

CAMP CHIRICAHUA

JULY 12-23, 2011

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**TOUR REPORT
CAMP CHIRICAHUA
July 12–23, 2011**

By Rob Day

All things must change to something new, to something strange.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

. . . nature undergoes her internal wars, and the surface of the globe has been overturned by successive revolutions and diverse catastrophes.

GEORGES CUVIER

Prior to this year's Camp Chiricahua, my wife and youngest son and I traveled to Vermont. While my wife Renee attended seminars and lectures to complete her master's degree residency, my son Matt and I roamed remnants of Vermont's northern hardwood forests. It was the first time I have birded back east since high school; the requisite nuances of eastern forest birding and warbler watching were reawakened, eventually permitting views of multiple species from my own youthful woodland forays.

One morning a commotion in the pines across from our dorm window revealed a strident pair of American Robins defending nestlings discovered by crows. The naked young were soon yanked from the nest; their lidded-eyed outsized heads lolled on scrawny necks as their obliteration unfolded. Long after the hard eyed brigands departed, the still frantic female robin returned again and again to the bough where the carnage occurred. Renee was horrified.

Paradise Road in the Chiricahuas: 8:22 AM, July 18th, 2011. With a great sense of relief, I note on our AM birding foray that Silver Peak suffered no damage from the Horseshoe fire that swept through nearly a quarter of a million acres of the national forest here. Days before on our arrival in Portal, the anticipated right turn onto Portal Road from the dusty San Simon Road revealed the ever dramatic prospect of Cave Creek Canyon. Viewed from Portal, the Chiricahuas seemed unaffected by conflagration.

While bird activity on Paradise Road is a little slow this morning, there are fine studies of Scott's and Bullock's Orioles in the scope. All three *Myiarchus* flycatchers—Ash-throated, Dusky-capped, and Brown-crested—are heard in the riparian forest, as comic Acorn Woodpeckers hawk insects above the sycamores. In the desert scrub nearby there is the distinctive descending whinny of a Ladder-backed Woodpecker as feisty male Rufous Hummingbirds sip nectar from an agave inflorescence. A singing male Blue Grosbeak is positively radiant in the scope in the fine morning light. Liquid song in the junipers across the drainage betrays a fine male Northern Cardinal; his improbably tall crest quivers with the vigor of his caroling.

ITINERARY

July 12 – The majority of the morning sees our group arriving in Tucson from across the US, Canada, and Costa Rica. Once settled into our rooms we meet together for the first time and load the vans for a visit to Sweetwater Wetlands; a water-reclamation facility focused on sustainability and wise water-use in this city in the desert. It is also a fine introduction to birds of the Tucson area. Here we see our first Tropical Kingbirds; now regular at this location. There are Abert's Towhees, the southwest's *Saltonis* race of the Song Sparrow, Verdins, Lucy's and Yellow warblers, and Gambel's Quail. Common Moorhens and a confiding pair of Pied-billed Grebes are nesting in one of the larger ponds. The grebes are unperturbed by gawking telephoto lenses. One of the pair climbs atop its partially submerged domed nest of reeds within a few feet of the viewing platform. Its pied bill reveals subtle pigments in the scope; an understated aquatic toucanet.

July 13 – After an early breakfast in the hotel, we visit the Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum. For the third year in a row, we enjoy stunning looks at a singing male Varied Bunting and a responsive and cooperative Rufous-winged Sparrow while birding the parking lot. There are Brown-crested flycatchers, Gila Woodpeckers, Phainopepla, and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher. After a group introduction to hummingbirds in their aviary, and the opportunity for independent explorations of this renowned museum, we return to the hotel to load the vans for our road trip. On the drive back through the Tucson Mountains I see my first Gila monster; salmon pink and black, its stout trunk in the half coil classically portrayed in Tohono O'odham motifs. It is the quintessential desert reptile. Sadly it is a road kill, as flat as a fossil.

After lunch in Tucson, our ponderously loaded vans wend their way up the Catalina Highway for the high country. The road twists and turns among stark granite ridges and spires bristling with saguaros on the lower slopes, giving way with subtlety at first to scrub oak and Manzanita, then pinyon and juniper, and finally ponderosa pine at Rose Canyon where we will camp for two nights. The climb is a fine transect through the range of ecosystems characteristic of the "sky islands".

July 14 – Dawn is unexpectedly cold; there is not a cloud to be seen in the sky and the desert heat of yesterday has evaporated into outer space. Cups of coffee and hot chocolate dull the edge. This morning we bird an open pine forest just above Rose Canyon Lake. There are Chihuahuan pines and an open understory of meter-tall post-fire oaks and native tussock grasses. It proves to be one of the "birdiest" places visited on recent Camps. Sorting our way through a mixed species flock yields a fine pair of Hepatic Tanagers, splendid looks at Olive and Grace's Warblers, Painted Redstarts and a handsome male Western Tanager, a piping entourage of Pygmy Nuthatches, male Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, a pert Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and an unexpected Black-headed grosbeak, and both Hutton's and Plumbeous Vireos. We are soon rewarded with phenomenal studies of Buff-breasted flycatcher and Greater Pewee; both at eye-level on the slope that ascends through the pines above the group picnic area. We must eventually walk away from the Buff-breasted Flycatcher. Oblivious to our final attentions and

eventual departure, it exhibits a surprising behavior; sallying for insects at ground level in this benign parkland amid rounded granite boulders.

Our next stop is Marshall Gulch; a sylvan defile of big-tooth maple and spruce higher up the mountain. We are greeted by three stunning Red-faced Warblers at the trail-head parking area, and later a brown creeper hitching its way up a towering alder and an unconcerned Warbling Vireo foraging unexpectedly among deadfall on the forest floor. As we continue up the drainage it is transformed into an insect and botanical wonderland. With our perspective now revised, we are elated by the variety of penstemons, elegant columbines, and a seep orchid. Butterflies and damselflies and diminutive skippers scatter the group as individual attentions demand; there are tiger beetles and an extraordinary robber fly that mimics a formidable species of *Scolid* wasp. As this insect giant apes the meandering flight of a host-seeking female wasp, it abruptly darts at potential aerial prey with a swiftness that is truly startling.

After lunch we continue our survey of the Catalinas. At an overlook on the Butterfly trail there is a fine study of a lone Steller's Jay above the vastness of the San Pedro valley spread beneath us. Though the late afternoon light is pleasant, there is portent in the gentle wind. The whole flank of the mountain to our left is a blast zone from the 2002 Bullock fire; a skeleton forest of ponderosa pines only barely softened by a new landscape, a rough shrubland of Gambell oak and mountain mahogany.

July 15 – Descending the Catalinas and birding as we go, today is a travel day. We stop in Wilcox for lunch and re-supply. The water-level at the Wilcox water treatment ponds is very low this year, and the wind blowing across the Sulfur Springs valley is from an unfavorable direction; we are constantly reminded that these are sewage ponds as we sort through shorebirds. Wilson's Phalaropes, Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets, Western and Least sandpipers, and both species of Yellowlegs constitute the avian majority today, remarkable in their immunity to stench. There are curtains of rain and the flicker of abrupt lightning as we clatter through the dust of the San Simon road into Portal.

July 16 – This morning we survey the San Simon valley along State Line road and around the town of Rodeo New Mexico. There are Swainson's Hawks, a Loggerhead Shrike, Scaled Quails, and our only good look at Greater Roadrunner. The latter atop a junk-heap at what is apparently the Rodeo dump; an all together unsavory and oddly unsettling place that demanded a succinct departure. We are eventually rewarded with distant scope-views of both Cassin's and Botteri's Sparrows in spite of the heat shimmer. At the feeders John Yerger's Quail B&B there is a female Painted Bunting and our first look at Lucifer's Hummingbird. There are handsome Black-throated Sparrows in the scope, and a splendid male Pyrrhuloxia that sings adroitly from atop the mesquite scrub. At Willow Tank a fine Lark Sparrow poses in the scope and also an Ash-throated Flycatcher that disgorges a sloppy pellet of beetle elytra; a behavior I have not seen before. In the distance beyond, the horrific aftermath of the Horseshoe fire is revealed; the south-face of Portal Peak has been scorched to black earth – the surface of once pink

rhyolite spires seared to a veneer of black glass. We are without Bendire's Thrasher when we retreat to Portal for lunch, a camp Chiricahua first.

At feeders at a comfortable residence owned by a retired California school teacher in Portal we are treated to a fantastic hummingbird display; in terms of species richness it is among the finest I have seen in almost 30 years of birding southeast Arizona. The majority of birds are males, all resplendent in afternoon light. There are Magnificent and Blue-throated, Broad-billed and Broad-tailed and Black-chinned, Violet-crowned and stunning Lucifer's. The number of svelte Rufous Hummingbird males at a single feeder at any given time is staggering. At intervals, up to five different species of males are obliged to share the same feeder. Among the black-backed morphs of Lesser Goldfinches at the seed feeders, a surreptitious pair of male Painted Buntings materializes. Though dazzling in species diversity and aerial vigor, there is a suggestion of foreboding in this glut of hummingbirds. Where are the females? As it is unlikely that these multi-species feeder-bound birds hold territories in such close proximity to one another, has any breeding occurred in the Chiricahuas this year? Beyond the well-kept plantings and neat adobe wall, the mountainsides of Cave Creek Canyon are clothed in a threadbare mantle of frost-killed, drought-stressed, and fire-blackened vegetation; a depauperate resource base for this seasons would-be breeders.

July 17 – Today would begin with the anticipated hike up the South Fork of Cave Creek canyon. We are restricted instead to a walk along South Fork road; our morning a casualty of the Horseshoe fire. Though it was only a ground fire and limited to one side of the road, its aftermath is ugly. The once sun dappled understory beneath a complex matrix of multiple oak species, alligator juniper, and Arizona madrones and sycamores has been replaced by a yawning hollow, fire-blackened and gaunt with exposed boulders, allowing one to look disconcertingly far back into the forest. Nonetheless there are Black-throated Gray Warblers, Painted Redstarts, Dusky-capped and Sulfur-bellied Flycatchers here, and raucous Mexican Jays. Calling male Elegant Trogons patrol higher up on the unburned hillsides for females; the hour is late for breeding this year. The urgency of their efforts has reduced these regal birds to nomads; they permit us only brief looks. We bird the feeders at Cave Creek Ranch after lunch.

July 18 – Paradise road is our destination this morning; an ecotone where desert scrub, pinyon-juniper woodland, and sycamore gallery forest meet. It is an avian frontier: the paths of Mexican Jays patrolling the sycamores and Western Scrub Jays wandering the pinyon pines and junipers often meet, as do those of Western and Cassin's Kingbirds, and Western Wood-pewees and Black Phoebes may share the same sycamore to hawk insects. Our target species are elusive today. There is no response from either Black-chinned Sparrow or Juniper Titmouse. A visit to the AMNH Southwest Research Station is far more productive. The hummingbird activity at the feeders is frenetic; many of the species observed the previous day are represented here as well. They are joined by a fine pair of Calliope Hummingbirds. Again, it is males that comprise the majority of birds at the feeders and it is Rufous Hummingbirds in large numbers that define the demographic. In the unburned forest behind the compound, there are Cordilleran and Buff-breasted

Flycatchers, Black-throated Gray Warblers, Hutton's and Plumbeous Vireos, and an out of place Yellow Warbler.

In the afternoon, we ascend the road beyond the Research Station to the east Turkey Creek junction; our only hope for Mexican Chickadee. Amid the fire-scarred forest here, there are Grace's Warblers and Band-tailed Pigeons, but no chickadees to be had. We once watched an epic emergence of subterranean termites here following unusually heavy rains. Both canopy and understory species of birds broke from their parochial haunts and habits to attend this monumental nuptial termite flight, feeding until they were too satiated to fly. Now there is a new forest here.

July 19 – We leave the Chiricahuas today, loading the vans to capacity once again as we roll on towards the San Pedro River and Huachucas. Our route takes us south through the lonely open country between Portal and Douglass; ancient cinder cones from a volcanic age eons ago punctuate the expanse under a leaden sky and fitful rain. Passing through Bisbee and then lunch in Sierra Vista, we settle in at the San Pedro River Inn.

July 20 – Morning finds i-pod Dave and scope-toting Rob and our group at the San Pedro River near the San Pedro House. Working the arid mesquite scrubland on our way to the river we have scope studies of Eastern Meadowlark, our only of the tour, and a better view of Botteri's Sparrow followed by Common Ground Dove. At kingfisher Pond there are both Yellow-breasted Chat and Common Yellowthroat engaged in aerial nuptial displays. At interval between their energetic efforts they allow us to leisurely peruse them in the scope. The river is alive with bird-song this morning and there is the startling mating-display of Bronzed Cowbird; the males piercing crimson eyes accentuated by his sinister cowl rendered an iridescent violet-blue in the morning light. Bright Summer Tanagers and a fine Vermillion Flycatcher are studied in the scope followed by a coupling pair of Yellow-billed Cuckoos. Their mating occurs on an open branch that arcs above the river – the male voluptuously feeds a large beetle to his mate while they are joined together. There are mystery birds here. A warbler chimera appears briefly; its *Vermivora* russet crown patch juxtaposed on the Gestalt of an immature male common Yellowthroat defy identification.

In the afternoon we visit Coronado National Memorial. Only the parking area is now open following the Monument fire; a sad island of oaks and Manzanita in the midst of the firescape. An information kiosk hastily updated by the Forest Service says that 100% of the park's acreage fell during the fire. We are van-refugees in a hard monsoon rain in the Monument parking lot. The rain relents, and we emerge to gawk at the flashflood that follows – the dense slurry of mud and ash roils apocalyptically down the nearest drainage, threatening to overwhelm the culvert beneath the road to Montezuma pass. It resonates with the growl of tumbling boulders.

July 21 – Our plan for the morning was a visit to Beatty's feeders in Miller Canyon to complete our hummingbird survey. Observations in the Huachucas would have nicely complemented those of the Chiricahuas, particularly in regard to the strangeness of the hummingbird spectacle in this year of drought and wildfire. There was a need to see

White-eared and Berylline Hummingbirds as well; two species that are now reliable here. Special access permits in-hand; we head up the dirt track into Miller Canyon. It is a mistake. Gunning the engine releases my van from a quagmire of loose sand at a stream crossing; we pull an about-face and head instead to Ramsey Canyon. Our final exploration of the “sky islands” sees us perched at the overlook above the Hamburg Trail with sweeping up-canyon vistas. The undulating mantle of diverse oaks, robust Arizona madrones, and serene Chihuahuan and Apache pines cloaking the hard geology of the mountainsides is reassuring. We have our last looks at Painted Redstart, a very healthy (and well-photographed) specimen of Black-tailed Rattlesnake, and a pair of Black Bears. It has been a long morning.

After a late lunch we have free time at the San Pedro River Inn. I am joined by some of the campers for a favorite birding activity of mine, selecting an optimal site for the scope and staying put; karma deciding the species compliment to be studied. There is a final male Blue Grosbeak in song, a last truly stunning Common yellowthroat that permits an uncharacteristically long look, the omnipresent and dazzling male Vermillion Flycatcher, a very close and lengthy study of Cassin’s Sparrow (the best I have seen), and a dapper male American Kestrel scoped in mid-hover. There is no place in southeast Arizona where the spectacle of the sky dome is more splendid. While a mounting wall of purple clouds and sheets of monsoon rain obscure the conical hills in nearby Mexico, the crenulations of the Dragoon Mountains 60 miles to the north stand in stark clarity in warm afternoon light; beyond them a massive thunderhead is a bright beacon at the edge of the world. This is a place of power.

July 22 – Our trusty vans are loaded a final time for our return to Tucson. There are stops in a fine stand of mesquite forest owned by the Nature Conservancy where we are treated to a cooperative Northern Beardless Tyrannulet. There are Thick-billed Kingbirds at Patagonia Roadside Rest and superb looks at Gray Hawk at Kino Springs and again as we picnic at Rio Rico. Our road trip is completed as the rugged mass of the Catalinas come into view once again above the Tucson cityscape.

July 23 – The camp is ended as the participants of Camp Chiricahua 2011 return home.

The outskirts of Tucson: 4:35 PM, July 23rd, 2011. I have no takers for a visit to the San Javier Mission once we are back at the hotel in Tucson. Dave is transformed from bird guide to lifeguard as the group romps in the pool. When late afternoon monsoon thunderheads tower once more above the Catalinas beyond the stately adobe Mission, I am reminded of the role of human history on the natural history of this corner of the southwest. Aboriginal burning, intrepid colonial Jesuits, cattle ranching, and the new realities of 21st century megadrought and global warming have and will continue to bring change this once lonely place. While the carnage wrought by the wildfires of 2011 resonate with the dire warnings of climatologists and suggest that the old landscapes of southeast Arizona may well be disappearing, I know this day that there will be 14 new naturalists and biologists to tease secrets from the new landscapes that will surely follow.

Bird List

Ducks (*Anatidae*)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)

(A distant pair in the scope at Kino Springs)

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*)

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Pheasants and allies (*Phasianidae*)

Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)

(Seen along the road above Marshall Gulch in the Catalinas)

New World Quails (*Odontophoridae*)

Scaled Quail (*Callipepla squamata*)

(Seen frequently, including territorial males in San Simon Valley)

Gambel's Quail (*Callipepla gambelii*)

Gebes (*Podipicedidae*)

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

(We enjoyed a truly marvelous scope study of a bird on the nest at Sweetwater wetlands)

Cormorants (*Phalacrocoracidae*)

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Hérons and Egrets (*Ardeidae*)

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)

New World Vultures (*Cathartidae*)

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

Hawks and Eagles (*Accipitidae*)

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)

Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*)

Grey Hawk (*Asturina nitidia*)

(Wow! Excellent scope studies of perched birds at Kino Springs and Rio Rico.)

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*)

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Falcons (*Falconidae*)

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)

Rails, Coots, and Gallinules (*Rallidae*)

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

(A marvelous scope study of a bird on the nest at Sweetwater wetlands)

American Coot (*Fulica americana*)

Plovers (*Charadriidae*)

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*)

Avocets and Stilts (*Recurvirostridae*)

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)

Sandpipers and allies (*Scolopacidae*)

Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*)

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)

Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*)

Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*)

Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*)

Gulls and Terns (*Laridae*)

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

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*)

(A pair was observed in-copula in the scope at the san Pedro River; the amorous male feeding an insect the female during the process)

Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californicus*)

Barn Owls (*Tytonidae*)

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Typical Owls (*Strigidae*)

Western Screech-Owl (*Megascops kennicottii*)

Whiskered Screech-Owl (*Megascops trichopsis*)

Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*)

Northern Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma*)

(Heard only; at Ramsey canyon overlook)

Elf Owl (*Micrathene whitneyi*)

Nightjars and allies (*Caprimulgidae*)

Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*)
Common Poowill (*Phalaenoptilus nutalli*)
(Briefly seen at the San Pedro River Inn)

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 nearly 30 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”.)

Violet-crowned Hummingbird (*Amazilia violiceps*)

(Fine looks at feeders in Portal, and again in Ramsey Canyon. As with Broad-billed, this species was once principally restricted to the Sonoita Creek drainage.)

Blue-throated Hummingbird (*Lampornis clemenciae*)

Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*)

(Exceptional looks were had at truly magnificent males at feeders in Portal, the AMNH southwest research station, and at Ramsey canyon. It was a pleasure to see several “wild” individuals in habitat on our hikes in the Catalinas, Chiricahuas, and Huachucas.)

Lucifer Hummingbird (*Calothorax lucifer*)

(Splendid males were observed at multiple feeder locations in the Chiricahuas. There was clearly an eruption of this species from the east this year)

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)

Anna’s Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*)

Costa’s Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*)

Calliope Hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*)

(An excellent study of both male and female birds at the AMNH southwest research station feeders)

Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*)

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

(Seen in truly staggering if not alarming numbers, particularly males, at virtually every location with feeders. Males were observed (repeatedly in the scope) on agave inflorescences throughout the Chiricahuas)

Trogons (*Trogonidae*)

Elegant Trogon (*Trogon elegans*)

(We had to work hard for the bird again this year; though at least three individual males were conspicuously vocal during our hike up the South Fork Cave Creek road. With effort the group was eventually allowed all too brief studies of these elusive males.)

Woodpeckers (*Picidae*)

Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

Gila Woodpecker (*Melanerpes uropygialis*)

Ladder-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides scalaris*)

Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides vilosis*)

Arizona Woodpecker (*Picoides arizonae*)

(Tough again this year, though it was seen very well at the feeders at Cave Creek ranch.)

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

Guided Flicker (*Colaptes chrysoides*)

Tyrant Flycatchers (*Tyrannidae*)

Northern Beardless-tyrannulet (*Camplostoma imberbe*)

(This bird was seen very well in the mesquite-woodland preserve on the outskirts of Patagonia.)

Greater Pewee (*Contopus pertinax*)

(We had absolutely extraordinary eye-level looks at very cooperative birds above Rose Canyon Lake.)

Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*)

Cordilleran Flycatcher (*Empidonax occidentalis*)

Buff-breasted Flycatcher (*Empidonax fulvifrons*)

(We savored fantastic studies of a responsive bird above Rose Canyon Lake in the Catalinas, and again at the AMNH Southwest Research Station.)

Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*)

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)

Vermillion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

(Wow! There were many splendid views in the scope along the San Pedro and at the San Pedro River Inn.)

Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

Brown-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*)

Sulfur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes lutiventris*)

(We enjoyed exceptional studies of this splendid species along South Fork road.)

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)

(First at Sweetwater Wetlands, and once again a regular 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. Once again, 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*)

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*)

Purple Martin (*Progne subis*)

(In the saguaros at ASDM.)

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*)

Mountain Chickadee (*Poecile gambeli*)

Bridled Titmouse (*Baeolophus wollweberi*)

(Everyone's favorite: at once perky, cheeky, and adorable as busy flocks tumbled through the oaks in the Chiricahuas along South fork road.)

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*)

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)

Gnatcatchers (*Sylviidae*)

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*)

Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila melanura*)

Thrushes and allies (*Turdidae*)

Western Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*)

Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*)

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

Mockingbirds and Thrashers (*Mimidae*)

Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*)
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*)

(Conspicuous and stunning while observed in mixed species flocks above Rose canyon Lake in the Catalinas.)

New World warblers (*Parulidae*)

Lucy's warbler (*Vermivora luciae*)
Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)
Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)
Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigriscens*)
Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*)

(Quite abundant this year; seen well in mixed-flocks in the Catalinas and at Turkey Creek in the Chiricahuas.)

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)

(Quite conspicuous and cooperative; some amazing scope views were had.)

Red-faced Warbler (*Cardellina rubrifrons*)

(Wow! Exceptional studies at Marshall Gulch in the Catalinas, including birds bathing in the stream.)

Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*)

(Always a favorite: a pleasure to observe as it showcased its animated foraging antics in the Catalinas, Chiricahuas, and Huachucas.)

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*)

(We had some truly amazing scope studies along the San Pedro River and at the San Pedro River Inn)

Tanagers (*Thraupidae*)

Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*)

(We had exceptional studies of this bird at the AMNH southwest research station.)

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

(Dazzling in the scope at the San Pedro river.)

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

(Seen in multiple habitats)

Sparrows, and allies (*Emberizidae*)

Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)

Canyon Towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*)

Abert's Towhee (*Pipilo aberti*)

Rufous-winged Sparrow (*Aimophila carpalis*)

(Wow! This bird was seen exceptionally well once again in the Arizona upland desert scrub in the parking area at the Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum.)

Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassini*)

(I have never had scope views as extraordinary as those at The San Pedro River Inn this year.)

Botteri's Sparrow (*Aimophila botteri*)

Rufous-crowned Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps*)

(An exceptional scope study was had at Molino Basin in the Catalinas.)

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*)

(Stunningly in the scope in the San Simon valley; it was quite extraordinary seeing the bird in song in the scope with a pronounced gap before its sound actually reached you.)

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)

Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)

(Seen in truly staggering numbers this year throughout the tour; superbly in the scope.)

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

(Wow! Two adult males studied at length at feeders in portal, and again at the AMNH southwest research station.)

Varied Bunting (*Passerina versicolor*)

(Wow! Seen stunningly well in the scope on multiple occasions.)

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*)

Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*)

Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*)

OldWorld Sparrows (*Passeridae*)

House Sparrow (I) (*Passer domesticus*)

Amphibians, Reptiles, and Mammals

Couch's Spadefoot (*Scaphiopus couchii*)
Mexican Spadefoot (*Spea multiplicata*)
Red-spotted Toad (*Bufo punctatus*)
Great Plains Toad (*Bufo cognatus*)
Canyon Treefrog (*Hyla arenicolor*)
American Bullfrog (I) (*Rana catesbeiana*)

Zebra-tailed Lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides*)
Ornate Tree Lizard (*Urosaurus ornatus*)
Plateau Lizard (*Sceloporus tristichus*)
Southwestern Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus cowlesi*)
Desert Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus magister*)
Clark's spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus clarkii*)
Yarrow's Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus yarrowii*)
Chihuahuan Spotted Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis exsanguis*)
Arizona Striped Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis arizonae*)
Desert Grassland Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis uniparens*)
Tiger Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris*)
Madrean Alligator Lizard (*Elgaria kingii*)
Gila Monster (*Heloderma suspectum*)*deceased/road-kill*
Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*)
Coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum*)
Common Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula*)
Checkered Gartersnake (*Thamnophis marcianus*)
Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*)
Black-tailed Rattlesnake (*Crotalus molossus*)

Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)
Mexican (Apache) Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus nayaitensis*)
Abert's Squirrel (*Sciurus alberti*)
Arizona Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus arizonensis*)
Rock Squirrel (*Spermophilus variegatus*)
Round-tailed Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*)
Cliff Chipmunk (*Tamias dorsalis*)
Botta's Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys bottae*)
Bailey's Pocket Mouse (*Chaetodipus baileyi*)
Merriam's Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys merriami*)
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.)

Coyote (*Canis latrans*)
Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)
Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*)

White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*)
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).)