

CAMP CHIRICAHUA

JULY 7-18, 2009

LEADERS:

ROB DAY AND DAVE JASPER

COUNSELOR: REBEKAH RYLANDER

COMPILED BY: ROB DAY

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I once sailed far into the East, so far that neither wind nor water heeded my command, being ignorant of their true names; or more likely it was I who was ignorant.

The world is very large, the open Sea going past all knowledge; and there are worlds beyond the world.

URSULA K. Le GUIN

We are the Ninja Birders (Dave's van) and the Evil Potoos (Rob's van). Tech-savvy yet stirred by wild places that hint of an older world. Fortified by granola bars and beef jerky and good rock-and-roll as our doughty vans clatter across the miles, we sail the desert seas, plying the arid basins that shimmer in the hard light and iron heat of the Arizona sun. We are the explorers of mountain islands: Chiricahuas, Huachucas, and Santa Ritas—isolated archipelagos of life rich in diversity and potential that seem to levitate above the desert plain. Though we may differ in age and background and experience, on this venture we are one, driven by shared expectation, and mindful to engage the unexpected.

The Miller Canyon hike, our introduction to the Huachucas, had an auspicious start beginning with another look at an approachable and affable pair of Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, a favorite in its distinctively tropical attire for a flycatcher. Our first Red-faced Warblers appeared; betrayed by their furtive movements in the tangle of oaks and Arizona sycamore, they soon emerged to continue their foraging at trails-edge, allowing us to admire their smart red, black, and gray attire. We are stopped by a “wild” Berylline Hummingbird that perched just above the trail, allowing quick but satisfying study prior to our anticipated visit to the hummingbird feeders at Tom Beatty's orchard down-canyon. We stopped again to admire a Chrysin beetle, here an iridescent green and violet jewel that complements the green and gold-striped species seen by the group earlier in the Chiricahuas, and the smaller gold specimen with an iridescent blue underside drawn to the lights of the San Pedro River Inn the previous evening. I had never before seen the latter species prior to this camp.

Entering the tall coniferous forest with its big-tooth maple understory, a pair of Spotted Owls roosting in the sub-canopy directly above the trail and just above head height startled us to mindfulness. Riveted in place by the owl's aloofness and serenity, we lingered for intimate study of the delicately vermiculated plumage contrasting with the predatory potential of scaled talons, the dark stare of gently lidded eyes, and a comical yawn followed by a slowly averted gaze that betrayed minor irritation, observations punctuated by proximity. This was our second encounter with Spotted Owl. Our first was a lone bird lunging forward from his perch each time he boomed his mighty call into dark conifers on a star-sprayed night in the Chiricahuas, an earlier experience assumed difficult to exceed. We pried ourselves away from the owls for new opportunities to savor Painted

Redstarts and Grace's Warblers; nuances of Cordilleran Flycatcher behavior as he hawked insects and proclaimed territory in the forest-light of the canyon; a tiny banded-rock rattlesnake coiled trailside like a sinister toy; and the antics of a Canyon Wren dwarfed by the limestone monoliths that comprised its territory.

Now descending, we are stopped by a bird vocalization that is unexpected, unfamiliar, and penetrating. Thrush-like, it is at once discordant yet pleasantly complex; it has a mounting, glass-like, and then tumbling cadence that renders it ethereal yet electrifying. One of the participants consults his iPhone on which he has wisely stored calls of Mexican birds. We are hearing a Brown-backed Solitaire, an endemic of the Mexican highlands. This is Jilguero, haunting songster of cathedral forests of remote Sierras. Our hike is suddenly one of those rare and special episodes that make birding the sky-islands of southeast Arizona unique. Beyond the ever-present potential for such discovery in the border highlands, we have crossed paths with a true rarity from the subtropics. We must see this bird. Play-back is used with care; fly-fishing with sound—just enough to pique the birds interest, not so much that our quarry is alarmed and vanishes into the conifers. The bird responds. Bunched together on the trail, we crane and contort to glimpse the bird in startling aerial display through a screen of canopy boughs. The Solitaire ascends to hover in the gulf of air above the forest; his call fills the canyon. It's on the move again. A purposeful flier of pine-clad ridges and the high canopy of coniferous forest, the Solitaire finally alights on an exposed bough and all of us have it in our binoculars. It allows us the subtleties of its plumage: soft gray with a rich brown mantle, white crescents that highlight the eye, the outer tail edged in white. The bird is still intent on confronting a rival; beak agape like that of a Bellbird, his call rings out once again in the depths of Miller Canyon.

July 7, 2009 – We are all assembled with minimal delay in Tucson. Our first outing is a visit to the Sweetwater wetlands project for an introduction to the birds and plants of the Sonoran Desert. A brief hard rain in full sun keeps us in the vans of the parking area. Bird activity is good. We see Burrowing Owls in the scope, amorous Harris's Hawks, and territorial Tropical Kingbirds. A distant Peregrine Falcon soars far overhead amidst monsoon thunderheads. A coy male Wood Duck slips into the reeds. The desert floor in this postage-stamp of habitat is alive with reptiles now active following the rain. A flamboyant male zebra-tailed lizard displays to a receptive female; his coloration is stunning in the scope. When alarmed the fleeing lizards coil and twist their boldly striped tails over their backs, resembling odd scorpions of preternatural speed.

July 8, 2009 – Today we travel. Before departing Tucson we enjoy an early visit to the Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum. Our departure is interrupted by a male Vermillion Flycatcher and a responsive Rufous-winged Sparrow in the tiny vegetated lot behind our hotel. We see the sparrow again in the parking area of the museum; oddly cooperative as it sits on a metal post allowing our photographers ample opportunity to capture it from the van. We have an opportunity to study birds of the desert in the museum aviaries as a group, and then visit exhibits on our own.

The vans are quickly packed once back at the hotel; the efficiency of the operation motivated by the mounting heat. It will reach 105 degrees in Tucson today. We lunch and shop and then bird the water treatment ponds in Wilcox enroute to Portal. As we rattle down the dusty San Simon road monsoon giants rear-up to the south and lightning flickers; we learn it is true that lightning can strike from the anvil-summits of these towering clouds. The high peaks of the Chiricahuas vanish beneath dark curtains of rain.

July 9, 2009 – There are night winds. The dawn chorus begins before 5:00AM under a pewter and copper sky. The clouds have gone. Today we bird the arid grassland and Chihuahuan desert scrub of the San Simon valley near the New Mexico border and the town of Rodeo. Swainson's Hawks; American Kestrels and Loggerhead Shrikes; a Roadrunner hunts Black-throated sparrows with the lizard he has dispatched still in his beak, his pigmented facial skin flushed with the colors of predator-frenzy; a family of Ash-throated Flycatchers sharing scenes of domesticity in the mesquite scrub as we bird along State-line road. We soon have both Cassin's and Botteri's Sparrows in the scope for fine studies; then Lillian's Meadowlark; a male Blue Grosbeak; a brief male Bullock's Oriole out of place as the air of the basin begins to dance in the heat.

After a brief stop at Dave Jasper's feeders, where a stunning male Pyrrhuloxia sings in the scope, we enjoy a hearty buffet lunch back at Mullen's cabin. Afternoon birding is along South-fork road at the bridge just below the trailhead. Aerial conflict of male Blue-throated Hummingbirds disputing territorial boundaries, a delightful vocal pair of Sulfur-bellied Flycatchers and a fine Red-shafted Flicker, and our first look at Painted Redstart are highlights for the afternoon.

July 10, 2009 – Today begins with our anticipated hike up South-fork. As we pull into the parking area a big bobcat materializes; handsome in rich chestnut pelage and big-pawed, he strolls down-canyon just above the road. He pauses to turn his husky head briefly in response to the cacophony of camera shutters then vanishes into the oaks and Arizona madrones. As we hike up the canyon there are more Painted Redstarts (always a pleasure to watch as they fan wings and tail and dangle in their acrobatic and improbable way to flush cryptic insects out of hiding), a fine pair of Hepatic Tanagers, Dusky-capped Flycatchers, and mixed flocks with Grace's and Black-throated Gray Warblers and Brown Creepers and both Hutton's and Plumbeous Vireos. Much of the bird sound we encounter is from family groups of Bridled Titmouse who have done well this breeding season. There are no Elegant Trogons. One can feel the press of desert heat from the cliffs above as we hike down-canyon; a House Wren with a strange song and the hum of cicadas are all that dispel the silent roar of the sun. Just above the vans there is a black-tailed rattlesnake of magnificent poised malevolence coiled just off-trail, resplendent in greens and gold and the complexity of his camouflage. Alarmingly, we have neither seen nor heard a single Elegant Trogon.

After lunch at our cottage, we visit the grounds of the South West Research Station for scope-views of Blue-throated Hummingbirds, nesting Cassin's Kingbirds, and a female Flame-colored Tanager on the nest. While nightbirds are not cooperative this evening, there are scorpions and vinegaroons, and an un-named small brown tarantula that brushes urticating hairs off his abdomen to dispel us with an effort at odds with his diminutive stature.

July 11, 2009 – A bird marathon day. We are on Paradise road early, just as the sun illuminates the limestone spur adjacent to a steep and rocky track leading up-slope to an abandoned mine. This is a fine strategy; allowing scope views of Black-chinned and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, a stunning male Scott's Oriole, the pale interior race of Western Scrub-Jay, and Crissal Thrasher. All are characteristic of this ecotone of juniper chaparral, riparian woodland, and ocotillo desert scrub.

Our next we stop is South-fork road. While gold-banded skippers dance above their host plants in the understory, there is a very young Elegant Trogon that calls softly yet insistently. The stealthy adult male comes into view only once with a large phasmid in his beak; he vanishes with equal swiftness into the oak-madrone tangle. The adult bird has not uttered a single note.

At Herb Martyr road above the research station: an immature Northern Goshawk that is truly Mesozoic in stature, a fine look at Buff-breasted Flycatcher, and more mixed species flocks. After lunch we split into two groups. Dave visits the feeders at Cave Creek Ranch and Rob returns to South-fork trail. The canyon it is still save the flutings of Hermit Thrush in weird light reflected from red canyon walls and the occasional chatter of White-throated swifts in full sun far above; a lone Arizona Woodpecker.

Tonight the nightbirds are kind; Elf Owl in the lower canyon and Whiskered Screech-Owl above. At the junction of the South-fork road, a Spotted Owl calls from the canyon wall far above, as a million stars and the pale shimmer of the Milky Way emerges cold and remote beyond the dark canopy of conifers. The bird is responsive and is soon in view, booming his huge call into the dark forest of the cosmos. This night, South-fork is a place of power and myth.

July 12th, 2009 – A travel day as we depart South-fork for Rustler Park and the Chiricahua highlands. After a sinful full-breakfast (yes, there was bacon involved) at the Portal Store, we return to the South-fork trailhead one last time. A fine male Elegant Trogon is there for all to see. We picnic in the high country and set-up camp under a benign mountain sky. Afterwards we are at the overlook above Bar Foot junction where the pallid yellows of the desert sea are spread below us like a vast carpet to the far horizon. Atop our little island of oaks and conifers and montane wildflowers a single Zone-tailed Hawk spins and sails in the vast gulf of air and light beneath us.

July 13th, 2009 – Our flannel shirts and pile sweaters smell of wood-smoke as we sip cocoa and coffee. The day begins with a hike to the summit of Bar Foot peak. There are mixed species flocks; Western Tanagers and a Warbling Vireo, strident family groups of Pygmy Nuthatch, Mexican Chickadees that have done well this breeding cycle and immature Olive Warblers also well represented. A soft resonance in the conifers is a Band-tailed Pigeon. As we linger at the fire look-out atop the peak, perspectives of size and scale shift against the immensity of the view of vast desert and distant peaks. In binoculars the crowns of conifers harbor diminutive and diverse forests of lichens and mistletoe on their boughs, stone gardens of wildflowers I cannot name and montane cactus and hardy *Eriogonum* (this is the genus of the diverse buckwheat family that is well represented in the soft chaparral back home) are tiny islands of life atop the peak, a lone male Black-headed Grosbeak passes from shadow to full light – a bright mote of color above the dark talus and shadow far below.

Lunch time: card games and bird books, for some the diversity of butterflies in the meadow beckons. This afternoon we hike along the ridge that encircles the meadow at Rustler Park. At the base of an escarpment of naked rock visible from the meadow below where the Rattlesnake fire of 1994 has thinned the trees, there is a Galapagos of montane wildflowers. Remarkable in diversity, the flower garden tests us; some are uneasy at confronting biological unknowns (there is comfort in the naming of things) while to others in the group the unnamed diversity of color and form exhilarates. Dave Jasper helps us “sort-out” this botanical cacophony. At the Fly peak overlook we are confronted again by the spectacle of distance and scale. Where dark mountains subside into bright desert, shafts of rain are back-lit by the late afternoon sun; in binoculars distant rain-washed limestone shards are glints of light. A splendid male Olive Warbler, the only one we will see on the tour, flits in the crown of a white fir before us at eye-level.

After dinner in camp, we try for Flammulated Owl. The search becomes an epic; steep slopes and fallen logs, drizzle, and pitch black as clouds obscure the stars. While some are rewarded with a quick look at this particularly difficult specimen, we abandon the bird for the comfort of our last campfire in the highlands.

July 14th, 2009 – After breakfast the vans are packed and we depart Rustler Park. *Ninja Birders* and *Evil Potoos* on the loose; today is a travel day. We pause to admire a particularly healthy specimen of Mojave rattlesnake as we are again in the lowlands between sky islands; rolling-on with the Rolling Stones and Hendrix and cloud shadow and the smell of brief desert rain. After lunch and “expedition” shopping in Sierra Vista, we settle in at the San Pedro River Inn.

July 15th, 2009 – We pack sandwiches at breakfast this morning for a day-long outing. There is cloud cover when we arrive at the San Pedro River, so we take advantage and begin in the mesquite scrub away from the ribbon of riparian forest. A Botteri’s Sparrow in the scope, Common Ground Doves, stunning scope views of Yellow-breasted Chat, and a gopher snake are studied by the group. The sun breaks free and the temperature begins to climb. Along the river there are splendid male Vermillion Flycatchers in the scope, and both male and female Summer Tanagers. We study the foraging technique of desert grassland whiptails in their bold racing stripes. Another robust specimen of Mojave rattlesnake is discovered; rattle hissing and antediluvian head raised, he appears to have no sense of humor at all so we adroitly leave him in peace. Tropical and Western and Cassin’s Kingbirds are compared and contrasted in the scope at Kingfisher Pond. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo flashes from the tall cottonwoods and is gone. Yellow and Lucy’s Warblers stir the willows beneath the canopy; more movement and here is a Yellow-throated Vireo which is carefully studied as shutters click and whirl. In mounting heat the birds grow still, save a defiant Song Sparrow that enjoys his determined bath in the river shallows. We visit the San Pedro House for sodas and to peruse books as the sun roars again and the air above the valley floor begins to squirm in the heat.

We are on the move again. A hasty picnic lunch and a hummingbird stake-out at the Ash Canyon Bead and Breakfast. Stunning looks at a Gray Hawk offset the heat and limited action at the feeders. Back at the San Pedro River Inn the air moves and thunderheads rear-up beyond the Mule Mountains. A stiff breeze irks the Western and Cassin’s Kingbirds, Say’s and Black Phoebes, and a lone male Vermillion Flycatcher attempting to hawk insects above the floodplain. A Loggerhead Shrike elects to preen. The mixed-flock of flycatchers holds firm; drifting just above the ground and swaying wildly on low perches as the breath of the storm rises.

July 16th, 2009 – This is the day we hiked up Miler Canyon and the world changed. Perhaps the complex tapestry of Madrean botany spread above us; oaks and manzanitas, madrones and sycamores, conifers and distant aspens all tucked in the folds of the vast amphitheater of Miller Canyon as seen from Beatty’s does appear different now. The *possibility* of a first encounter with a rare wanderer from the distant Sierras of Mexico is part of any hike in Miller Canyon, but being among the elect that *experience it* alters perceptions. Still, against this prospect of mountains and botanical diversity the Solitaire is a little thing. But then again, what else remains hidden up there?

Beatty’s upper hummingbird feeders do not disappoint. There are fine males of many species in warrior-colors: feisty Anna’s, strident Black-chinned, and bold Broad-tailed who herald their presence with their bright wing-whir. We study Broad-billed; a sudden and stunning Magnificent; a White-eared that blusters from his perch, allowing us to admire the bold markings and violet and blue-green of his fierce visage directed towards rivals. A fine Beryline allows us excellent studies, the best I have had of this species. The resplendence of male hummingbirds seen close and in good light draws us away from the Brown-backed Solitaire sighting now imprinted in us; if only momentarily. At the feeders there are two species of whiptail at our feet. The Sonoran spotted whiptail seen in the Chircahuas is also here in the Huachucas. There is another that defies naming. More boldly colored than the desert grassland whiptail and also possessing brown ovoid markings in the dark fields along its back, it doesn’t “fit” when the field guide is consulted; is this also an endemic of Mexican Sierras that has been overlooked?

After lunch we visit the bookstore at Ramsey Canyon. A trio of immature Cooper's Hawks at play lumber through the oaks in a clumsy game of tag; one tumbles to the forest floor when knocked from his perch. It is moths on the wall of the visitor center, not the hawks that pull us away from field guides to Mexican birds. These are denizens of the night forest with names unknown to us; at least eight species startling in size and pattern and color. One is larger than a mouse; soft-furred and warm to the touch, it vibrates in a strange way when cupped in the hand. With a flash of once hidden crimson and blue hind-wings and as large as a sparrow, it vanishes into the canopy of sycamores.

July 17th, 2009 – Today we return to Tucson. There are stops at Patagonia for a glimpse of Sinaloa Wren; here there is another bobcat that strolls through traffic just outside of town, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, and an immature Northern Parula. In desert scrub above Patagonia Lake we have a splendid Varied Bunting in the scope. At Florida Canyon in desert heat we finish with a soaring Golden Eagle and close studies by all of a Black-capped Gnatcatcher.

July 18th, 2009 – The *Ninja Birders* and *Evil Potoos* are homeward-bound.

Bird List

Ducks (*Anatidae*)

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

(A fine male allowing brief scope views at Sweetwater Wetlands)

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*)

Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*)

Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Pheasants and allies (*Phasianidae*)

Wild Turkey (*Meleagris galopavo*)

(Groups of hens and toms at Ramsey and Ash Canyons)

New World Quails (*Odontophoridae*)

Scaled Quail (*Callipepla squamata*)

Gambel's Quail (*Callipepla gambelii*)

Gebes (*Podipicedidae*)

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

Cormorants (*Phalacrocoracidae*)

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Hérons and Egrets (*Ardeidae*)

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*)

New World Vultures (*Cathartidae*)

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

(Eight at a roost at the Patagonia Roadside Rest allowing close inspection)

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

Hawks and Eagles (*Accipitidae*)

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)

(Seen frequently, including three very tame and playful immature birds that entertained us with their antics at Ramsey Canyon.)

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

(Wow! An impressively large immature in the pines on Herb Martyr road in the Chiricahuas.)

Grey Hawk (*Asturina nitidia*)

(Wow! An excellent close study of a perched bird on a power pole in Ash Canyon.)

Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*)

(A brief look by some at a soaring bird above Rustler Park.)

Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*)

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*)

(How wonderful to observe these birds soaring at or below eye-level at Rustler Park.)

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

(A soaring bird high above us as we departed Florida Canyon in the Santa Ritas.)

Falcons (*Falconidae*)

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Rails, Coots, and Gallinules (*Rallidae*)

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

American Coot (*Fulica americana*)

Plovers (*Charadriidae*)

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*)

Avocets and Stilts (*Recurvirostridea*)

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)

Sandpipers and allies (*Scolopacidae*)

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*)

Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)

Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*)

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*)

Gulls and Terns (*Laridae*)

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

(A lone and bedraggled bird in the heat at Wilcox.)

Doves and Pigeons (*Columbidae*)

Rock Pigeon (I) (*Columba livia*)

Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*)

Eurasian Collared-Dove (I) (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*)

Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*)

Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*)

Cuckoos (*Cuculidae*)

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)

Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californicus*)

Barn Owls (*Tytonidae*)

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Typical Owls (*Strigidae*)

Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammeolus*)

(Seen by some of the group after considerable effort at Rustler Park.)

Western Screech-Owl (*Megascops kennicottii*)

Whiskered Screech-Owl (*Megascops trichopsis*)

Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*)

Elf Owl (*Micrathene whitneyi*)

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

(Scope studies of two at Sweetwater Wetlands.)

Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*)

(Wow! Stunning close views of an adult booming out his call perched just above eye-level in open conifers along South Fork road.)

Nightjars and allies (*Caprimulgidae*)

Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*)

Common Poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttalli*)

(Three birds seen well at the San Pedro River Inn)

Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferous*)

(Heard only)

Swifts (*Apodidae*)

White-throated Swift (*Aeronautes saxatalis*)

Hummingbirds (*Trochillidae*)

Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cyanthus latirostris*)

(This bird has expanded its range considerably since I began birding in SE Arizona over 25 years ago.

Once restricted as a common specialty hummingbird only in the Santa Rita Mountains in Madera Canyon, it is now regularly seen in virtually all of the SE Arizona “sky islands”.)

White-eared Hummingbird (*Hylocharis leucotis*)

(Wow! A splendid and very cooperative adult male allowing long studies and photography at the upper feeders at Beatty's in Miller canyon. The group had wonderful looks at the bird's purple and green iridescence that can be difficult to observe on this species.)

Violet-crowned Hummingbird (*Amazilia violiceps*)

Blue-throated Hummingbird (*Lampornis clemenciae*)

(Very conspicuous this year; many fine males on territory along the South-fork of Cave Creek.)

Beryline Hummingbird (*Amazilia beryline*)

(Wow! We saw a total of three birds, including two "wild" individuals in habitat on our hike up Miller Canyon. Excellent studies of the nuances of this bird's plumage were enjoyed at Beatty's feeders.)

Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*)

(Truly magnificent in good light. It was a pleasure to see several "wild" individuals in habitat in the Chiricahuas.)

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)

Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*)

Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*)

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

Trogon (*Trogonidae*)

Elegant Trogon (*Trogon elegans*)

(We had to work hard for the bird this year; alarmingly silent/absent on our hike up South-fork. A very young bird was located down-canyon along South-fork road by its faint begging call. The adult male attending it challenged us with his surprising stealth in approaching and feeding his young charge. We were finally rewarded with excellent looks at a fine male below the South-fork parking area the morning of our departure for Rustler Park.)

Woodpeckers (*Picidae*)

Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

Gila Woodpecker (*Melanerpes uropygialis*)

Ladder-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides scalaris*)

Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides vilosis*)

Arizona Woodpecker (*Picoides arizonae*)

(Tough this year, but eventually seen by all.)

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

Guilded Flicker (*Colaptes chrysoides*)

(At the last minute at the San Pedro River Inn.)

Tyrant Flycatchers (*Tyrannidae*)

Northern Beardless-tyrannulet (*Camplostoma imberbe*)

(Seen well in the mesquite-scrub just beyond the picnic tables outside of Patagonia.)

Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*)

Cordilleran Flycatcher (*Empidonax occidentalis*)

Buff-breasted Flycatcher (*Empidonax fulvifrons*)

(Nice studies of a responsive bird above the SW Research Station.)

Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*)

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)

Vermillion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

(Wow! Many splendid views in the scope along the San Pedro.)

Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

Brown-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*)

Sulfur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*)

(We enjoyed exceptional studies of this splendid species.)

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)

(Seen repeatedly: Sweetwater Wetlands, San Pedro River at Kingfisher Ponds, and on the grounds of the San Pedro River Inn.)

Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*)

Thick-billed Kingbird (*Tyrannus crassirostris*)

(Scope studies of a single bird at Patagonia Roadside Rest. Scarce and inconspicuous compared to past years.)

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

Shrikes (*Laniidae*)

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

Vireos and allies (*Vireonidae*)

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*)

Plumbeous Vireo (*Vireo plumbeus*)

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)

(We enjoyed long studies of this approachable bird foraging mid-canopy in the willows and cottonwoods long the San Pedro River.)

Hutton's Vireo (*Vireo huttoni*)

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*)

Crows and Jays (*Corvidae*)

Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)

Western Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*)

Mexican Jay (*Aphelocoma ultramarina*)

Chihuahuan Raven (*Corvus cryptoleucus*)

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)

Swallows (*Hirundinidae*)

Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*)

Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*)

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrronota*)

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Chickadees and Titmice (*Paridae*)

Mexican Chickadee (*Poecile sclateri*)

Bridled Titmouse (*Baeolophus wollweberi*)

Verdin (*Remizidae*)

Verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps*)

Bushtit (*Aegithalidae*)

Bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*)

Nuthatches (*Sittidae*)

Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta Canadensis*)

White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*)

Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*)

Creepers (*Certhiidae*)

Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*)

Wrens (*Troglodytidae*)

Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*)

Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*)

Canyon Wren (*Caterpes mexicanus*)

Sinaloa Wren (*Thryothorus Sinaloa*)

(Quick looks for a few of us at this skulker in the vicinity of its nest site at the Nature Conservancy sanctuary just outside of Patagonia.)

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)

Gnatcatchers (*Sylviidae*)

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*)

Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila melanura*)

Black-capped Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila nigriceps*)

(Wow! Great looks by all at a very cooperative bird at the entrance to Florida Canyon.)

Thrushes and allies (*Turdidae*)

Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*)

Brown-backed Solitaire (*Myadestes occidentalis*)

(WOW! Startled by its robust and complex call during our descent of Miller Canyon, we were able to establish the bird's identity thanks to one of the campers having a collection of Mexican bird vocalizations on his *i-pod*. While purposeful in flight and intent on remaining in the canopy of conifers, the bird proved very responsive to brief play-back; eventually granting all of us studies of its remarkable moth-like display-flight above the canopy and vocalizing while perched.)

Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*)

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mockingbirds and Thrashers (*Mimidae*)

Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Bendire's Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*)

Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*)

Crissal Thrasher (*Toxostoma crissale*)

Starlings (*Sturnidae*)

European Starling (I) (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Silky-Flycatchers (*Ptilogonatidae*)

Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*)

Olive Warbler (*Peucedramiidae*)

Olive Warbler (*Peucedramus taeniatus*)

(Immature-plumaged birds were well-represented in mixed-species flocks at Rustler Park. We were treated to a splendid male our final afternoon at Rustler Park at the Bootlegger Saddle overlook.)

New World warblers (*Parulidae*)

Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*)

Lucy's warbler (*Vermivora luciae*)

Northern Parula (*Parula americana*)

(An immature-plumaged bird observed in response to Pygmy-owl play-back in the mesquite-scrub outside of Patagonia.)

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigriscens*)

Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*)

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)

Red-faced Warbler (*Cardellina rubrifrons*)

(Wow! Exceptionally colorful adults enjoyed by all on our Miller Canyon hike.)

Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*)

(Everyone's favorite: a pleasure to observe as it showcased its animated foraging antics in the Chiricahuas and Huachucas.)

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*)

Tanagers (*Thraupidae*)

Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*)

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

Flame-colored Tanager (*Piranga bidentata*)

(Scope views of a female on-nest at the AMNH Research Station.)

Buntings, Sparrows, and allies (*Emberizidae*)

Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)

Canyon Towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*)

Abert's Towhee (*Pipilo aberti*)

Rufous-winged Sparrow (*Aimophila carpalis*)

(Wow! Seen exceptionally well in remnant desert-scrub in a vacant lot behind the hotel in Tucson, and again in the Arizona upland desert scrub in the parking area from the vans at the Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum.)

Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassini*)

(We enjoyed long scope studies along in the San Simon Valley.)

Botteri's Sparrow (*Aimophila botteri*)

(Seen wonderfully in the scope in San Simon Valley and at the San Pedro River.)

Rufous-crowned Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps*)

Black-chinned Sparrow (*Spizella atrogularis*)

(We had good looks at this often challenging species on our brief but very "birdy" stop along paradise road.)

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*)
Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)
Yellow-eyed Junco (*Junco phaeonatus*)

Saltators, Cardinals, and Buntings (*Cardinalidae*)

Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
Pyrrhuloxia (*Cardinalis sinuatus*)
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)
(A fine male at the feeders in Portal.)
Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)
Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)
Varied Bunting (*Passerina versicolor*)
(Wow! Seen stunningly well in the scope in the desert scrub along the access road above Patagonia
Lake our last day afield.)

Blackbirds and allies (*Icteridae*)

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)
Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)
Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)
Great-tailed Grackle (*Quisicalus mexicanus*)
Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*)
Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)
Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*)
Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)
Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*)

Finches (*Fringillidae*)

House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)
Red-crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)
Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*)

Old World Sparrows (*Passeridae*)

House Sparrow (I) (*Passer domesticus*)

Amphibians, Reptiles, and Mammals

Mexican Spadefoot (*Spea multiplicata*)
Woodhouse's Toad (*Bufo woodhousii*)
Canyon Treefrog (*Hyla arenicolor*)
Chiricahua Leopard Frog (*Rana chiricahaensis*)
American Bullfrog (I) (*Rana catesbeiana*)
Zebra-tailed Lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides*)
Ornate Tree Lizard (*Urosaurus ornatus*)
Side-blotched Lizard (*Uta stansburiana*)
Striped Plateau Lizard (*Sceloporus virgatus*)
Southwestern Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus cowlesi*)
Desert Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus magister*)
Clark's spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus clarkii*)
Yarrow's Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus yarrovii*)

Sonoran Spotted Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis sonorae*)
Desert Grassland Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis uniparens*)
Tiger Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris*)
Madrean Alligator Lizard (*Elgaria kingii*)
Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*)
Common Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula*)
Sonoran Mountain Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis pyromelana*)
Black-necked Gartersnake (*Thamnophis cyrtopsis*)
Mojave Rattlesnake (*Crotalus scutulatus*)
Black-tailed Rattlesnake (*Crotalus molossus*)
Twin-spotted Rattlesnake (*Crotalus pricei*)
Rock Rattlesnake (*Crotalus Lepidus*)
Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)
Black-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*)
Mexican (Apache) Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus nayaitensis*)

(We had repeated encounters with this Sierra Madrean endemic restricted to the Chiricahuas in the US.)

Arizona Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus arizonensis*)
Rock Squirrel (*Spermophilus variegatus*)
Round-tailed Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*)
Cliff Chipmunk (*Tamias dorsalis*)
Arizona Cotton Rat (*Sigmodon arizonae*)
Bat sp.

(There are up to 24 species of bats possible in the variety of SE Arizona habitats we visited. An evening or two of mist-netting would be illuminating in this regard.)

Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)

(An astonishing three separate individuals were observed during our transect.)

Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)

Collared Peccary (*Peccari tajacau*)

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

(The taxonomy followed in the trip list is derived from Dunn and Alderfer *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of Western North America* (2008) and Howell and Webb *A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America* (1995) for birds. The taxonomy of reptiles and amphibians is derived from the classic *Western Reptiles and Amphibians* by Stebbins (2003) and the excellent *Amphibians and Reptiles in Arizona* by Brennan and Holycross (2006). The mammal list is from *Mammals of North America* by Kays and Wilson (2002).)