

*VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.*

**BIG BEND SUMMER**

**July 11-18, 2005**

**Leaders: Barry Zimmer and Victor Emanuel**

**ITINERARY:**

- July 11 - afternoon visit to Sunland Park area of west El Paso (21 species)
- July 12 - Border Hwy, Tornillo and McNary reservoirs, Hwy 20, drive to Cibolo Creek with roadside birding; evening owling (70 species; 74 total)
- July 13 - Cibolo Creek Ranch in am; drive to Big Bend via the River Road, owling at Rio Grande Village (58 species; 96 total)
- July 14 - Window Trail, Cottonwood Campground, Santa Elena overlook (57 species; 115 total)
- July 15 - all day hike to boot Springs via the Pinnacles Trail and returning on Laguna Meadows Trail (46 species; 127 total)
- July 16 - Rio Grande Village, Marathon area, Davis Mts. State Park (70 species; 134 total)
- July 17 - Davis Mts. Nature Conservancy Preserve, McNary & Tornillo reservoirs, west El Paso, my yard (85 species; 151 total)
- July 18 - departures for home (151 total species)

**KEY:**

E = all areas in and around El Paso (including lower valley reservoirs)

C = Cibolo Creek Ranch

B = Big Bend National Park

D = Davis Mountains and surrounding grassland areas

**bold-faced species** indicate birds of rare, casual, or accidental occurrence

underlined species indicate birds of very uncommon occurrence or species which occur regularly but in such low densities as to be easily missed

## **BIRDS:**

Mallard E,B,D---the "Mexican" Duck subspecies  
Northern Pintail E---a few early returning migrants at McNary  
Northern Shoveler E---one female at McNary  
Wood Duck E---one at McNary was particularly surprising  
Ruddy Duck E  
Wild Turkey B,D---two not so wild looking birds at Cottonwood Campground, plus three toms on the Davis Mts Preserve  
Scaled Quail C,B----the most numerous I have ever seen them on this trip  
Gambel's Quail E---good numbers in El Paso's lower valley  
Montezuma Quail D---unbelievable study of a male after some effort; the bird circled me twice and made two nice long passes in front of the entire group; the runaway winner for favorite bird of the tour!  
Pied-billed Grebe E  
Eared Grebe E  
Western Grebe E---nice views of ten or more at McNary  
Clark's Grebe E---more numerous than the Westerns; good comparisons  
American White Pelican E---unexpected  
Double-crested Cormorant E  
Neotropic Cormorant E  
Great Blue Heron E,C,B  
Great Egret E  
Snowy Egret E  
Cattle Egret E  
Green Heron E  
Black-crowned Night-Heron E  
Black Vulture B---three seen total; very uncommon  
Turkey Vulture seen daily in numbers  
Mississippi Kite E---great views of several in west El Paso  
Cooper's Hawk D---great scope views of fledged young  
**Gray Hawk** B,D---three (two adults and one imm) at Cottonwood Campground and RGV; unexpected  
Common Black-Hawk B,D---great views in Rio Grande Village (thanks to Victor's spotting) & Limpia Creek; extremely localized  
Harris's Hawk E---nice studies near Tornillo  
Swainson's Hawk E,C,D  
Zone-tailed Hawk C---great pair at Cibolo Creek  
Red-tailed Hawk seen almost daily in small numbers  
Golden Eagle C---always tough in summer; nice spotting by Mickey  
American Kestrel E,C,D  
American Coot E  
Killdeer E,D  
Black-necked Stilt E  
American Avocet E---flock of thirty at McNary  
Lesser Yellowlegs E  
Spotted Sandpiper E  
Least Sandpiper E  
Rock Dove urban areas throughout  
Band-tailed Pigeon B---a couple of brief flybys at Big Bend

Eurasian Collared-Dove seen in virtually every town along our route and we even had one in Rio Grande Village; expanding at an unbelievable rate  
 White-winged Dove seen daily in numbers  
 Mourning Dove common throughout  
 Inca Dove E,C,B  
 Common Ground-Dove B---seen only briefly  
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo C,B  
 Greater Roadrunner E,C,B,D---an amazing 20 in one day and a total of 39 for the trip!  
Western Screech-Owl B---superb night time study from about three feet!  
Elf Owl C,B---fantastic views; both small owl species can be very tough in midsummer  
 Burrowing Owl E---a rather amazing 16 in one day!  
 Lesser Nighthawk C,B  
 Common Nighthawk Valentine---at day roosts  
Common Poorwill C--- always tough this late  
 White-throated Swift B  
 Blue-throated Hummingbird B  
Magnificent Hummingbird D---very brief views on preserve  
Lucifer Hummingbird B---great views of males and females down the Window Trail and on Pinnacles Trail; missed entirely two years ago; the best showing for this specialty in recent memory  
 Black-chinned Hummingbird seen daily  
Calliope Hummingbird E---excellent, repeated views in my yard; very uncommon  
 Broad-tailed Hummingbird B,D,E  
 Rufous Hummingbird E,B---great views of adult males in my yard  
 Acorn Woodpecker B,D  
 Golden-fronted Woodpecker B  
 Ladder-backed Woodpecker C,B,D  
 Northern Flicker D---the Red-shafted variety  
 Western Wood-Pewee B,D---one early migrant along the Laguna Meadows Trail  
**Buff-breasted Flycatcher** D---great views of one of four---the only known pairs in Texas; not to be expected  
Gray Flycatcher D  
 Cordilleran Flycatcher B  
 Black Phoebe C,B  
 Say's Phoebe C,B,D  
 Vermilion Flycatcher C,B---always spectacular; we had fifteen in one day!  
 Ash-throated Flycatcher C,B,D  
Brown-crested Flycatcher B---very uncommon, but seemingly increasing in the park  
**Tropical Kingbird** B---pair at Cottonwood Campground  
 Cassin's Kingbird C,D  
 Western Kingbird E,C,B,D  
 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher D---great studies near Marathon; about 10 seen  
 Loggerhead Shrike D,B---fewer than usual  
 Bell's Vireo C,B  
**Black-capped Vireo** B---quite unexpected was a pair down the Window Trail; unusually nice views for this skulking species at the western edge of it's range  
Gray Vireo C,B---great views of this highly localized species; our best year ever with 6 seen  
 Plumbeous Vireo D  
 Hutton's Vireo B,D

Western Scrub-Jay D  
 Mexican Jay B  
 Chihuahuan Raven mostly in grasslands west of Davis Mts  
 Common Raven B,D  
 Violet-green Swallow D  
 Cliff Swallow E,C,D  
 Cave Swallow E,D---nice studies  
 Barn Swallow E,C,B,D  
 Mountain Chickadee D  
 Black-crested Titmouse B,D---a recent resplit from Tufted Titmouse  
 Verdin E,B---much scarcer than usual  
 Bushtit B,D  
 White-breasted Nuthatch D  
 Cactus Wren seen daily  
 Rock Wren C,B,D  
 Canyon Wren C,B,D---great bird with a super song!  
Carolina Wren B---pair at Rio Grande Village, the absolute western extreme of their range  
 Bewick's Wren B,D  
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher B  
 Black-tailed Gnatcatcher E,C,B  
 Western Bluebird D  
 American Robin E---one of our last new birds!  
 Northern Mockingbird seen daily in numbers  
 Curve-billed Thrasher E,C,B  
Crissal Thrasher B---nice views of this skulker  
 European Starling E--- easily missed on this trip  
 Phainopepla D---amazingly only one seen by a couple of folks  
Colima Warbler B---a total of thirteen birds with most seen very well  
Grace's Warbler D---good views of two in the preserve  
 Common Yellowthroat B  
**Painted Redstart** B---family group in Boot Canyon thanks to Victor; rare & irregular  
 Yellow-breasted Chat B---nice studies  
Hepatic Tanager B,D---several good views  
 Summer Tanager C,B  
 Western Tanager B  
 Spotted Towhee B  
 Canyon Towhee C,B,D  
 Cassin's Sparrow E,C,D---nice skylarking displays  
 Rufous-crowned Sparrow C,B  
 Chipping Sparrow B,D  
 Black-chinned Sparrow B---great views of two birds  
 Lark Sparrow E,D  
 Black-throated Sparrow E,C,B---the handsomest sparrow?  
 Northern Cardinal B,D  
 Pyrrhuloxia E,C,B  
 Black-headed Grosbeak B,D  
 Blue Grosbeak E,C,B,D---gorgeous!  
**Indigo Bunting** B---seen by a few people in the Big Bend are; rare  
 Varied Bunting C,B---several excellent views of plum-colored males

Painted Bunting C,B---excellent views of several gaudy males  
Red-winged Blackbird E,D  
Eastern Meadowlark D---the subspecies lilianae  
Western Meadowlark E---uncommon breeder  
Yellow-headed Blackbird C,B---gorgeous  
Great-tailed Grackle E,D  
Bronzed Cowbird C,B,D  
Brown-headed Cowbird E,C,B,D  
Orchard Oriole C,B  
Hooded Oriole B---this regionally declining species was somewhat of a surprise at Cottonwood; the  
race here is brilliant red-orange  
Bullock's Oriole E---one male spotted along Hwy 20 near Fort Hancock  
Scott's Oriole C,B  
House Finch seen daily  
Lesser Goldfinch C,B,D  
House Sparrow E,C,B,D---unusual at Cibolo?

total species - **151**

**MAMMALS:**

Desert Cottontail  
Eastern Cottontail  
Black-tailed Jackrabbit  
Rock Squirrel  
White-tailed (Texas) Antelope Squirrel  
Spotted Ground Squirrel  
Hispid Cotton Rat---thanks to Christina  
Mule Deer  
White-tailed Deer  
Pronghorn  
Collared Peccary (Javelina)---great views of family groups, including tiny babies  
Striped Skunk  
Raccoon  
various unidentified bat species

total species - 14+

**REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS:**

Plateau-striped(Rusty-rumped) Whiptail  
Chihuahuan Spotted Whiptail  
Big Bend Canyon Lizard  
Tree Lizard  
Bullfrog---heard only  
Western Diamond-backed rattlesnake---nice study on road to RGV  
Coachwhip---found by Christina  
Arid Land Ribbon Snake---found by Charles

total species – 8

**BUTTERFLIES:**

Queen  
Two-tailed Swallowtail  
Pipevine Swallowtail  
California Sister  
Sleepy Orange  
Dainty Sulphur  
unidentified grass skipper species (orange)  
unidentified grass skipper species (dark brown)---(Dun?)  
Golden-banded Skipper  
Juvenal Duskywing  
Lyside Sulphur  
Checkered White  
Cabbage White  
Reakirt's Blue  
Red Satyr  
Hackberry Emperor  
plus many other unidentified species

total species - 16+

**SIGNIFICANT OTHERS:**

Walking Stick  
Desert Millipede  
Tarantula Wasp  
Leaf-footed Bug  
White-lined Sphinx  
moth species---huge specimen at Cibolo, possibly another kind of sphinx moth  
Vinegaroon  
Velvet Ant  
June Beetle  
pecan theft  
the great milk crate caper