



Field Guides Tour Report

Texas' Big Bend & Hill Country 2017

Apr 22, 2017 to May 1, 2017
Chris Benesh & Doug Gochfeld

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



This gorgeous Aplomado Falcon at Lake Balmorhea was a real surprise! On a tour that has a number of rare and endemic species, we did not expect this one, but we were very happy to accept it as a bonus bird for the tour! Photo by guide Doug Gochfeld.

The 2017 Big Bend, Davis Mountains, and Hill Country tour was a big success. We covered a lot of territory in some of Texas's wildest country. Del Rio was amazing. We had a really cooperative White-collared Seedeater, more Yellow-breasted Chats than you ever imagine, and a tremendous mix of species.

Our stay in Big Bend National Park was rewarding. Varied Buntings showed well in Blue Creek Canyon and the Lucifer Hummingbird nest there was a treat. Rio Grande Village had some nice surprises and we enjoyed the cooperative Common Black Hawks that have nested there for so many years. The hike to Boot Spring was the highlight of our stay in Big Bend, beginning with a cool morning there. We had to get nearly to the spring before encountering our first Colima Warbler, but it showed well with a bonus Dusky-capped Flycatcher.

Our travels north to Fort Davis got us our Eastern Meadowlark and Chihuahuan Ravens. Our evening in the Davis Mountains saw us enjoying some Elf Owls feeding young and examining Jupiter's four larger moons. No sign of Poorwill, perhaps due in part to breezy conditions and a new waxing moon.

Our visit to Lake Balmorhea the following morning provided the biggest surprise of the tour when Bob noticed an Aplomado Falcon perched near the vans while the rest of us were admiring Clark's Grebes on the lake.

The Hill Country was also wonderful, from the Tropical Parula hanging out at Neal's, to the wonderful variety of birds at Lost Maples, including Golden-cheeked Warblers. Great views of Black-capped and Gray vireos added to the mix along with an unforgettable evening witnessing many thousands of Brazilian Free-tailed Bats emerging from the Frio Bat Cave on our final evening out. An Eastern Screech-Owl was icing on the cake.

Thanks to all of you for making the Big Bend trip such a treat for Doug and me. We wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you on another adventure — Chris & Doug.

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*) – We encountered the first ones flying over as we drove to Del Rio on day one, but then we got excellent views the next morning at several places in Del Rio. Whether perched on the edge of a pond, or flying over, it's quite a strikingly plumaged bird!

WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*) – A couple of pairs around Cook's Slough in Uvalde.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – Two males seemed to materialize out of nowhere on the pond in Del Rio, after we had been there for a half an hour or so. Then we saw some at Lake Balmorhea, and a pair along the road heading down to Fort Clark Springs while we were in Hill Country.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*) – One female at the small marshy pond adjacent to Lake Balmorhea.

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*) – Two flew a tight circle around us as we were birding near the river in Del Rio.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – The first were in Del Rio, and we had a small group flying around Lake Balmorhea a couple of times.

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*) – Five were at the small marsh adjacent to Lake Balmorhea.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – Many on Lake Balmorhea.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – A couple of nice-sized rafts totaling more than one hundred individuals on Lake Balmorhea.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – They must have had an excellent winter and early spring (perhaps due to the wetness), as they were truly abundant on our approach to Big Bend, and then over the entire, very long, park entrance road. We then encountered them throughout our stay in the park, and on the drive north to Alpine.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – A few in Del Rio on our first full day of birding, and then a few birds around Fort Clark Springs.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LEAST GREBE (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – A great and unexpected final day pickup at a small pond north of Bracketville. After some patience, we finally got reasonable and unobscured scope views for all who desired.

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – A couple at Lake Balmorhea, and then heard only at the small pond north of Bracketville.

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – About thirty scattered around Lake Balmorhea, including mixed in with the Shovelers and Ruddy Ducks.

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) – A handful on Lake Balmorhea, including some really good comparisons between them and the next species.

CLARK'S GREBE (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) – This is actually the dominant *Aechmophorus* grebe on Lake Balmorhea, and we got some great point blank views of it, including in direct comparison to the similar looking Western Grebe.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – Our first was a single bird flying by as we birded along the Rio Grande River in Del Rio, and then a couple around Cook's Slough in Uvalde.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – We had several along the Pecos River from the Pecos River bridge overlook.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Our first was in the pond at Del Rio, and then we had a couple around Lake Balmorhea.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Several scattered around Del Rio during our first full day, especially at the pond first thing in the morning, and then a very out of place individual standing on an interpretive sign in the middle of the desert as we drove out of Big Bend.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – A few flying over at our first couple of stops in Del Rio, and then a couple at Cook's Slough.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – An adult at Cook's Slough was our only one of the tour.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – First we had an adult fly over at the pond in Del Rio, and then we had at least two adults at a smaller body of water alongside the road a bit later that same morning.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – Two birds flew over while we were at the pond in Del Rio on our first morning of birding, and then we had great views of a bunch around the marshy areas of Lake Balmorhea.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Widespread and numerous, except in the barren desert and higher elevations of Big Bend, where they were absent. Some especially good views at the bridge overlook along the Pecos River. They got quite common again in the Hill Country, and on the way there we had a massive kettle of almost a hundred birds over I-10 heading east.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – All day every day.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Three or four of these were around Lake Balmorhea.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – An unexpected pickup during our last full morning of birding, west of Uvalde.

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – We had a pair flying over a peak near the road as we headed towards Big Bend. Initially associating with some kettling Turkey Vultures, they broke away, and one flew directly over our heads while the other one went into a stoop and a hard dive before disappearing behind a nearby hill. The latter one eventually came back into view and then perched in a tree on the side of that same hill.

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – We had one of these graceful raptors loosely associating with Turkey Vultures to the north of the parking lot at the HEB in Uvalde.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) – We had one migrating high over the hills above the Indian Lodge in Fort Davis.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – A young female (identified as a female based on its very large size for the species) was hanging around the southwestern end of Rio Grande Village in Big Bend. We also had one at Cottonwood Campground, and a couple during our morning birding at Fort Davis.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – Seen during the last four days of the tour, with the best looks being at a territorial pair at the Davis Mountains State Park.

COMMON BLACK HAWK (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – Great views of a pair of this sparse and local species around their active nest at Rio Grande Village in Big Bend. [N]

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – We encountered a few of these handsome raptors on our drive to Del Rio on the first day of the tour, and stopped to view a couple of them perched and in flight. We then had scattered birds around the Hill Country and driving back towards San Antonio.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*) – A couple of adults in flight in the Del Rio area. We then had one flying over the canyon at Lost Maples.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – A young bird, with a streaky chest, somewhat marked underwings, but a barred tail reminiscent of an adult, circled over us at the southwest end of Rio Grande Village, a surprise in this area. We then had a scope view of a territorial bird calling from a tree at Lost Maples.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – Here and there as we drove to Del Rio on day one, and then from Del Rio to Big Bend on day two. We had birds in flight sporadically from then on, but on our drive to Alpine we stopped for a couple of perched individuals, including one on a nest! [N]

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – A great spot by Marc as we filling up at Panther Junction upon our arrival into Big Bend NP. This bird was fairly low, and atypically close, giving great views as it eventually flew almost over our heads. We then had another one two days later at Rio Grande Village, seen well twice, about 45 minutes in between the two sightings. Other views were at Fort Davis, and along the road into Lake Balmorhea, and in Concan.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – We saw quite a few of the paler Texas version of the already pale *fuertesi* subspecies on our drive from Del Rio to Big Bend, and then in the National Park itself. We also had several non-*fuertesi* as we got northeast of the desert, including downy young on a nest at Lost Maples. [N]

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus limicola*) – Alison saw one of these briefly fly up and drop down into a marshy bit at Lake Balmorhea.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – A couple of these at the pond north of Bracketville, and also at Cook's Slough.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Several at the pond in Del Rio, and then one way downriver at the Pecos River bridge. We then had a few dozen around Lake Balmorhea, as well as the wet areas we visited near the Hill Country.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – At least three at the pond in Del Rio, and a whole bunch at Lake Balmorhea.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Including an adult with four adorable fluffball youngsters at the border patrol checkpoint heading west from Del Rio. [N]

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

MARbled GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*) – One cooperative bird fairly close to the road near the check-in at Lake Balmorhea was a nice surprise.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – A couple of groups in high breeding plumage at Lake Balmorhea.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – Two beautiful females in with the Long-billed Dowitcher flock at Lake Balmorhea.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – A couple at the pond in Del Rio, and a whole bunch around the edges of Lake Balmorhea.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*) [*]

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – A couple at Lake Balmorhea.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) – One crispy adult with a few Ring-billed Gulls on Lake Balmorhea was a really cool pickup.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – We had ten of these in two groups at Lake Balmorhea.

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*) – Very brief looks at at least one individual along the river in Del Rio.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Scattered around towns along the way. [I]

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

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – A few around and on the approach to Del Rio were seen by a few, but we finally nailed a couple for everyone at the Rio Grande Village campground. We had a few scattered around the Hill Country as well.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – One perched on a utility wire along the road near the Rio Grande in Del Rio was the first. We then ran into a few in Big Bend, especially down at Rio Grande Village.

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (WHITE-TIPPED) (*Leptotila verreauxi angelica*) – A couple near the trailhead at Lost Maples SNA, including one foraging out in the open under the feeders. It is really interesting to see their gradual expansion north into and through the Hill Country.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Abundant and widespread.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Abundant and widespread in open country (which is most of the country we passed through).

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx californianus*) – Several, in many contexts, from running the road, to perched up high in a tree singing, to holding giant grasshoppers in its bill as a love offering, to fighting each other for the affection of another. What a charismatic and appropriate emblem of the desert southwest!

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus americanus*) – A couple at our first landbirding-oriented stop in Del Rio were a nice surprise.

Strigidae (Owls)

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops asio*) – A perfectly cooperative one at the Frio Bat Cave ranch as our last new bird of the tour, and a wonderful exclamation point on the tour!

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – Heard only by a few people pre-dawn at Indian Lodge.

ELF OWL (*Micrathene whitneyi*) – Yet another spectacular owl experience, we had at least two Elf Owls interacting with each other at Davis Mountains SP. We got to watch multiple food deliveries to a nest hole, and then an exchange between two individuals in a nearby tree. [N]

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – On the way north to Alpine we found a couple of Burrowing Owls that were very confiding, hanging out around some burrows right alongside the road. [N]

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – A couple of people had one at Indian Lodge, and then the rest of the group caught up with them around the Hill Country, where we had them in four locations.

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) – Some heard them calling at Indian Lodge and then Concan, and then as a group we saw a couple foraging near the Frio Bat Cave after dark.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) – Very well heard during our last night of the tour, at both the Frio Bat Cave and then when we returned to the lodge.

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*) – Really good views of them drinking and courting at the pond in Del Rio, and scattered around elsewhere.

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Our first were eye-level flybys at the Pecos River bridge, but they shot by so swiftly that we didn't get great looks at them. We then had a large flock along the Rio Grande river at Rio Grande Village.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – About six of these monster hummingbirds, including a few very obliging individuals around Boot Springs and Boot Canyon.

LUCIFER HUMMINGBIRD (*Calothorax lucifer*) – Nice! We had a pair in Blue Creek Canyon. First Marc spotted the male, and we ended up seeing that perched on an ocotillo for a bit, and then Jay saw the female heading into a dead cholla cactus, where it turned out it was tending a nest, so we got to watch her in the scope at our leisure as it made repeated trips to tend what were apparently unseen nestlings inside. [N]

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – At least one gorgeous male coming to the feeders at the restaurant across from Neal's Lodge.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*) – A couple around Del Rio, and then loads at Neal's Lodge. The vast majority of the immature and female-type *Archilochus* hummingbirds that we saw in Concan were the longer-billed, less contrasty, Black-chinneds.

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycircus*) – A few on the hike to Boot Canyon.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*) – A flyby near the river in Del Rio.

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*) – We unexpectedly encountered one perched on a footbridge across the creek near the entrance to Fort Clark Springs on our drive to Del Rio on the first day, and we all got good scope views of it from every angle. We then had a couple flying around Cook's Slough.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – A bunch around the Chisos Basin, and we had many encounters with these charismatic clown-faced woodpeckers along the hike to Boot Canyon. [N]

GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) – We saw our first at the rest stop along route 90 on the way to Del Rio, and we had a steady diet of them the next morning, until we got to the desert. We didn't see them again until we got to Rio Grande Village, where they are truly abundant and omnipresent. They were also in the Hill Country in small numbers. [N]

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – A couple around Del Rio, then scattered throughout Big Bend.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – Our first were while driving from San Antonio to Del Rio, and then we had quite a few during our last few days of the tour.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – A couple of brief views while driving during the first couple of days, but our first perched one that everyone saw was at Rio Grande Village.

APLOMADO FALCON (*Falco femoralis septentrionalis*) – A big time surprise at Lake Balmorhea, and one of the highlights of the trip. Bob spotted this perched on a wire alongside the dam as everybody else was busy looking out over the water. Aplomado Falcon used to occur into west Texas and southern New Mexico, but underwent a drastic decline and range contraction within the last century. There have been reintroduction programs in both the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and southern New Mexico/West Texas, with the latter fizzling out and being a failure. While it may be impossible to know for sure which population this one came from, we think that a vagrant from the natural northern Mexican population is the likely source of our bird, which would make it the first wild one in this region in many years, perhaps decades.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – Some had one flying around the cliffs at Casa Grande in the Chisos Basin just after our final lunch there.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – Our first was at Dugout Wells, and it gave phenomenal views as it hawked insects all over the area.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*) – A non-calling Wood-Pewee at the Rio Grande Village could have been this species, and then we had a completely dark-billed and very dark-breasted one at Cottonwood Campground.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus virens*) – Singing and perching out in the open conspicuously at Fort Clark Springs.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax virescens*) – Some great encounters with a couple of these massive-billed *Empidonax* at Lost Maples.

GRAY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax wrightii*) – Jay had one briefly near the feeders at Davis Mountains SP.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – We had a few of these migrants in Blue Creek Canyon, where they posed very well for all pertinent field marks to be seen, with one vocalizing diagnostically as well. We also had one the next day at the Sam Nail Ranch, which was giving some nice "whit" calls.

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – We heard one calling from down the wash at Boot Spring, but we never did track it down visually.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Views for some at Fort Clark Springs on opening day, and then views for most in the Rio Grande River at Rio Grande Village.

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – Fairly common in the Hill Country.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – Including a friendly pair, which we became very well acquainted with, nesting in the restaurant and check-in building at the Chisos Mountain Lodge [N]

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – These hover-cherries delighted us every time we laid eyes on them, which was thankfully a lot! They were extra abundant and were feeding fledged young at the Rio Grande Village Campground. We saw their bizarre and amazing flight displays a few times on the tour, especially around the Rio Grande River and near Bracketville and Fort Clark Springs, and we also saw them at at least one nest, and feeding newly fledged juveniles in multiple locations. [N]

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – A nice surprise at our first Colima Warbler spot. We first heard it giving its very distinctive plaintive call, and then found it fairly quickly. It even hung around long enough for us to get it in the scope! This is such a rarity in the state, that it was on the Texas review list until just a few years ago.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – The palest and most tied to barren desert of the *Myiarchus* that we see on this tour. We started to see them in Del Rio, and they were the common *Myiarchus* in Big Bend.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – Excellent views of a few in Del Rio, and then scattered through habitats with reasonable trees (including the campgrounds along the Rio Grande, where one was visiting a nesting cavity) thereafter. [N]

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – We had a few around Del Rio, especially down by the river, and then encountered another couple of birds around Fort Clark Springs during the last full day of birding.

COUCH'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus couchii*) – Del Rio produced several, and then we had great scope studies of a close bird repeatedly vocalizing at Fort Clark Springs.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – The default kingbird around the Davis Mountains.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – A very common roadside *Tyrannus* in a wide variety of habitats.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – Our first ones were on the way to Del Rio, and we had some great views at the day one rest stop, and then the next morning in Del Rio itself. Thereafter we encountered them in any type of open grassy habitats, which included most days outside of Big Bend NP. We never tired of seeing these distinctive flycatchers and their aerial antics (including four mobbing a Common Raven at once)!

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Sporadic encounters along the road in various places.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLACK-CAPPED VIREO (*Vireo atricapilla*) – Pretty good views of a female or two at Los Maples, where several were heard well. We then had a few birds west of Uvalde, including a couple that eventually gave great out-in-the-open views. One of the big targets of the tour for many people, since it is so range restricted within the US.

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*) – A few singing and one perched out nicely in Del Rio. Then we hit the motherlode when we got to the Hill Country.

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*) – Our first were at Del Rio. Then we encountered them, mostly by song, throughout appropriate desert habitat thereafter. We ran into some of the eastern subspecies once we got into Hill Country, though the prior ones were the duller western subspecies for the most part.

GRAY VIREO (*Vireo vicinior*) – Our first were in Blue Creek Canyon, where most people got looks, though the two that were in view moved up to the crest of one of the cliffs fairly shortly after we first laid eyes on them. We then got excellent and prolonged views for all in the Hill Country near Uvalde.

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – Once we started descending towards Boot Canyon, we encountered three or four of these Ruby-crowned Kinglet-esque vireos. We also heard a couple at Lost Maples.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*) – Repeated good views of this bright vireo during the last couple of days of the tour, in the Hill Country.

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – A couple of the dullest of the Solitary Vireo complex at the Davis Mountains SP.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) – A migrant seen briefly adjacent to the Black-Hawks at Rio Grande Village.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – Common songsters in appropriate habitat of large trees in the Hill Country, though more frequently heard than seen.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

GREEN JAY (*Cyanocorax yncas*) – A couple of birds at Fort Clark Springs on the last full day of birding of the tour.

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*) – We saw a couple of these around the campgrounds at Davis Mountains SP, and then had them scattered throughout the Hill Country, where the local taxon is the most genetically divergent from the other existing "Western" Scrub-Jays.

MEXICAN JAY (*Aphelocoma wollweberi*) – The go-to jay around the Chisos Basin.

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) – We encountered a few of these slightly more diminutive ravens on the drive up to Alpine.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – A few scattered around Big Bend, including one coming in for a drink at Dugout Wells. Seen on all days of the tour except for day one as we drove to Del Rio.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – Along the river in Del Rio and Big Bend, and then scattered around the Uvalde area.

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – Very good views of a bunch at the pond in Del Rio, and then sporadically elsewhere, especially in proximity to martin houses along our route.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – Lake Balmorhea produced one or two of these.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – A large swarm of ~200 individuals along the Rio Grande in Del Rio was almost certainly very close to an unseen breeding colony. We also had a couple at Cook's Slough.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Common in a variety of habitats, though not in the desert of Big Bend.

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – We drove by nesting colonies scattered throughout, with some numbering into the hundreds of individuals. [N]

CAVE SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon fulva*) – We had them scattered around various bridges and overpasses at the beginning and end of the tour, but the most memorable experience with them was certainly in tandem with the bats at the Frio Bat Cave. [N]

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Poecile carolinensis*) – We didn't get into the chickadee zone until we were up in the Hill Country, where they were reasonably common in appropriate habitat.

BLACK-CRESTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus atricristatus*) – We first ran into them at the rest stop on the way to Del Rio, and then the next day in Del Rio. The call was a conspicuous part of the soundscape around the parking lot at Chisos Basin, and we heard many and saw quite a few on our big hike to Boot Canyon. They were also quite conspicuous at Fort Davis and in the Hill Country, and we recorded this species every single day of the tour.

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*) – First seen in Del Rio, and then encountered visually and (more frequently) aurally in appropriate habitat afterward.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (*Psaltirparus minimus*) – A bunch on the hike down to Boot Canyon, including a couple around or at nests. [N]

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*) – These were calling the Chisos Basin upslope from the cabins, and we got good looks on the Pinnacles Trail hike.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – Excellent point blank views at the Pecos River bridge overlook, and also singing from atop the buildings of Indian Lodge.

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – Our first were at the Pecos River bridge overlook, and we encountered them frequently thereafter, though as is typical with the species, we heard their beautiful song cascading down from distant cliffs much more than we laid eyes on them. We had this charming icon of the southwest on every day after the first travel day.

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Scattered brief encounters around Big Bend, most often by vocalization only.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – Some great listens around the river in Del Rio, and then we had some very confiding ones around Concan and at Fort Clark Springs.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – Widespread, and we started to see them on our first full day of birding. The place where they were most common was along the Pinnacles Trail up to see the Colima Warbler.

CACTUS WREN (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) – What a charismatic wren! We saw them in a variety of contexts, though the most obliging were the birds around the parking lot at the lodge in Big Bend. [N]

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – Fairly numerous around the lodge in the Chisos Basin, and downright abundant on the Pinnacles Trail.

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*) – Really nice views of multiple birds, including singing males, at Blue Creek Canyon. We also had a good view of a male at the boat ramp at Rio Grande Village, and then a family of them at Cottonwood Campground.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – A few folks saw one in Del Rio, and then we encountered several in multiple locations around Big Bend.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – In various places, mostly along roadsides, in the Hill Country.

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – We had one of these exceptionally pale western Hermit Thrushes (of the auduboni group) in Boot Canyon, though it was somewhat shy.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – A pair had a nest and showed well at Dugout Wells.

LONG-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma longirostre*) – We had a few scattered around Del Rio, including two birds chasing each other around for almost a minute. We then had some singing west of Uvalde on our final day.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – The State Bird of Texas, and it's hard to argue against it, given how widespread and abundant it is. We probably saw this in every county that we passed through.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – We didn't see them on three days: the days where we didn't leave Big Bend. [I]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) – A nice surprise was an adult in full buff-bellied breeding plumage at the parking lot when we arrived at the lodge in Big Bend. Then over the next few days this location would provide us with several at a time, including up to nine in one instance. There were also single birds at Lake Balmorhea and near Cook's Slough.

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Many in Del Rio, and some in the Hill Country.

Ptiliognatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) – Our first encounter was of an individual flying up the road ahead of us, and then perching for a bit, as we ascended towards Chisos Basin the evening of our second full day in the park. Then we had a brief flyover at Davis Mountains SP.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

- LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia motacilla*) – Excellent views of these birds on territory in the stream at Lost Maples. We also got to hear their song in multiple locations there as well.
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – Quite numerous at Lost Maples, though mostly heard only. One male did pose and sing for long enough for most people to get nice scope views.
- ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*) – Seen briefly a couple of times leading up to the last day, we had one inquisitive bird at Fort Clark Springs that finally let most people get a good look at it.
- COLIMA WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis crissalis*) – YES!! We connected with this Big Bend specialty on our final full day at Big Bend NP, on our 10+ mile round trip hike to Boot Canyon. It was very windy inside the Chisos Basin, so we had to hike up and over the ridge that leads to Emory Peak before we caught up with any, but catch up we did. Our first bird was a male emphatically singing shortly after the turn towards Boot Springs, and this one even allowed scope views for several people. We then picked up several more at Boot Springs and especially in Boot Canyon. We got great experiences with their songs, some good calling, and several repeated chances at high quality views. It was an all around great experience!
- LUCY'S WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis luciae*) – We had a couple of these at Cottonwood Campground, including one bird bringing food to an unseen nest multiple times. [N]
- NASHVILLE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – The first was seen by a few at Dugout Wells, and then we had a handful over the next few days, with sightings at Rio Grande Village, Sam Nail Ranch, Lost Maples, and Fort Clark Springs.
- MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – A couple at Rio Grande Village, the second of which stayed in view for long enough for everyone to see it, and some to even get scope views of what was a lifer for some!
- COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Heard first (and briefly seen) in Del Rio, and also heard at Lake Balmorhea and Fort Clark Springs.
- NORTHERN PARULA** (*Setophaga americana*) – Brief views for some at our first stop in Rio Grande Village in Big Bend, which is fairly far west for the species.
- TROPICAL PARULA (NORTHEAST MEXICO)** (*Setophaga pitiayumi nigrilora*) – After quite a while of searching for what has apparently been a very stealthy pair, we got some great point blank views of a female at Neal's Lodge.
- YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – One vocal (making a lot of chip notes) male in the rest area that we birded on the way to Alpine, and another seen by some at Fort Clark Springs.
- YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S)** (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – The most widespread wood-warbler throughout the tour. It was conspicuously absent from the Hill Country, but was common around Big Bend and Fort Davis. Some of them were sporting excellent breeding finery.
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** (*Setophaga dominica*) – The Hill Country is the place for these on this tour, and we got some stupendous looks at Lost Maples and in Concan, with a bird going to and from a nest with young at Lost Maples. [N]
- TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – We had almost ten of these in the vicinity of Boot Canyon and Boot Springs.
- GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER** (*Setophaga chrysoparia*) – We got this Texas breeding endemic at Lost Maples, where we heard several territorial males singing, and saw birds well in at least three spots. The neatest experience was our first one, which was of a pair that was apparently investigating a potential nest site, visiting the same sheltered limb together over and over again. [N]
- WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – A few at various places around Big Bend, with most people first catching up to it at Dug Out Wells. We saw them in a few other places as well, including three together at the water feature at Davis Mountains SP.
- PAINTED REDSTART** (*Myioborus pictus*) – We heard one on the Pinnacles Trail on the way up, and then we saw multiples down in Boot Canyon itself. What a showy warbler!
- YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*) – Del Rio may just be the epicenter of Chat-dom on Earth. We had loads of them during our birding along the river there, including some good out-in-the-open views, and multiple birds performing display flights. We also had the species at Sam Nail Ranch, Cottonwood Campground, and in the Hill Country, but not nearly in the density of Del Rio.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

- WHITE-COLLARED SEEDEATER (WHITE-COLLARED)** (*Sporophila torqueola sharpei*) – Yay! Great looks and listens at a couple of individuals along the river in Del Rio. A great pickup of a species that has only become known about in this area in the past few years.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

- CASSIN'S SPARROW** (*Peucaea cassinii*) – We heard several and saw two very well in the scope at the small pond north of Bracketville during our last full day.
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – We had a surprise migrant at the pools near the western end of Rio Grande Village.
- OLIVE SPARROW** (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) – Great views of this typically skulking south texas specialty at Del Rio.
- CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – Scattered around in small numbers during our foray to the western deserts, including one hopping around next to our checklist meeting one evening in Big Bend. Seen during every day of the tour, with the largest numbers perhaps around Fort Davis.
- CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** (*Spizella pallida*) – Brief views by some along Highway 90 heading to Big Bend and then the next day at Blue Creek Canyon. We then got better views at more birds at Rio Grande Village. We then had a bird singing near the grebe pond north of Bracketville.
- BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW** (*Spizella atrogularis*) – We heard these singing around Fort Davis, but Alison was the only one to lay eyes on one.
- FIELD SPARROW** (*Spizella pusilla*) – We heard these singing in a few places in the Hill Country, and we saw one or two along our vireo road near Uvalde during our last full day of birding.
- BREWER'S SPARROW** (*Spizella breweri*) – At least three in Blue Creek Canyon, and then a very surprising one singing its head off in Fort Davis while we were trying for Black-chinned Sparrow.
- BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – Our first was at the Pecos River bridge overlook, and what a view it was! After that, we became spoiled for them on our hike through Blue Creek Canyon, where this striking sparrow is the most visible, and perhaps common, passerine. They were fairly widespread throughout open grassy or deserty habitats, even to the Edwards Plateau.
- LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*) – This bold and beautiful sparrow is thankfully very widespread along the tour route, so we got lots of opportunities to ogle them.

LARK BUNTING (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) – We stopped for a nice roadside flock of ~75 individuals along the road between Del Rio and Big Bend.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (LEUCOPHRYS) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys*) – We had one of these black-lored individuals hopping around the parking lot at Chisos Basin as we were doing our checklist on the second evening in the park.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (GAMBEL'S) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) – The pale-lored western subspecies of White-crowned Sparrow. We first encountered a these at Dugout Wells, where there were two together.

VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*) – We ran into several at the ponds at the western end of Rio Grande Village.

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – The first one was seen by some folks as we passed through our first border patrol checkpoint on the way to Big Bend, but then we picked up a bunch of them a couple of days later at Rio Grande Village, and saw a few individuals in the Hill Country.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) – One at the feeder at Lost Maples.

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – Remarkably tame at the parking lot at the lodge in Big Bend, and encountered in the surrounding desert as well. [N]

RUFUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – Numerous in Blue Creek Canyon, and singing on the hike up the Pinnacles Trail. One even perched on an Ocotillo for a while right outside the restaurant window as we were eating lunch.

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – We had these in several places on the hike from the Emory Peak Trail junction down to Boot Canyon. Mostly heard in song. We also had one singing west of Uvalde during our vireo foray.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC TANAGER (*Piranga flava*) – A male was on territory behind our building in the Chisos Basin, and we encountered it or other males in the vicinity most days during our Big Bend leg.

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) – Great views of some singing out in the open in Del Rio, and then encountered commonly in well vegetated habitats throughout, especially at the Rio Grande river campgrounds and in the Hill Country, where their ticky-tuck calls were spread liberally throughout the canopy.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – In the wettest habitats we had, right along the Rio Grande River, and in the dry deserts of Big Bend. In addition to being iconic and beautiful, it really is a very adaptable species!

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) – Our first were in the open desert as we approached Big Bend, and then we encountered them in several places where we birded desert and semi-desert habitats.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEEK (*Phoebeastacus melanocephalus*) – There were quite a few of these in Boot Canyon, including multiples in full song. A couple even came down out of the foliage to give us excellent views.

BLUE GROSBEEK (*Passerina caerulea*) – Singing in Del Rio quite nicely, and then encountered at feeders in Davis Mountains SP, and at a couple of locations around the Hill Country, including Lost Maples.

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – A common songster around Lost Maples, with multiple males teeing up high in trees and signing their brains out.

VARIED BUNTING (*Passerina versicolor*) – Great views of males singing in several places in Big Bend, including at Blue Creek Canyon, though our first views were along the park road before we even got there. This wet year seems to have made them easier to find than they sometimes are- a very fortunate turn of events for us!

PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) – We got stunning looks at a stunning male of this stunning species during our very first encounter in Del Rio. The experience was truly stunning! We also had a male and some females at Rio Grande Village, and males singing and flying around at Cottonwood Campground and Neal's Lodge.

DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*) – A male singing on territory in Del Rio was interesting, and then we had several along the road west of Uvalde during our final day.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Seen in a few places where we visited their appropriate habitat, including Lake Balmorhea and Cook's Slough.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (LILIAN'S) (*Sturnella magna lilianae*) – We saw these very well in two counties on the way up to Alpine, right alongside the road.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – A couple of flock flying over at the pond at Del Rio, and then a few mixed in with cowbirds at Judge Roy Bean's museum in Langtry. We then had a mixed flock of these guys and Brown-headed Cowbirds fly over near Uvalde on the final day of birding.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) – Scattered flocks throughout the western leg of the tour, including several living around the Chisos Basin parking lot, and seemingly a flock at every Border Patrol checkpoint.

COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – We had a few on the way to Del Rio on day one, including one calling and "singing" in the rest area, and then just a couple from the car while driving near and in Uvalde.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Yup. This conspicuous grackle is the go-to icterid for most of this trip, though they stay away from the very dry habitats, so we didn't encounter many in Big Bend.

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – Our first encounters with these blocky-headed cowbirds were good views in Del Rio on our first full morning of birding, and we got briefer and poorer looks later on in the tour near the Uvalde area.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – Plenty widespread, including a flock of more than 20 at Dugout Wells, and big flyover flock near Uvalde.

ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*) – Some great looking males in Del Rio, one at the rest area on the way to Alpine, and then all over the Hill Country. They were especially abundant at Fort Clark Springs.

HOODED ORIOLE (CUCULLATUS/SENNETTI) (*Icterus cucullatus cucullatus*) – Great views at several places in Del Rio and then at Langtry, and later on at Fort Clark Springs. This subspecies is much brighter than the one found in southeast Arizona.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) – A female seen by a few at the rest area on the way to Del Rio on the first day. Then we had males driving up to Alpine, around Fort Davis, and in the Hill Country.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*) – Big Bend produced these incomparable songsters right outside our doors at the lodge. One even dropped in to feast on prickly pear cactus flowers right next to us as we did the checklist on our second evening in the park. Other cooperative adults perched up nicely at Davis Mountains SP and Lost Maples.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – Very widespread, and even in desert locations such as Dugout Wells, where it was one of the most numerous species.

PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*) – A handful around the feeder at Davis Mountains SP during our morning there.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – Seen in small numbers throughout, though sparse in Big Bend, and missed on a couple of days while there.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – We actually avoided them on day 3 and day 5, since the only place they seem to be in Big Bend is at Panther Junction. [I]

MAMMALS

BRAZILIAN FREE-TAILED BAT (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) – WOW.WOW.WOW! One of the big highlights of this tour is the epic exodus of these bats from their underground lair on a private ranch in the Hill Country. This year, it was even better than normal, as the bats started coming out of the cave a full hour before sunset! There were still some of the 15 million (give or take a couple) bats departing well after dark, when we left the area.

NINE-BANDED ARMADILLO (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) – At least one seen by Jay and a couple of others at the Frio Bat Cave.

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – Scattered around singly, in Del Rio, Big Bend, and the Hill Country.

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – Our first was at Dugout Wells in Big Bend, and we only encountered them in the very arid habitats of that region.

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*) – We encountered a couple of these big desert bunnies on our final day in Big Bend, along the main road and then again at Cottonwood Campground.

MEXICAN GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus mexicanus*) – Seen once by a few as we neared Big Bend.

ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – Ran into several during our hike through Blue Creek Canyon on our first full day in Big Bend, and saw them in several more places, including very dark blackish ones in Fort Davis and Lost Maples.

FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus niger*) – Del Rio and in the Hill Country.

BEAVER (*Castor canadensis*) – A big surprise at Fort Clark Springs! One swam right by us as we were preparing to leave for lunch, and eventually hauled itself out of the water and onto some logs for a bit.

GRAY FOX (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – A couple of folks had one around the parking lot at the lodge in Big Bend on our first night there, and then the lead van had two cross the road within a half mile of each other as we were driving out of Fort Davis.

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – A few had one in Big Bend, but then some more people caught up with a more cooperative one alongside the road heading up towards Alpine.

COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*) – We ran into a big family group of these head-heavy native pigs at Rio Grande Village, including some real large adults. One also came to the water feature at the feeders at Davis Mountains SP.

SPOTTED DEER (*Axis axis*) – The Hill Country is where these introduced deer have their stronghold along our tour route, though our best sightings (including an antlered buck) were just south of there in Fort Clark Springs. [II]

MULE DEER (*Odocoileus hemionus*) – In Del Rio and on the journey between Del Rio and Big Bend, then again around Fort Davis.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Scattered sightings throughout.

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – We had a small group of four on the way to Big Bend on our second afternoon. We then saw them several times on the drive up to Alpine.

SCIMITAR ORYX (*Oryx dammah*) – Two sightings during the drive to Alpine. One close to the road by itself, and then ten or so a bit later at the Burrowing Owl spot.

BLACKBUCK (*Antilope cervicapra*) – Introduced for hunting. We saw a few of these behind a fence in the Hill Country. Beautiful animals. [II]

BARBARY SHEEP (*Ammotragus lervia*) – We saw a family of these introduced sheep high on the cliffs above the ponds at the western end of Rio Grande Village. We then caught up with more distant ones on the way to Alpine and in Fort Davis. [II]

Herps

GREEN ANOLE (CAROLINA ANOLE) (*Anolis carolinensis*) – One of these was at Cook's Slough.

COACHWHIP (*Masticophis flagellum*) – Chris briefly saw one slithering off a side road in Big Bend, and then we found an injured one on the drive up to Alpine, which Bill moved out of harm's way by getting it off the road.

DIAMONDBACK WATER SNAKE (*Nerodia rhombifer*) – One of these was curled up in some branches at the edge of one of the cells at Cook's Slough.

WESTERN DIAMOND-BACKED RATTLESNAKE (*Crotalus atrox*) – We had one of these rattle at us in warning at Dug Out Wells in Big Bend. After backing away, we were able to watch this three-foot long rattler as it moved about in its bush, and then slithered away into deeper cover after a few minutes.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 214 bird taxa and 19 mammal taxa