around with the Western Sandpipers at Willcox. [b]

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – These birds would soon be up on the tundra in arctic Alaska. [b]

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – Attractive in their breeding plumage at Willcox. [b]

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – Pretty good numbers of these unusual shorebirds were still coming through during our visit to Willcox. [b]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BONAPARTE'S GULL (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) – A rare visitor to Willcox in the spring. [b]

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) – Much more regular than the above gull at Willcox at this season. Did you know that Arizona has exactly zero species of breeding gulls? [b]

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – We had a pretty sizable flock of these fly through Portal during our final picnic breakfast there.

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

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – These seem to be doing quite well in Portal proper.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – A single at Whitewater Draw before we headed to the Chiricahuas.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Common just about everywhere in the lowlands at this season.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – This was a pretty good tour for Roadrunners this year, with several seen on the first couple of days.

Strigidae (Owls)

FLAMMULATED OWL (*Psiloscoptes flammeolus*) – We really worked hard for this one that first night in the Chiricahuas and pretty much came away empty-handed. The next night, however, was a different story! After trying up high again for this elusive owl, and getting a pretty decent view of one bird high in a pine before it flew off, we gave it another shot at a more lowland site and - Bingo! We found a very responsive bird which came in at eye-level in the oaks for some stunning looks! Woo Hoo!

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops kennicottii*) – A quick stop at some larger trees just after our success with the nightjar on that first night brought us some great views of this widespread Western species. We all made note of the bill color and the call so that we could later compare those characters to the very similar Whiskered Screech-Owl to come in the Chiricahuas.

WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops trichopsis*) – With Western Screech-Owl still pretty fresh in our minds, we called in one of these to the trees near our van in the Chiricahuas for some excellent views. The voice of this one is clearly different compared to that of Western SO and the green bill was in sharp contrast to that black bill with the pale tip of the Western SO. Habitat preference is also different with these two similar species. Western prefers more open woodland at lower elevations with widely spaced trees, while Whiskered prefers dense pine/oak woodland at higher elevations (though some Westerns occur at higher elevations than Whiskered in some more open habitats). A lovely Southeast Arizona specialty owl!

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – We found a very cooperative bird in the daylight hours roosting in a hay barn just across the New Mexico line. It was doing its best to stay out of that howling wind!

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium gnoma*) – We ended up seeing this tiny owl really well on a couple of occasions. The first was our point-blank look as we ascended Miller Canyon in the Huachuca Mts. on Day 2. The second was spotted up in a tall conifer as we drove up to the top of the Chiricahuas on our final morning. Both of our birds were representative of the subspecies *gnoma*, which occurs from s.e. Arizona south through Mexico. The call notes of this race are always delivered in pairs, unlike the fast single notes of the subspecies *pinicola* of the Rockies to the north (also in n. Arizona) and the slower single toots of the subspecies *californicum* of the West Coast mountains. The differences are so stark and so consistent that some taxonomists split these forms (as well as birds of the Cape District of Baja California) into different species. If they are eventually split, this one would be called the Mountain Pygmy-Owl.

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – This was one of our 'bonus birds' at our picnic dinner spot below California Gulch where we saw the rare Buff-collared Nightjar. This has been a reliable site for this bird for the past couple of years and they responded nicely for us. Tiny, with no 'ears' and almost no tail, it's the smallest owl in the world! Elevationally in Arizona, it occupies a wide range, from near the Colorado R. Delta (historically) up to over 6000' in the mountains of the Southeast.

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – A two minute drive from our hotel near the airport, this once common species was our first 'nightbird' of the tour! It's suffered much since the wide elimination of prairie dog towns across the West and also with the widespread use of insecticides. It may be increasing a little in Arizona, and this has been one of the most reliable sites in the Tucson area for several years now.

SPOTTED OWL (*Strix occidentalis*) – YESSSS!!! Thanks to a little help from a friend (thanks, Charlie!), we were able to enjoy prolonged views in the scopes of this magnificent owl in a new (to me, anyway) roost site in upper Miller Canyon in the Huachuca Mts. The race here, often called the Mexican Spotted Owl, is not in the same dire trouble that the West Coast race is in. It seems to be found in just about every suitable mountain canyon with big trees in s.e. Arizona (it doesn't seem to have the same requirement for old growth that the West Coast birds have). This has been one of the most reliable, and one of the most easily accessed, pairs in the region.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – We saw this one very well in the lights of the Border Patrol checkpoint on our way back to Tucson from California Gulch. Another high on the Onion Saddle road in the Chiricahuas was a complete surprise! Similar in form to Common Nighthawk (not yet back in the state in late Apr.-early May), but with a different voice, more rounded wing tips, and diagnostic barred inner

primaries.

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – Unfortunately, none of the birds that we heard were close or particularly responsive during the tour (sigh). [✱]

BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR (*Antrostomus ridgwayi*) – For the second year in a row, a pair (at least) of these rare summer visitors from Mexico had set up shop in the desert foothills south of California Gulch and just a couple of miles north of the Mexico border. And, just like last year, we were able to get a light on a responsive male just after the sun went down and after we finished our lovely picnic dinner. First noted in the state and the US in the late 1950's well to the east of here in the extreme s.e. corner of the state, this bird started showing up in the arid canyonlands near the border in s.c. Arizona north to well north of Tucson in the 1970's. It has since withdrawn in its range and seems most reliable here and in the Santa Rita Mts. s. of Tucson.

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrostomus arizonae arizonae*) – Like the Common Poorwill, we never heard one close enough to get on this short tour and they seemed to be very unresponsive - maybe due to the wind and the cooler-than-normal temperatures. A recent split from the Eastern Whip-poor-will of eastern N. America. [✱]

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – A number of these were spotted flying high among the rosy cliffs of Cave Creek Canyon in the Chiricahuas. The only breeding swift species in Arizona

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*) – The most common of the two regular large hummers in the mountains of s.e. Arizona. Seen well in Portal and in Cave Creek Canyon.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – The Chiricahuas seem to be the best range in the state to see this one, and we had some wonderful looks, especially at the feeders in Portal.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*) – Often the most common hummer at most lowland sites in s. Arizona at this season. The Western replacement species of Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – Common at the higher elevations here at this season.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus latirostris*) – Common and increasing, it's a wonderful hummingbird to have as one of the most plentiful in the region. Gorgeous!

Trogonidae (Trogons)

ELEGANT TROGON (*Trogon elegans*) – Our hike along the South Fork Trail in the Chiricahuas produced fine looks at an adult male along the creek. One of the most charismatic of the s.e. Arizona specialties, this one really lends a tropical flavor to these rich and diverse mountains.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Common here wherever oaks are present.

GILA WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) – The common desert woodpecker and the most common woodpecker within the city of Tucson.

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) – The adult male that we saw along the South Fork Rd. in the Chiricahuas had wintered on that very tree - and was still there when I came back on my longer Arizona tour a couple of weeks later! [b]

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – At the feeders near Portal.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*) – Small and dark, these s. Arizona birds look very different from the birds in eastern N. America.

ARIZONA WOODPECKER (*Picoides arizonae*) – Wonderful looks at this local specialty in the Chiricahuas.

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

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*) – We spotted this one while it was in New Mexico and watched it disappear in Arizona as it flew off to the Chiricahuas.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – A couple of migrants in the Chiricahuas. [b]

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*) – Nicely along the South Fork Road. In the U.S., this one's primarily a s. Arizona specialty.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*) – Just now arriving on the breeding grounds.

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*) – The most common migrant Empidonax moving through the mountains of Arizona during our visit and best identified by call. [b]

GRAY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax wrightii*) – One of these late migrants was spotted along Stateline Rd. in New Mexico on our final morning. [b]

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – Very similar to the above Hammond's, but best told by call and behavior. [b]

BUFF-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax fulvifrons*) – Our single bird along the start of the South Fork Trail was a bit of a surprise there. The center of abundance of this bird in Arizona is the Huachuca Mts., not the Chiricahuas.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – A pair at the South Fork Rd. bridge. Very closely related to the Eastern Phoebe.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – Only on our final day along Stateline Rd. and at Willcox.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – This stunning little flycatcher is always a pleasure to see!

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – The smallest of the three regular Myiarchus flycatchers in Arizona.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – In terms of Myiarchus size, this one is in the middle of the three species here. It's also the dullest of the three in terms of plumage.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – This one ranges from the low deserts with Saguaros up into the mountain canyons and it's often the only Myiarchus that you find in the city of Tucson.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – Often the most common kingbird along our route, especially with a little elevation.

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – Seen by a few of us in Portal, but it proved to be elusive. A real vagrant at this locale.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – Similar to Cassin's, but much paler on the head and chest than that one.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – A couple of birds at Whitewater Draw. Declining in the West, but not nearly as much as in the East.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – Common and conspicuous in the pine/oak forest of the mountains here. Formerly lumped with Cassin's and Blue-headed Vireo as the Solitary Vireo.

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – This Ruby-crowned Kinglet look-alike often confuses birders.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) [*****]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – In the highest reaches of the Chiricahuas and seen only on our final day.

WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (WOODHOUSE'S) (*Aphelocoma californica woodhousei*) – A few of these around Portal. These inland birds (Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay) might get split from the California birds sometime soon.

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – Do you remember when this one was called the Gray-breasted Jay?

CHIHUAHUA RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – We saw a few of these small ravens on the drive between Douglas and Portal.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*)

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – Our best looks were at Willcox on the final day. The breeding race here, *E. a. adusta*, is quite red on the upperparts.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – We ran into a bunch of swallows on the final day at Willcox, including this widespread species.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – This western swallow is a regular breeder in the mountains of s.e. Arizona.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – We saw a few of these on the final day at Willcox. Arizona is the only state - other than Hawaii - where this species does not nest. [**b**]

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – On our final day at Willcox.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – Good looks on our final day of the tour in the Chiricahuas. This is the only place in the U.S. where you can easily see this primarily Mexican species.

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – A regular in the oak woodland that we frequent on this tour - and one of the cutest birds on the planet!

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (*Psaltirparus minimus*) – The birds here in Arizona are pretty different from the ones that are seen on the West Coast with ours having gray crowns and brownish ear coverts - just the reverse of the birds on the West Coast.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*) – We found ours high in the Chiricahuas on our final day of the tour.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni*) – I don't know what's going to come of the speculation that three species will some day be recognized in N. America, but these Interior West birds do sound very different from West Coast birds and from birds east of the Rockies.

PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*) – A few confiding birds on our final day in the Chiricahuas before we headed back to Tucson.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (ALBESCENS/ALTICOLA) (*Certhia americana albescens*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) [*****]

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) [*****]

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) – A couple of late lingering birds at Willcox on our visit there on the final day. [**b**]

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – One of the more distinctive wrens here with its longish expressive tail and familiar song.

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – Talk about distinctive wrens - this huge wren made an appearance at Portal, where it's rather local. The state bird of Arizona.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – Still quite a few migrants coming through, especially high in the Chiricahuas on our final day of birding. [**b**]

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – Nicely from the inside van as we left Barfoot Park and headed back down the mountain on the final day.

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – The large, pale race *auduboni* nests here in the mountains of S.E. Arizona.

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – Around Portal Peak Lodge.

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*) – We saw a bird bringing food to a nest just across the New Mexico border along Stateline Rd. east of the Chiricahuas. [N]

CRISSAL THRASHER (*Toxostoma crissale*) – This elusive species sat up briefly for us on the New Mexico side of Stateline Rd. on our final morning of birding.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – A few birds still hanging around Portal. [b]

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – This very distinctive warbler was recently placed in its own family, based mostly on anatomy of its 'voice box' compared with other warblers, recent DNA studies, and its having ten, not nine, primary feathers on its wing.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) [b]

LUCY'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis luciae*) – The only widespread breeding warbler species in the hot lowlands of s. Arizona.

VIRGINIA'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – We had pretty good views of what can be a very difficult species at this season high in the Chiricahuas on our final day of birding. A very close relative of the Nashville and Colima warblers.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*)

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – This is the widespread wintering form in Arizona and is a very local breeder in the mountains of Southeast Arizona.

GRACE'S WARBLER (*Setophaga graciae*) – A pine specialist of the Southwestern mountains. Seen well in the Chiricahuas.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – The most common warbler species breeding in the oak/juniper woodland of the mountains in the region.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*) – We still had some decent numbers of these moving through the mountains - and one low in California Gulch that first afternoon. [b]

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*) [b]

RED-FACED WARBLER (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – These didn't seem to be around the Chiricahuas in numbers yet, but we did track one down up at Barfoot Park high in that range for some great views. What a wonderful bird!

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – One of my favorite Arizona birds since I was a kid starting to bird.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

RUFUS-WINGED SPARROW (*Peucaea carpalis*) [*]

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*)

BREWER'S SPARROW (*Spizella breweri*) – One at the Portal feeders was a little bit of a surprise - most had already left this region of the state. [b]

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – A regular feature of the Portal feeders and also quite common along Stateline Rd. on the final morning.

FIVE-STRIPED SPARROW (*Amphispiza quinquestriata*) – A walk down to the bottom of California Gulch produced some unforgettable looks at this rare s. Arizona specialty sparrow, found only in the U.S. in a handful of rugged canyons along the Mexican border.

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*) – One of the most handsome of the N. American sparrow species.

YELLOW-EYED JUNCO (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Quite common high in the Chiricahuas, we saw quite a few of these at nearly every stop on the final day of the trip when we ventured to the top of the mountains. Very local within the U.S.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (ORIANATHA) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) – This was the race with the pinkish bill and dark lores. This is the southernmost breeding race in the Western states and is the most common race in S.E. Arizona in late spring. [b]

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (GAMBEL'S) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) – This race is the common wintering race throughout s. Arizona, but it's much less common here in late spring than the dark-lored birds above. This one breeds in the boreal forests and taiga across w. Canada and Alaska. [b]

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – A scarce visitor at any season in Arizona, we had nice views of an adult at the Portal feeders. [b]

VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*) – The first week of May is getting late for this one in s. Arizona. We found a couple of birds at Willcox on our final day of birding together. [b]

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – The same is true with this species, so our birds at Willcox on the final day were getting on the late side for spring migrants. [b]

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*) – A couple of very pale local breeders at Willcox on the final day.

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – Just a couple of birds around Portal this year. Numbers of this one seem to have dropped considerably in recent years for some unknown reason.

ABERT'S TOWHEE (*Melospiza aberti*) – A single bird at the Portal feeders was a rarity at that locale - and it gave us a 4 towhee day on Day 3 (Canyon, Abert's Green-tailed, and Spotted)!

RUFUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – Seen on the last day in the Chiricahuas.

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – A few late birds were still moving through the Portal area. [b]

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – Formerly known as the Rufous-sided Towhee before it was split into two species.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC TANAGER (*Piranga flava*) – A tanager of the pine/oak habitat of the Southwestern mountains.

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) – Much brighter red than the above Hepatic, this one favors lush riparian woodland in s. Arizona, usually at lower elevations than the Hepatic.

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – This vibrant species is found at all elevations at this season in s. Arizona, but only breeds at the highest elevations.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Longer-crested, longer-tailed, and brighter red than the Northern Cardinals of e. North America.

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – A handsome twist on the 'cardinal' theme.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – The bulk of the nesters in s. Arizona hadn't yet arrived during our visit, but they were still easy to find in the extensive oak woodland in the mountains.

LAZULI BUNTING (*Passerina amoena*) – Lots of lovely males at the feeders in Portal. These migrants had all left the area by the time I started my longer S.E. Arizona tour a weeks and a half later. [b]

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S) (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – All of ours were seen on our final day of the tour. This distinctive race is often considered for a split from the other Eastern Meadowlark races to the east and south of here.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) – A couple of lingering female birds on the golf course at Willcox on the final day. [b]

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – One of the first "Mexican" invaders to the state, first being found in Arizona in the late 1930's.

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – A pair on the golf course at Willcox on that final day was a nice find for the tour.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*) – Our most widespread oriole on the tour, even nesting in the palms of our Tucson hotel!

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) – This one probably breeds in the big trees on the Willcox golf course.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*) – This one certainly has the most pleasant voice of the regular orioles in Arizona.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – Still plenty of these at the Portal feeders. [b]

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [I]

MAMMALS

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – The cottontail found in the driest habitats away from the mountains.

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*) – We saw this one on our last day of the tour along Stateline Rd.

CLIFF CHIPMUNK (*Tamias dorsalis*) – The only species of chipmunk in this region of the state.

ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – Probably the most frequently encountered 'squirrel' in s. Arizona.

MEXICAN FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) – This was the richly-colored squirrel that we saw in the Chiricahuas - the only place in the U.S. where you can see this one.

GRAY FOX (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – We saw about 5 or 6 years worth of Gray Foxes on this short tour in the Chiricahuas. The night that we saw 4 of them high in the Chiris was pretty amazing!

RINGTAIL (*Bassariscus astutus*) – This one was a nice surprise at the start of the South Fork road in the Chiricahuas one morning. The state mammal of Arizona.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Also called the Coues's White-tailed Deer, this small race in the mountains of s. Arizona is the second-smallest White-tailed Deer in the U.S. (only "Key" Deer is smaller).

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – Good looks at a small herd in the grasslands north of Douglas, including a couple of youngsters.

Herps

CANYON TREEFROG (*Hyla arenicolor*) – Heard in the stream in Madera Canyon on our final evening together. [*]

CHIRICAHUA LEOPARD FROG (*Rana chiricahuensis*) – Good numbers in the little pond by the house in Miller Canyon in the Huachuca Mts.

YARROW'S SPINY LIZARD (*Sceloporus jarrovi*) – The common lizard on the rocks in the canyons of the Huachucas and Chiricahuas.

GILA MONSTER (*Heloderma suspectum*) – Quite a surprise was finding a rather small individual on the road into California Gulch on our first afternoon together. I almost never see this fascinating - and poisonous - lizard in Arizona!

GOPHERSNAKE (*Pituophis catenifer*) – Good views of one in the road as we left Miller Canyon. Sometimes called the 'Bull Snake'.

COACHWHIP (*Masticophis flagellum*) – One crossing the road in front of our vehicle on the final day was the usual bright pink form that I frequently see here.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 181 bird taxa and 9 mammal taxa