

Arizona – May/June 2017

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Our first holiday in the USA was a relaxed trip with about equal time spent on mammalwatching, birding and hiking, but often all three could be combined. Mammal highlights included White-nosed Coati, Hooded Skunk, Striped Skunk, American Badger and unfortunately brief views of Black-footed Ferret. There were many birding highlights but I was particularly pleased with sightings of Montezuma Quail, Scaled Quail, Red-faced Warbler, Elegant Trogon, Greater Roadrunner, Elf Owl, Spotted Owl, Dusky Grouse and Californian Condor.



American Badger

Introduction

Arizona seemed to offer a good introduction to both the avian and mammalian delights of North America. Our initial plan was to do a comprehensive two-week visit of southeast Arizona, but after some back and forth we decided to include a visit to the Grand Canyon, also because this allowed a visit to Seligman for Badger and Black-footed Ferret and Vermillion Cliffs for Californian Condor. Overall, the schedule worked out pretty well, even if the second part included a lot more driving, although most of the driving was through pleasant or even superb scenery. I was already a little skeptical of including Sedona before the trip, and while I don't regret having visited the Sedona area, from a mammal and birding perspective it is a destination that could be excluded. Another night in Seligman and more hiking/birding around Flagstaff would probably have been more productive.

Timing and Weather

By late May/early June the northbound migratory species have largely left southeast Arizona so you mainly get to see the resident birds and summer visitors. Most late-arriving summer breeders had arrived by late May. There is a wealth of reports for southeast Arizona in spring, but there are not that many trip reports for the summer season. The reports of Peter Hawrylyshyn (August 2015) and Peter and Rosemary Royle (September 2015) on Cloudbirders were useful to get a feel for the bird species to expect in the summer period.

We extensively used the excellent [Benchmark Road Atlas Arizona](#) to find our way.

Temperatures in southeast Arizona were consistently high (always in the 90s in the afternoon and typically 100+ °F in the desert areas). On the Kaibab Plateau and in the Flagstaff area it was pleasant in the daytime (65-80 °F), but usually the humidity would build up and by early to mid afternoon we experienced the occasional shower or thunderstorm. Evenings and nights were chilly especially on the Kaibab plateau and close to freezing in the morning at Kaibab Lodge.

In Sedona and Agua Frias it was positively hot. On our last day it was a scorching 106 °F in Phoenix, even a little too hot for us. If you are not too concerned about the “missing” migratory birds in southeast Arizona, late May/early June is a good time to visit Arizona for a bird- and mammalwatching trip.



Point Imperial, Grand Canyon NP

Itinerary

May 19: Flight to Phoenix
May 20: Saguaro National Park / Madera Canyon
May 21: Madera Canyon
May 22: Florida Wash/Florida Canyon – Transfer to Cave Creek Ranch
May 23: Cave Creek Ranch
May 24: Cave Creek Ranch
May 25: Cave Creek Ranch
May 26: Transfer to Sierra Vista / Ash Canyon
May 27: Hunter Canyon/Carr Canyon/ Coronado National Monument/Hwy 61
May 28: Morning: Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve/Paton Feeders/Patagonia Lake State Park
Afternoon: Buenos Aires NWR
May 29: Nogales – Flagstaff / Arizona Trail near Walnut Canyon NM
May 30: Marble Canyon/Vermillion Cliffs / Grand Canyon NP – Kaibab Lodge
May 31: Grand Canyon NP – Jacob Lake Inn
June 1: Road 8910/Wupatki/Sunset Crater/Lockett Meadow/Schultz Pass
June 2: Lamar Haines Memorial Wildlife Area / Flagstaff Arboretum / Seligman / Aubrey Valley
June 3: Flagstaff Lakes / Sedona / Bubbling Ponds Page Springs
June 4: Hiking in the Sedona area
June 5: Agua Fria National Monument / Montezuma Castle / Montezuma Well – Flight back



Montezuma Quail

Sites Visited

Most of the sites below have been described extensively in books and other trip reports, so I will only add some personal notes below. I didn't buy one of the birding guides for southeast Arizona. The lodges at Cave Creek and Madera Canyon had a copy of at least one of the available guides in the room and we used them a couple of times. While very useful (and indispensable if you live in the area), I don't think you really need any of the books for a one-time visit to the well-established sites. Moreover, the well-known birding locations in the area can also be found via eBird.

Saguaro National Park

Pleasant park with good desert birding and a few mammals. From sunrise until about 9.30 am we slowly drove the unpaved Golden Gate Road and Hohokam Road where we saw among others Gilded Flicker, Gambel's Quail, Purple Martin, Cactus Wren, Pyrrholoxia, Bushtit, Lucy's Warbler and Bullock's Oriole. Harris's Antelope Squirrel and Desert Cottontail were the only mammal species seen. The short Desert Discovery Nature Trail was surprisingly good (even at 10 am). Here we saw our only Round-tailed Ground Squirrel and several Harris's Antelope Squirrel. Birds seen included Pyrrholoxia, Verdin, Say's Phoebe, Gila Woodpecker, and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher.



Black-headed Grosbeak

Painted Redstart

Black-throated Sparrow

Madera Canyon

We arrived on a Saturday, which is clearly to be avoided. The place was completely overrun by picnicking hordes. Sunday was better, but still busy – more hikers and less picnickers. I expected late May to be already somewhat out of season for birding, but there was a constant stream of Arizonian birders, guided groups of birders and the odd foreign birder.

Spotlighting here was frustrating, because there was constant traffic up and down the mountain road until about midnight on Saturday. So I thought it would be a good idea to exploit my jetlag and get up in the middle of the night. I spotlighted for more than an hour from 1.30 am to about 3 am but saw zero wildlife save a few insects and spiders. Bizarre! The Sunday evening was quieter and I spotlighted on foot the upper Madera Canyon area from about 9 pm and then drove up and down the canyon road; the walk produced a Whiskered Screech Owl and Mexican Whip Poorwill, but again not a single mammal of note. I only flushed a few white-tailed deer.

We stayed at Chuparosa Inn, which has a more secluded location than Santa Rita Lodge. The owner Luis is very friendly and helpful. The room we had was a little cramped though, but the feeders are wonderful. All kinds of interesting wildlife (including four skunk species, Bobcat, Ringtail, Black Bear and Coati) may show up around the lodge, but not when we were there. Rock and Arizona Grey Squirrels were almost constantly present though. Bird activity at the feeders was good and it was the best place to see Magnificent Hummingbird. You may see the trogon at the lodge (we didn't).

Madera Kubo: I probably didn't stay long enough here but there was usually nothing going on at the feeders when we stopped and I saw few other birders at this place. Flame-coloured Tanager was allegedly around, but we didn't see it.

Santa Rita Lodge: great place with superb feeders. It can get very busy in the daytime. We visited the feeders about 6-7 times including two visits at dusk. There is always something going on; besides the near-constant hummer frenzy the most interesting species for us were Arizona Woodpecker, Hooded Oriole, Scott's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak and Blue Grosbeak. Unfortunately, no cotton rats, pocket gophers, etc. The Elf Owl nesting in the wooden electricity post opposite the lodge was still present this year. We saw it briefly peeking out the breeding hole before flying off. The owl was nesting in one of the electricity poles directly across the road from the lodge's parking (so not in one of the poles with holes next to the feeders). Ask the locals or other birders if you are not sure where to look.



White-winged Dove and Red Cardinal

Cave Creek Ranch and Chiricahua Mountains

A fabulous place with a real wildlife lodge feel. Unfortunately, our mammal sightings here were less spectacular than I hoped, but maybe I was expecting too much and it didn't detract from how much we liked this place. The birding was, as expected, excellent. We visited/hiked South Fork, Sunny Flat Campground area, Herb Martyr and Ash Springs trail, Paradise and the Turkey Creek area, Barfoot Park and Chiricahua NM, which were all good for birding. Less productive during our visit were the area around the research station and Rustler Park.

Despite doing a number of spotlighting sessions at every conceivable hour of the night under what seemed optimal weather/temperature conditions, the results were a little underwhelming given the potential but unlike Madera Canyon we did at least see mammals here. One night/morning we made a 3 am start, which produced a Gray Fox and Striped Skunk. Another night with a "normal" spotlighting session just after dark only produced a Western Lyre Snake on the drive, but at least I

walked into a Hooded Skunk scurrying around our cottage when I got back. Our last night we spotlighted all the way from Chiricahua National Monument to Cave Creek Ranch, which takes you through plenty of habitat zones but we saw few mammals (two rogue bulls and about a dozen white-tailed deer), but at least we got a Spotted Owl next to the road. During our stay I did not really hear of anyone seeing anything exceptional mammalwise. Ringtails had last been seen at Cave Creek Ranch in March, when an individual came to the feeders daily (even in daytime) and then disappeared.



Chiricahua National Monument

Huachuca Mountains/Sierra Vista Area

The canyons west/southwest of Sierra Vista are well-established birding locations. Since I had seen most of my most wanted species the preceding days, we didn't spend too much time here. This cost me a couple of species high on the tick list of most birders (such as Tufted Flycatcher and one or two localized hummers) but this was acceptable collateral damage.

Upon arrival in the area we first stopped at the feeders of Mary Jo Ballator at the foot of Ash Canyon. She is a lovely lady, knows her birds very well and also gave some good info on where to look for certain species in the area. Despite it being midday, activity at the feeders was good. She told us to come back in the evening for the Lucifer Hummingbird, because they prefer it quiet. Of course she was right and we saw one subadult male and a splendid fully adult male (although by that time the light was too poor for decent photos). Other species seen around the feeders included Scott's and Bullock's Oriole, Anna's Hummingbird, Song Sparrow, Bewick's Wren, Wild Turkey, and Ladder-backed Woodpecker. Mammals included Arizona Grey Squirrel, Rock Squirrel, Coue's White-tailed Deer, and Desert Cottontail. Ringtails do visit the feeders at night regularly (if you stay at her place). Collared Peccaries are another fairly regular guest.

We stopped briefly at Miller Canyon. It was quiet around the car park and the entrance at Beatty's Ranch was uninviting enough to make us turn around (apart from not expecting to see anything new save one or two hummers). We stayed at the Quality Inn in Sierra Vista, good value at about 50 USD a night!

The next morning we first visited Hunter Canyon. Bird activity was surprisingly poor (but included Bewick's Wren, Spotted Towhee and Hutton's Vireo), but eventually I found a Rufous-capped Warbler. The bird was rather restless, so views could have been better. Next stop was Carr Canyon (very busy with day visitors and campers). Birding was pretty good and sightings included Buff-breasted Flycatcher and Brown Creeper (easiest at the lower campsite), Mexican Jay, Arizona Woodpecker, Painted Redstart (just one), Greater Pewee, Western Tanager, Western Scrub Jay, and a bird that very much looked like a female Olive Warbler but it was just a little too far and flighty to be sure. By 11am activity came to a halt so we decided to leave. We stopped for lunch at Coronado National Monument and saw a Greater Roadrunner race through the picnic area. We then drove to Nogales and took the lonely but lovely unpaved Highway 61 that snakes west along the Mexican border. It was scorching outside, so bird activity was low but we did encounter Gambel's Quail, Horned Lark, and Grasshopper Sparrow. The late afternoon/evening unfortunately required a pit stop (shopping for food, washing clothes, petrol, etc). We stayed in Nogales in Candlewood Suites, which was good value at about 75 USD per room.



House Finch and Lesser Goldfinch



Mexican jay

Patagonia Area / Nogales

My original plan here was to spend an afternoon and full morning on Ruby Road and in the California Gulch area in case I had not seen Montezuma Quail by then, but with this species in the bag multiple times we changed our plans and a visit to Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge was added to our itinerary (see below).

We anticipated that Patagonia Lake State Park would be completely overrun on a Sunday, which proved correct, so in the morning we first visited Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, which we had to ourselves the first couple of hours. A small but wonderful reserve with a good trail system. It was a bit of relief to finally see Collared Peccaries here, which I had expected to be a trash species in this part of Arizona, especially in the Cave Creek Ranch area. We saw most of the bird specials you would

expect to see here, but multiple close sightings of Varied Bunting males were particularly pleasing. Other mammals seen included Coue's White-tailed Deer and Arizona Grey Squirrel.

Patagonia Lake State Park charges a rather excessive 10 USD per person entrance fee. The lake was a national holiday recreation nightmare, but by walking up the river on the Bird Trail we managed to shake off pretty much everyone within the first 300-400 yards (it was blistering hot, which may have helped as well). Birding was entertaining enough and birds were pretty active given that we visited between 11 am and 1 pm. Sightings included Green Kingfisher, Black-crowned Nigh-heron, Great-tailed Grackle, Striated Heron, Verdin, Varied Bunting, Summer Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxia, and Mexican Mallard.



Scenery on the Pronghorn drive in Buenos Aires NWR

Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge

An unexpected highlight of the trip, although you should try to include an early morning/late afternoon visit. Camping in the reserve would probably be the most productive way to visit. The notice board at the visitor centre had several interesting sightings listed for April and May (assuming they had some basis in reality): a Puma crossing the Arivaca-Sasabe Road and Black Bear and Desert Bighorn in the mountainous areas of the reserve.

Border Patrol vehicles were everywhere, but the Border Patrol guys only stopped us at the checkpoint in Arivaca Junction near the I19 Motorway. They were friendly and relaxed.

The drive to the reserve from Arivaca Junction to Arivaca town was pleasant enough, but not particularly exciting from a birding or mammal perspective.

We first hiked the trail at Arivaca Creek (a few miles west of Arivaca, signposted). It was seriously hot at about 4 pm, but the gallery forest was rather alive with birds including Blue Grosbeak, Common Ground Dove, Bridled Titmouse, Song Sparrow, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Summer Tanager and Western Wood Pewee. A Gray Fox was flushed on the trail and we had to navigate past a thankfully docile young black bull. In the area where the main loop trail and the Mustang Trail branched, part of the trail appeared to have disappeared or overgrown, and the numerous animal/cattle trails made it difficult to establish whether there was an actual "official" trail. While doing some trail searching I suddenly found myself half a metre away from a bulky Mojave Rattlesnake. What a beast! This was also the sign to be smart and just walk back the same way on the actual trail. Soon after we ran into a White-nosed Coati and then an Antelope Jack-rabbit. Wow, pretty good session, and we had almost skipped this trail assuming that it would be deserted at this time of day. Next we drove to the part of the reserve around the visitor centre. On the access road to the visitor centre (after you leave Hwy

286) we saw a Coyote and two Pronghorns. A nice male Pronghorn was seen near the visitor centre. We first drove to Lake Aguirre, which was completely dry as expected, but another Pronghorn male and numerous Mule Deer were seen here.

We then drove the Pronghorn Drive slowly. Nice scenery and rather incredible numbers of Antelope Jackrabbits. Black-tailed Jack-rabbits were present too, but they were outnumbered by the bigger cousins. It initially looked like that the drive was going to be Pronghorn-free, but eventually we found a young male and later about two dozens at Mormon Lake.

We tried to drive back via one of the “gamedrive tracks” straight north from Lake Aguirre in the hope to reach the paved road to Arivaca further north. At some point we turned around because there were a lot of stony stretches and the idea of a flat tyre in this remote area didn’t seem too appealing. We didn’t see that much either: plenty of Mule Deer, a few Desert Cottontails and a couple of Gambel Quails with at least 15 chicks.

Back at the visitor centre area we saw a Coyote, which appeared to be a different animal than the one seen earlier. After the sun had set we were back on the paved road and soon spotted a Great Horned Owl, but unfortunately no new mammals. The road between Arivaca and Arivaca Junction leads through pleasant countryside (mostly cattle ranches), but we were surprised how much traffic there was after dark (although it was Memorial Day). The only mammals seen on this stretch were a few Desert Cottontails, a deer and two Black-tailed Jackrabbits.



Antelope Jack-rabbit

Grand Canyon National Park

Our initial plan was to visit both the south and north rim. Travel plans worked out such that we first had to visit the north rim. On our way back from the north rim to the south rim, several people warned us that the south rim was total mayhem with long traffic jams around popular viewpoints and 2-3 hour waiting times to visit certain viewpoints. Exit south rim.

On the north rim we visited several viewpoints near Bright Angel Point and the lodge, Point Imperial and Cape Royal. I liked Point Imperial best but the viewpoints are all about equally spectacular. We spent about 18 hours in the north rim area, which was enough for us. At some point we developed viewpoint fatigue.



The first night we stayed at Kaibab Lodge, which had better food and a better location (i.e., views over a meadow that attracted wildlife) than Jacob Lake Inn. I didn't really like Jacob Lake Inn, where we stayed the second night: poor food and a rather ugly setting. The food in Grand Canyon Lodge in the park was a little uneven. Our salad for starters was excellent, but the main courses were a joke.

Widforss Trail: nice trail through good forest. Good for birding (Dusky Grouse) and plenty of squirrels and chipmunks, but other mammals (including Black Bear and Puma) are sometimes seen on the trail.

Cape Final Trail: easy trail through rather boring pine forest but good birding near the rim where there is more variation in the vegetation and hence birdier. I saw Kaibab Squirrel twice in the Cape Final area (including one on the trail) plus several chipmunks and other squirrel species. Here we also saw the only Clark's Nutcrackers of the trip.

Point Imperial and Ken Patrick Trail: unfortunately large tracts of forest have burned down in this area. Good for unobstructed views of the canyon but wildlife was relatively scarce in this area. Best sighting was a Peregrine hunting swifts and swallows. A little later we found the falcon perched on a tree nearby.

Seligman area

I thought this would just be a functional visit to get in and out to try and see the ferret but I actually really enjoyed Seligman and the surrounding countryside. Simple but tasty food at Lilo's Café and

friendly down-to-earth staff. Their carrot cake is the size of a small brick but indeed delicious. We stayed at Deluxe Inn in a King Room (indeed with a life-size Elvis mock-up in the room), which was good. In the afternoon we did a recce between mile 133 and 120. After seeing a dozen prairie dogs, something bigger came bouncing through the grasslands. A badger at 4.30 pm! We stopped the car and, as hoped, it slowly walked towards us, walking past the car at about 50-60 metres. Brilliant!

Traffic was rather heavy in the early evening. So I reckoned it wouldn't be worth going out just after dark. After about 11 pm the traffic intensity started to wane and around midnight we drove off but the first driving session wasn't very exciting. A Coyote just at the edge of the spotlight was the best sighting. After a couple of hours my wife had had enough so I dropped her off in Seligman and then went back. This time things were a bit more productive with another Coyote and a Badger but all at the far end of the spotlight and not particularly cooperative. Only by 4 am in the morning I finally saw two green laser beams radiate in the prairie. The ferret stood still when I caught him in the spotlight but it was far away (still within the range of the spotlight, but it should have been at least 50 yards/metres closer for good views). After a few seconds it bolted off into a burrow. The ferret stuck its head out a few times but did not leave burrow. I waited for about 20-30 minutes but no joy. I slowly drove back towards Seligman with the sunrise already developing in the far distance. Two Red Deer (Elk) crossed the road at mile 137-138 on the way back, but nothing else was seen.

Flagstaff area

Walnut Canyon NM / Arizona Trailhead: we arrived at 4.30 pm and they do close the gate to Walnut Canyon at 5 pm so we headed on an unpaved road west from the entrance to Walnut Canyon for about 2 miles to the Arizona Trail trailhead (well marked and information boards at the parking). We walked the trail in both directions and found Abert's Squirrel and Gray-collared Chipmunk fairly easily. Birds were rather scarce, but we did see Audubon's (Yellow-rumped) warbler, Western Bluebird, Pygmy Nuthatch, Chipping Sparrow and Mountain Chickadee.

Wupatki/Sunset Crater National Monument: pleasant scenery but not too exciting in terms of birds and mammals in daytime. We had a freak shower with some thunder and lightning, which was actually quite pleasant. A male Pronghorn was the most interesting sighting here.

Lockett Meadow/Inner Basin Trail: on your way up to Lockett Meadow you have pretty cool views over the prairie towards the north and Wupatki/Sunset Crater National Monument in the east. We arrived mid-afternoon when bird and mammal activity was moderate. Probably better to visit this site in the morning. The first mile of the hike (Basin Trail) up the mountain from the parking area was the most productive stretch: a stunning male Red-naped Sapsucker in ultracrisp plumage and Hairy Woodpecker were the most interesting species. Williamson's Sapsucker remained heard only. Higher up the trail birds were scarce. Gray-collared Chipmunk and Spruce Squirrel were the only mammals seen.

Schultz Pass: the road near the pass is rather unpleasant and should probably be avoided with a sedan (especially near the pass). Ending up with a flat tyre is not unlikely here. Best sighting along the road were two Pinyon Jays. Otherwise underwhelming. Most of the forest has been destroyed by a fire, so I was hoping to see some of the rarer woodpeckers, but we only saw Acorn Woodpecker and Northern Flicker. Steller's Jay was common and one Abert's Squirrel was seen.

Lamar Haines Memorial Wildlife Area: nice forest, but otherwise very disappointing. I hoped to see some of the rarer woodpeckers here, but no joy. Only common bird species and one Mule Deer were seen.

Flagstaff Arboretum: we easily saw Abert's Squirrel and Gray-collared Chipmunk. Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel was present, but not very cooperative. Birding was disappointing; only about a dozen common species were seen.

Flagstaff Lakes: we visited three lakes southeast of Flagstaff, Upper and Lower Lake Mary and Mormon Lake. Since it was a Saturday, it was very busy but Mormon Lake nevertheless had some decent birding. In the lake we found about a dozen Elk feeding in the marshes on the east side of the lake.



Abert's Squirrel

Sedona area

A bit of a gamble and I should have followed my instinct here – this was a little too touristy and manicured for our tastes, but we did make a few nice hikes here. Sedona is indeed embedded in a beautiful natural arena of red rock sculptures, but unfortunately the ongoing urban sprawl is eating into the landscape in a way that is ruining what constitutes the actual appeal of the area. My first choice for a hike was a bit of a mistake. I thought that the short hike in Fay Canyon would still be relatively quiet early in the morning. I had read on a local birding website that Fay Canyon was underbirded but should have good birding. I made the unfounded assumption that underbirded meant undervisited. Not so. A short distance into the trail we met a group that must have come from one of the expensive spiritual-healing-type resorts in the direct vicinity. Ahead of the troupe was an enlightened Führerin, directly followed by two enchanted zealots, then a little gap, and then another six disciples that looked positively pissed off, their faces reading something along the lines “why, by

Zeus, do I pay 763 USD a night to meditate in a canyon at 6 am in the morning while having to tolerate the unwashed and unshaven (yours truly), packs of desperate housewives, Oh my God-ing teenage girls, clingy young couples and some actual hikers”. Unsurprisingly, the birding was a little underwhelming with this carnival of human visitors, the only new birds being two Juniper Titmouse. Only mammal was an unidentified chipmunk that crossed the trail.

We then went to the canyon next door, Bear Mountain Canyon, to do a more challenging hike; it was only about 8 km but only on our way back we noticed how incredibly steep the climb up had been in some parts. So it wasn't just our age and less than amazing fitness levels that made us catch our breath for longer than seemed normal a number of times on the way up. Just like in Fay Canyon, the birding was okay but not spectacular. The views, on the other hand, across the red rock canyons and semi-desert as far as Oak Creek village were excellent. We got back by about 11.30 am, by which time the temperature was again in the high 90s.



Bear Mountain Canyon area

In the early afternoon it was just too hot to do much. In the late afternoon I made a walk southeast of Oak Creek village starting at the Pine Canyon/Hot Loop Trailhead; I walked part of the Hot Loop Trail. Nice walk, quiet, but no mammals. Best birds were a male Scott's Oriole, Western Scrub Jay and Loggerhead Shrike (at the start of the trail).

Bubbling Ponds Page Springs: A small but well-run reserve with good trails and a variety of habitats. Information and a map can be found here: <http://northernarizonaaudubon.org/NAAS/bubbling-ponds-preserve/>. We saw a Black Hawk near the river just outside the reserve. Inside the reserve we mostly saw common species; most noteworthy were Masked Yellowthroat, Ladder-backed

Woodpecker, Black Phoebe and the antics of the breeding Red-headed Blackbirds and Great-tailed Grackles.

Agua Fria National Monument

This was a last-minute addition; since our plane would fly from Phoenix to Europe in the evening, we decided to give this unknown reserve a try. I had no info on this place so we briefly browsed the Internet the evening before. Information on the reserve is rather limited:

http://www.americansouthwest.net/arizona/agua_fria/national_monument.html

A map can be found here:

http://www.americansouthwest.net/arizona/agua_fria/map.html

We first checked out the Badger Spring area; we got there by 7.30ish, which was already a little late, but the birding was still okay. The footprints along the riverbed suggested that a variety of medium-sized mammals visit during the cooler half of the day, so a dusk/early evening visit could be productive. Best sightings were a Zone-tailed Hawk mobbed by two kestrels, a male Hooded Oriole, Cactus Wren, Verdin and Canyon Towhee. Mammals were represented by Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel, Rock Squirrel and Cliff Chipmunk. We then backtracked to Bloody Basin Road. Nice views from the plateau down in the canyons below. The unpaved road is in good condition up to the Agua Fria River. We then climbed up the plateau on the other side of the river but after a couple of miles we turned around because the road got pretty bad and a punctured tyre in the relatively remote reserve seemed not worth the hassle. Bird activity was highest around the river (only common species). Up on the plateau we saw a Greater Roadrunner, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk and Black-throated Sparrow.

Montezuma Castle and Montezuma Well

We visited the two sites between noon and 3 pm with temperatures above 100 °F, so wildlife activity was negligible. Gila Woodpecker was the most exciting sighting.



Steller's jay



White-winged Dove

Trip Lists

By “southeast” I mean the entire area southeast of Tucson, so roughly the area south of Highway 10 between Nogales/Green Valley/Highway19 in the west and the New Mexico/Arizona state border in the east. Buenos Aires NWR is mentioned separately in the lists below and is not part of this area/definition when I mention “southeast”. Grand Canyon NP in this report only refers to the north rim area of the park. Unless specified otherwise “Cave Creek Canyon” refers to the entire area between Portal and the/research station/Herb Martyr Campground.



Coyote

Antelope Jack-rabbit

Mammal List

Mexican Long-tongued Bat *Choeronycteris Mexicana* – seen at the feeders in Cave Creek Ranch
Western Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus hesperus* – a tourgroup guide with a bat detector called this species in Cave Creek Canyon

Pallid Bat *Antrozous pallidus* – two in Oak Creek village

Coyote *Canis latrans* – one rather sorry looking animal along Highway 19 towards Nogales, two in Buenos Aires NWR, one seen several times (but possibly two) in Aubrey Valley, twice a sighting of probably the same animal at dusk in Oak Creek near Sedona, one in daytime near Kaibab Lodge

Grey Fox *Urocyon cinereoargenteus* – two in the Cave Creek Canyon area while spotlighting, one in daytime in Buenos Aires NWR along the Arivaca Creek walking trail

American Badger *Taxidea taxus* – two in Aubrey Valley (one at night, one in daytime)

White-nosed Coati *Nasua narica* – one on the Arivaca Creek trail in Buenos Aires NWR



White-nosed Coati

Hooded Skunk *Mephitis macroura* – one on the grounds of Cave Creek Ranch
 Striped Skunk *Mephitis mephitis* – one in Cave Creek Canyon
 Wapiti (aka Elk) *Cervus canadensis* – about eight on the road between Flagstaff and Arizona
 Snowball, at least 20 feeding in Mormon Lake near Flagstaff, two just before dawn between Aubrey
 Valley and Seligman
 Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus* – common in Grand Canyon NP, Kaibab Forest and Buenos Aires
 NWR; (a couple of fine) males were only seen in Grand Canyon NP
 Coue's White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus couesi* – common in the southeast, particularly
 Madera Canyon and Cave Creek Canyon, but seen on pretty much every hike or drive in the area
 Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana* – four sightings of about 20 animals in Buenos Aires NWR, single
 animals east and west of Seligman, one male in Wupatki
 Bison *Bison bison* – two groups (11 and 5 animals) in Grand Canyon NP



Collared Peccary

Collared Peccary *Pecari tajacu* – group of about 10-12 animals in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve
 Black-tailed Jackrabbit *Lepus californicus* – 1-5 at Portal Road and Stateline Road, one on Procter
 Road, one between Florida and Madera Canyon, one on Road 8910 (near Vermillion Cliffs), 3+ in
 Buenos Aires NWR and 3+ along the road to Arivaca Jct.
 Antelope Jackrabbit *Lepus alleni* – two along Procter Road (Madera canyon), 12+ in Buenos Aires
 NWR including one on the Arivaca Creek Trail
 Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii* – seen in Saguaro NP, Seligman/Aubrey Valley, and Wupatki
 NM, among other sites
 Eastern Cottontail *Sylvilagus floridanus* – common at several locations in the southeast
 Gunnison's Prairie Dog *Cynomys gunnisoni* – common in Aubrey Valley, single animals along the
 roadside near Flagstaff



Gunnison's Prairie Dog

Arizona Grey Squirrel *Sciurus arizonensis* – common in the southeast, easiest to see in Madera Canyon and Cave Creek Canyon/Chiricahuas



Arizona Grey Squirrel



Uinta Chipmunk

Mexican/Apache Fox Squirrel *Sciurus nayaritensis* – two on the South Fork trail, one on the trail from the visitor centre to Sunny Flat campsite and one at Barfoot Park



Mexican Fox Squirrel

Spruce Squirrel *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus* – regular sightings in Grand Canyon NP, where particularly common on the Widforss and Cape Final Trail – this subspecies was quite different from the red squirrels in the Flagstaff area; 6+ seen on the Inner Basin Trail at Locket Meadow (opposite Wupatki NM)

Kaibab Squirrel *Sciurus kaibabensis* – one at the far end of the car park at Grand Canyon Lodge, two in the Cape Final area

Abert's Squirrel *Sciurus aberti* – uncommon but easier to find than expected; two along the Arizona Trailhead near Walnut Canyon, two in the Flagstaff Arboretum grounds, one on the road to Schultz Pass

Cliff Chipmunk *Tamias dorsalis* – two in the grounds of Cave Creek Ranch, one in Grand Canyon NP, at least two in Agua Fria NM

Uinta Chipmunk *Tamias umbrinus* – fairly common in Grand Canyon NP

Gray-collared Chipmunk *Neotamias cinereicollis* – fairly common around Flagstaff, seen at Arizona Trailhead near Walnut Canyon, Locket Meadow area and Flagstaff Arboretum

Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus lateralis* – two in the Flagstaff Arboretum, one in Agua Fria NM, about 7-8 in Grand Canyon NP

Round-tailed Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus tereticaudus* – one in Saguaro NP

Rock Squirrel *Spermophilus variegatus* – common around Madera Canyon and Cave Creek Canyon. Also seen in Agua Fria NM and Grand Canyon NP.
Harris’s Antelope Squirrel *Ammospermophilus harrisi* – 5+ seen in Saguaro NP
White-tailed Antelope Squirrel *Ammospermophilus leucurus* – several on the drier eastern edge (juniper forest) of the Kaibab Plateau, 2+ seen along Road 8910 near Vermillion Cliffs



Kaibab Squirrel

Bird List

Canada goose *Branta canadensis* – a pair at Mormon Lake southeast of Flagstaff

Wood duck *Aix sponsa* – a female with ducklings at Bubbling Ponds (Page Springs)

Gadwall *Anas strepera* – 4 at Bubbling Ponds, 5+ at Mormon Lake

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos (platyrhynchos)/(diazi)* – two on a small pond on the Kaibab plateau, 10+ at Mormon Lake and a few at both lake Mary's, five birds of the Mexican subspecies were seen at Patagonia State Lake Park

Cinnamon Teal *Anas cyanoptera* – one at Bubbling Ponds, 6+ at Mormon Lake near Flagstaff, a female at Willow Tank

Redhead *Aythya americana* – 5+ at Mormon Lake near Flagstaff

Scaled Quail *Callipepla squamata* – 3+ along Portal Road, 3 in Buenos Aires NWR on the Pronghorn Drive

Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii* – 6 in Saguaro NP, easy to see along Portal Road and Stateline road, 16+ at the Rodriguez feeders, 20+ (including chicks) in Buenos Aires NWR, about 3-4 in Oak Creek village, and a few sightings on route.

Montezuma Quail *Cyrtonyx montezumae* – a pair on the Carrie Nation Trail in Madera Canyon, a pair in Bonita Creek in Chiricahua NM, a pair slightly west of Paradise in the Cave Creek Canyon area, a flushed pair in Florida Canyon



Gambel's Quail



Scaled Quail

Dusky Grouse *Dendragapus obscurus* – one seen at close range in Grand Canyon NP on the Widforss Trail

Gould's Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo gouldi* – fairly easy to see in Madera Canyon where they come to the feeders, a few on route from Cave Creek Canyon to Chiricahua NM, twice seen on the road between Paradise and Turkey Creek Jct., 4+ Mary Jo's feeders (Ash Canyon),

Merriam's Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo merriami* – three sightings in Grand Canyon NP of 2, 1 and 2 animals, respectively

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* – seen but did not really pay attention to this species

Band-tailed Pigeon *Patagioenas fasciata* – scarce (or at least not very conspicuous), seen near Cave Creek Ranch and Florida Canyon

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* – one on the feeders in Cave Creek Ranch, one at the Paton feeder

Inca Dove *Columbina inca* – one at the feeders in Cave Creek Ranch

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina* – common in Buenos Aires NWR

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* – common in Saguaro, Buenos Aires NWR and the southeast
Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* – common, seen daily
Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus* – less easy than expected, four birds along the Hwy 19 near Sahuarita, one in Agua Fria NM, only one along Portal Road and one in the picnic area of Coronado NM
Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis* – one flushed animal seen well in flight quite late in the morning in Saguaro NP, 10+ at dusk in Madera Canyon
Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor* – one hawking around dusk between Phoenix and Tucson was probably this species (brief views from the car), seen in flight at dusk in Madera Canyon
Common Poorwill *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii* – one near South Fork
[Buff-collared nightjar *Antrostomus ridgwayi* – heard only in the Madera Canyon area]
Mexican Whip-poor-will *Antrostomus arizonae* – one at the upper parking in Madera Canyon, one next to the road between the research station and Turkey Creek; often heard calling
White-throated Swift *Aeronautes saxatalis* – fairly common, seen on most days in small numbers (typically < 5)
Magnificent Hummingbird *Eugenes fulgens* – common at Chuparosa Inn, but also seen at Santa Rita Lodge, Cave Creek Ranch and Ash canyon (Mary Jo's feeders)
Blue-throated Hummingbird *Lampornis clemenciae* – two in Madera Canyon, appeared easiest in Cave Creek Canyon where common,
Lucifer Hummingbird *Calothorax lucifer* – two (an adult and immature) at Mary Jo's feeders in Ash Canyon
Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri* – fairly common to common, seen on all feeders in the southeast but usually about 1-4 individuals
Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna* – a few seen in Cave Creek Canyon, best sightings including adult males at Mary Jo's feeders in Ash Canyon
Broad-tailed Hummingbird *Selasphorus platycercus* – a female at Mary Jo's feeders (Ash Canyon),
Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cynanthus latirostris* – a few in Saguaro NP, common in the southeast on feeders, Mary Jo's feeders (Ash Canyon)
Violet-crowned Hummingbird *Amazilia violiceps* – two on the Paton feeders
American coot *Fulica americana* – seen in Patagonia Lake State park, Willow Tank in the Portal area, and Mormon Lake
Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* – one in the Willow Tank in the Portal area, and a pair with chicks at Bubbling Ponds Page Springs
Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* – one in breeding plumage in the Willow Tank in the Portal area
Solitary sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* – a few scattered sightings throughout the tour
Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* – a few in Patagonia Lake State Park
Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus* – About two dozens in Patagonia Lake State Park
Great blue Heron *Ardea herodias* – seen in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, 10+ in Bubbling Ponds Page Springs, one each at Lower and Upper Lake Mary, several on Mormon Lake
Green Heron *Butorides virescens* - one in in Patagonia Lake State Park
Black-crowned night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – a juvenile in Patagonia Lake State Park, a juvenile and an adult in Bubbling Ponds Page Springs
Turkey vulture *Cathartes aura* – common in the southeast and Buenos Aires NWR, fairly common in Grand Canyon NP, Vermillion Cliffs, Agua Fria NM, only a few daily in the Flagstaff and Sedona area; there may have been the odd Black Vulture among all the turkey vultures, but didn't really check since I have seen both species in abundance on every South America trip
California Condor *Gymnogyps californianus* – a female on the nest at Navajo Bridge, two adults in flight from the road BLM 1065 (where there is also a condor viewpoint), at least three (two adults and one immature) in Grand Canyon NP termalling upwards along the canyon wall about ten miles south of Jacob Lake Inn

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus* – one flushed on the Cape Final Trail
 Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii* – one in Madera Canyon swooping over the Santa Rita Lodge feeders, one landed right above the feeder area at Chuparosa Inn, one at Turkey Creek Jct., two over Florida Canyon
 Common Black Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus* – one near Bubbling Ponds Page Springs
 Gray Hawk *Buteo plagiatus* – one seen well in Florida Canyon
 Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus* – one near Douglas
 Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni* – only a few seen
 Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus* – one in grasslands on Hwy 80 towards Douglas, one seen well in Agua Fria NM



Gray Hawk



California Condor

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* – the commonest buteo on our trip
 [Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis* – saw two on route from the car window that were probably this species, but the road was too busy to stop]
 Golden eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos* – one seen briefly in Grand Canyon NP
 American kestrel *Falco sparverius* – two in Agua Fria NM mobbing a Zone-tailed Hawk
 Peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus anatum* – one seen at close range in Grand Canyon at Point Imperial



Red-tailed Hawk



Peregrine



Elegant Trogon

[Western Screech-owl *Megascops kennicottii* – heard regularly in the southeast]
 Whiskered Screech-owl *Megascops trichopsis* – one seen while spotlighting in Madera Canyon, heard regularly

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus* – one seen well in the late afternoon in Buenos Aires NWR
 [Mountain/Northern Pygmy-owl *Glaucidium gnoma* – heard only in Madera Canyon]
 Elf Owl *Micrathene whitneyi* – one at Santa Rita Lodge, one briefly in flight at Portal Lodge
 Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia* – two in the late afternoon in Buenos Aires NWR
 Spotted Owl *Strix occidentalis* – a chance encounter with a bird at dusk sitting on a snag along the road between Pinery Canyon and Onion Saddle in the Chiricahua s
 Elegant Trogon *Trogon elegans* – surprisingly easy to find with 1-3 birds seen on all walks in South Fork Trail. A male was seen in the riparian forest of the creek bed below Herb Martyr Campground; in Madera Canyon only heard briefly and rather far away on the Carrie Nation trail but they were around during our stay, as far down as Madera Kubo.
 Green kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana* – one in in Patagonia Lake State Park
 Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus* – common in the southeast, fairly common around Flagstaff and the Grand Canyon
 Gila Woodpecker *Melanerpes uropygialis* – common in Saguaro NP, also seen in Agua Fria NM and Montezuma Castle/Well, Buenos Aires NMR and regular sightings in the southeast



Gila Woodpecker



Acorn Woodpecker

[Williamson's Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus thyroideus* – heard only Locket Meadow]
 Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis* – superb views of a male in the Locket meadow area
 Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Picoides scalaris* – two seen in Florida Canyon, easy to see at Mary Jo's feeders in Ash Canyon, a female at Bubbling Ponds, two at Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve
 Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus* – 2-3 on both hikes in South Fork Trail, two on the hike to Ash Springs (Herb Martyr Campground), a pair on route to Barfoot Park, a female on the Inner Basin hiking trail (Lockett Meadow)
 Arizona Woodpecker *Picoides arizonae* – a female on the Santa Rita lodge feeders in Madera Canyon, a male in Chiricahua NM, one at South Fork trail
 Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus* – at least five on in South Fork Trail, fairly common to common in the Flagstaff area, Kaibab Forest, Grand Canyon NP.
 Gilded Flicker *Colaptes chrysoides* – a pair in Saguaro NP
 Northern Beardless Tyrannulet *Camptostoma imberbe* – one in Florida Canyon (identified by call by a local birder), one in Patagonia Lake State Park, a probable one on the Arivaca Creek trail
 Greater Pewee *Contopus pertinax* – seen along the road to Rustler Park and two sightings on the Carr Canyon Road between the two campgrounds
 Western Wood-pewee *Contopus sordidulus* – fairly common

Cordilleran Flycatcher *Empidonax occidentalis* – fairly common in the southeast in the higher parts (e.g., upper trails Madera Canyon, Carr Canyon, Rustler/Barfoot Park); I could not positively identify migrant Empidonax flycatchers (Pacific-Slope, Hammond's, etc.)

Buff-breasted Flycatcher *Empidonax fulvifrons* – easiest to see at the Reef Townsite campground in Carr Canyon, but one or two along the road in Carr Canyon

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans* – a pair at Cave Creek Ranch, several at Bubbling Ponds Page Springs

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* – one seen in Saguaro NP, common in the lower part of Florida canyon, two at the Flagstaff Arboretum, common at Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus* – common in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve

Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer* – fairly common in the southeast, seen (among other places) in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, Ash Canyon, Madera Canyon

Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens* – fairly common in the southeast, seen in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, Ash Canyon, Coronado NM, Hunter Canyon, but also on the Kaibab Plateau (e.g., Jacob Lake Inn and Kaibab Lodge), also seen in the Sedona area and around Flagstaff

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus* – fairly common in the southeast, mostly seen at mid and higher elevations in the southeast, but sometimes also lower, such as in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve and Patagonia Lake State Park, also seen in the Sedona area

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher *Myiodynastes luteiventris* – two seen well on the Carrie Nation trail

Cassin's Kingbird *Tyrannus vociferans* – seen in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, Florida Wash and Portal area, also en route to Buenos Aires NWR/Arivaca

Thick-billed Kingbird *Tyrannus crassirostris* – one seen well in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis* – common in the foothills in the southeast, seen at Stateline and Portal Road, Portal-Paradise Road, Portal area, Florida Canyon, Procter Road, Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, and Saguaro NP. Also seen at Page Springs Fish Hatchery.

Loggerhead shrike *Lanius ludovicianus* – 3-4 on the road between Chiricahua NM and Willcox, several in Buenos Aires NWR, two along Stateline Road

Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii* – fairly common at the lower end/foothills of Madera Canyon and Florida Canyon, also several seen in the Patagonia area (Paton feeders), a few sightings in the Cave Creek Canyon area

Hutton's Vireo *Vireo huttoni* – a few seen at the lower end/foothills of Madera Canyon and Florida Canyon, also one each at Patagonia Lake State Park and Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, a few in Cave Creek Canyon, Rustler Park, Echo Trail in Chiricahua NM

Plumbeous Vireo *Vireo plumbeus* – fairly common on Carrie Nation Trail and other trails in Madera canyon, also a number of sightings in the Chiricahuas (South Fork Trail, Herb Martyr Campground)

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus* – two at Lamar Haines MWA, not positively identified in southeast Arizona

Pinyon Jay *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus* – two in the Schultz pass area near Flagstaff

Steller's Jay *Cyanocitta stelleri* – fairly common to common in mountainous areas above 2000 m

Woodhouse's (Western) Scrub-Jay *Aphelocoma woodhouseii* – one near Barfoot Park, fairly common in the Sedona/Oak Creek area

Mexican Jay *Aphelocoma ultramarina* – common

Clark's Nutcracker *Nucifraga columbiana* – two on the Cape Final trail in Grand Canyon NP

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos* – only three scattered sightings of single birds in grassland/prairie areas

Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucos* – seen (with certainty) in Sierra Vista and Buenos Aires NWR

Common Raven *Corvus corax* – common to very common throughout the trip

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* – seen in grassland/prairie areas, a few seen well when sitting on wires or little mounds/rocks, but most seen flushed from the track/road

Purple Martin *Progne subis hesperia* – 10+ in Saguaro NP

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor* – a few scattered sightings of 1-4 animals

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina* – fairly common, seen almost daily but in small numbers (of about 3-8)

Northern rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* – seen at Montezuma Well, Bubbling Ponds Page Springs

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – seen on most days, but only seen in small numbers

Mountain Chickadee *Poecile gambeli* – fairly common in Grand Canyon NP and around Flagstaff (Lockett meadow)

Mexican Chickadee *Poecile sclateri* – one just showed up at close range in the Barfoot Park area when photographing a Red-faced Warbler

Bridled Titmouse *Baeolophus wollweberi* – common in the southeast

Juniper Titmouse *Baeolophus ridgwayi* – two in Fay Canyon

Verdin *Auriparus flaviceps* – 5+ in Saguaro NP, two in Patagonia Lake State Park, 3 in Agua Fria NM, a few seen on stops along the motorway in (semi)desert areas

Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus* – fairly common, seen well in Saguaro NP, hikes in the Sedona/Oka Creek area, Madera Canyon

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis* – common at the feeders in the southeast, regular sightings in the Flagstaff and Grand Canyon area

Pygmy Nuthatch *Sitta pygmaea* – fairly common in the Flagstaff area and Grand Canyon area

Brown Creeper *Certhia americana* – may take a few days but eventually you should run into them, 3+ on the South Fork trail, two on the Ash Springs hiking trail that starts from Herb Martyr campground, 4+ in the Reef Townsite campground in Carr Canyon

Rock Wren *Salpinctes obsoletus* – one on South Fork Trail, a few in Chiricahua and the Madera Canyon area, about 5 in Agua Fria NM

Canyon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus* – one in Chiricahua NM on the Echo Trail

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon* – common throughout



House Wren



White-breasted Nuthatch

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii* – fairly common in the southeast (usually in the lower areas), common in the Sedona/Oak Creek area

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* – fairly common in Saguaro NP, one in Florida Canyon, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Polioptila caerulea* – a few on the Kaibab Plateau and in Grand Canyon NP, several groups on trails in the Sedona area, a few scattered sightings in the southeast

Black-tailed Gnatcatcher *Polioptila melanura* – seen fairly regularly in the southeast and Saguaro NP [Black-capped Gnatcatcher *Polioptila nigriceps* – one briefly seen at Florida Canyon, identified by call by a local birder]

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana* – fairly common to common in Kaibab Forest (including around the lodges), Grand Canyon NP, and the Flagstaff area including Arizona Trailhead (near Walnut Canyon)

Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides* – fairly common in Kaibab Forest and Grand Canyon NP

Hermit thrush *Catharus guttatus* – fairly common in Cave Creek Canyon, Grand Canyon NP and the Flagstaff area, one on the Carrie Nation trail, 3-5 in the Rustler and Barfoot campground areas

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* – fairly common to common throughout

Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre* – fairly common in Saguaro NP, a few along the Stateline Road, two at the feeders in Ash Canyon

Crissal Thrasher *Toxostoma crissale* – surprise sighting in semi-desert terrain in the Sedona area

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* – a few along Procter Road and Florida Wash in the Madera Canyon area, fairly common Agua Fria NM

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* – seen in downtown Tucson

Phainopepla *Phainopepla nitens* – one male at the bottom of Carr Canyon, common in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve and Bubbling Ponds Page Springs, also seen at Agua Fria NM

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* – common in urban areas

Lucy's Warbler *Oreothlypis luciae* – common in Saguaro NP, several groups seen well at Florida Wash including rufous crown of the male, a few in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* – one in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, one in Bubbling Ponds Page Springs

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia* – a total of about 5-6 sightings in the southeast including Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, Patagonia Lake State Park, Pinery Canyon, Procter Road and Florida Canyon

Audubon's/Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata auduboni* – common in Grand Canyon NP, Kaibab Forest and the Flagstaff area

Grace's Warbler *Setophaga graciae* – one on the Carrie Nation Trail in Madera Canyon, one on the Ash Springs trail in Cave Creek Canyon

Black-throated Gray Warbler *Setophaga nigrescens* – common in the area between the two campgrounds in Carr Canyon, relatively easy to find in the area between Paradise and Turkey Creek, several on the Ash Springs trail (Herb Martyr), common in Chiricahua NM,

Rufous-capped Warbler *Basileuterus rufifrons* – one in Hunter Canyon

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla* – a female on the trail at the Procter Road turnoff, one on route to Rustler/Barfoot, one at Herb Martyr/Ash Springs trail, a male on the “other” side of Onion’s Saddle towards Chiricahua NM.

MacGillivray’s Warbler *Oporonis tomlieri* – a small warbler with a gray head, green back and wings and yellow underside was seen in Grand Canyon NP and must have been the female of this species

Red-faced Warbler *Cardellina rubrifrons* – about 7-8 in Barfoot Park, one seen briefly in Rustler Park



Red-faced Warbler

Painted Redstart, *Myioborus pictus* – common on the Carrie Nation Trail in Madera Canyon, also seen

Yellow-breasted Chat, *Icteria virens* – common in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo chlorurus* – at least two on a mountain slope in a burned down area in Grand Canyon NP

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus* – common to very common on hikes in in the Sedona area, a few in Hunter Canyon and Carr Canyon, about five on the Echo trail in Chiricahua NM, two at Mary Jo's feeders (Ash Canyon)

Canyon Towhee *Melospiza fuscus* – a few at the lower end of Madera Canyon, one in Florida Canyon, common in Chiricahua NM especially the lower parts, two in Agua Fria NM, one Mary Jo's feeders (Ash Canyon), one in Coronado NM

Abert's Towhee *Melospiza aberti* – common in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve

Rufous-crowned Sparrow *Aimophila ruficeps* – at least two on the road to Rustler Park, one seen well in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, a few in the Florida Canyon area

Rufous-winged Sparrow *Peucaea carpalis* – one seen well in Buenos Aires NWR, two in Patagonia Lake State Park

Botteri's Sparrow *Peucaea botterii* – several seen well at the foothills of Madera and Florida Canyon, quite common but hard to see well in Buenos NWR, heard at the feeders in Ash Canyon by Mary Jo

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina* – fairly regular in the higher parts (Rustler Park, Carr Canyon, etc.) in southeast Arizona, common on the Kaibab Plateau and the north rim side of Grand Canyon NP, common in pine forest in the Flagstaff area and occasionally seen on hiking trails in the Sedona area

Black-chinned Sparrow *Spizella atrogularis* – a few seen along the Stateline Road, common in dry grassland/prairie areas, a few in Agua Fria NM, fairly common in Buenos Aires NWR

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus* – at least two, which were seen well, on Road 8910 in the Vermillion Cliffs area

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata* – first seen at a parking area on the motorway near Willcox, several along Stateline Road, Chiricahua NM,

Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum* – at least five on Highway 61 towards Lochiel. I am not 100% sure about the ID, Savannah Sparrow would be another candidate. See photos below. If my ID is wrong, please let me know at olpa {at} onsneteindhoven.nl.

Song Sparrow *Melospiza Melodia* – one at Mary Jo's feeders in Ash Canyon, a few in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve

Dark-eyed junco *Junco hyemalis caniceps* – common on the Kaibab plateau and Grand Canyon NP

Yellow-eyed junco *Junco phaeonotus* – common in the higher areas in the southeast

Hepatic Tanager *Piranga hepatica* – fairly common, seen in the Rustler/Barfoot area, Onion Saddle area, Chiricahua NM, Madera Canyon and Florida Canyon

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra* – fairly common, a pair at the car park in Florida Canyon, common in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, several in Bubbling Ponds Page Springs



Summer Tanager

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* – fairly common throughout the trip, first seen in the hotel grounds in Tucson, also in Florida Canyon, Madera Canyon, Carr Canyon, Chiricahua NM, hiking trails in Grand Canyon NP, Jacob Lake, in Cave Creek seen on the South Fork and Ash Springs trails and in the Rustler/Barfoot campground areas

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis* – present in low numbers: a male was seen on trail Procter, two males and a female would sometimes visit the feeder area in Cave Creek Ranch, a couple showed up at the Rodriguez feeders, a male at the parking in Florida Canyon, a male at Bonita Creek in Chiricahua NM

Pyrrhuloxia *Cardinalis sinuatus* – two sightings of three birds in total in Saguaro NP, two on the trail Procter, once at Cave Creek Ranch and briefly at the Rodriguez feeders, and one near the entrance of Chiricahua NM

Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus* – this attractive species was very common on the feeders in the southeast, less conspicuous in the forest in the southeast but still regularly encountered; also seen a few times in Grand Canyon NP and in the Flagstaff area

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina (Guiraca) caerulea* – two on the feeders in Santa Rita Lodge, two at the Paton feeders, a few seen on the trails in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve

Varied bunting, *Passerina versicolor* – a pair on the trail at the foot of Madera Canyon at the Procter Road crossing, seen twice in Florida Canyon, 5+ in Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve

Red-winged blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* – about 10 at Bubbling Ponds Page Springs, a pair at Willow Tank in the Portal area

Eastern (Lilian's) Meadowlark *Sturnella magna (lilianae)* – a few along Stateline Road, several along Hwy 61 near the Mexican border

Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta* – a few at Mormon Lake, about 10-15 in the Vermillion Cliffs area (Road 8910 and BLM 1065)

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus* – one in the fields at Kaibab Lodge, three at Jacob Lake Inn

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus* – 10+ in the reedbeds in Patagonia State Lake Park, about 5-6 at Bubbling Ponds Page Springs, a few sightings on route

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus* – at least two near Mary Jo's feeders (Ash Canyon)

Brown-headed cowbird *Molothrus ater* – fairly common to common throughout, seen in Saguaro NP, Agua Fria NM among other sites

Hooded Oriole *Icterus cucullatus* – a male at the base of Florida Canyon



Painted Redstart



Hooded Oriole

Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii* – a pair in Saguaro NP, a male and female at the George Walker feeders, a female in Chiricahua NM, at least three at Mary Jo's feeders in Ash Canyon, a male on the Carrie Nation trail

Scott's Oriole *Icterus parisorum* – a pair together on the feeders at Santa Rita Lodge, a male and female separate at Mary Jo's feeders (Ash Canyon), a male on the Hot Loop trail in Oak Creek village
House finch *Haemorhous mexicanus* – common in the southeast, only sporadically seen in the Grand Canyon NP and Flagstaff area

Red crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* – a male in Grand Canyon NP

Pine siskin *Spinus pinus* – common at the feeders in Madera Canyon and Cave Creek Canyon

Lesser goldfinch *Spinus psaltria* – common in most areas visited

Other wildlife

Western Lyre Snake *Trimorphodon biscutatus* – one at night in Cave Creek Canyon, the lady that runs George Walker House identified it for us and told me that this was an excellent sighting

Mojave Rattlesnake *Crotalus scutulatus* – one on Arivaca Creek trail; I first thought it was a Western Diamondback. Both species are quite similar: tips on how to distinguish both species can be found [here](#).

Rattlesnake species – one on Road 8910 near Vermillion Cliffs. It disappeared too quickly.

Quite a large variety of lizards was seen, but I had no field guide to ID them. Butterflies were rather common and often spectacularly coloured.

