



WORLD-CLASS BIRDING
SMALL GROUP COMFORT

Southeast Arizona Hummingbirds, Specialties and Monsoon Breeders

August 10-17, 2024

Guided by Justin Bosler & Kip Miller

Tour Summary & Sightings List

With the wonderful Ramsey Canyon Inn as our base, we enjoyed a successful week of late summer Southeast Arizona birding together. As expected at this time of year, the hummingbirds were the star attractions – and we recorded 12 species, including regional specialties such as Broad-billed, Violet-crowned and Blue-throated Mountain-gem, as well as Berylline and White-eared, two species that are quite rare north of the Mexican border.

We also enjoyed a long list of other Southeast Arizona specialties, including Montezuma Quail, Gray and Zone-tailed Hawks, Whiskered Screech-Owl, Arizona Woodpecker, Rose-throated Becard, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, Buff-breasted and Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, Thick-billed Kingbird, Mexican Jay, Bridled Titmouse, Olive Warbler, Rufous-winged and Five-striped Sparrows, Abert's Towhee, Chihuahuan Meadowlark, Painted Redstart, Red-faced Warbler, Hepatic Tanager and Varied Bunting. A summary of our daily activities and a link to a listing of all species seen is included below. Thanks again to all for joining us and we hope to see you on a future High Lonesome tour!



Saturday, August 10 – After linking up with most of the group at the Tucson airport, we made the drive through desert grasslands lush from recent rains to Ramsey Canyon and the Huachuca Mountains near Sierra Vista. After getting checked in and settled a bit, most gathered by the feeders for some late afternoon birding before dinner. Here we found seven species of hummingbirds including Rivoli's, Broad-billed and Violet-crowned. Other species present at the seed feeders and on the grounds included Wild Turkey, Acorn Woodpecker, Yellow-eyed Junco, Hepatic Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak.



Sunday, August 11 – We started our first full day with an early morning visit to the nearby Brown Canyon Ranch, where we found a variety southwestern species including Vermilion Flycatcher, Phainopepla, Black-throated Sparrow and Pyrrhuloxia, as well as Rufous-winged Sparrow, a species with a U.S. range mostly restricted to southeast Arizona. After a return to the inn for breakfast, we made the short drive to the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. The hummingbird feeders were busy with multiple species, including the rare Lucifer Hummingbird we hoped to find here. By patiently watching the seed and suet feeders we also enjoyed views of other species, including Gila Woodpecker, Mexican Jay, Curve-billed Thrasher and Canyon Towhee. Fortunately, while the rest of us were watching the feeders, Justin had the good sense to look up and directed our attention to a pair of Gray Hawks circling overhead. After a couple of hours of enjoyable birding here, we moved on to the Lower Carr Canyon picnic area where we located Bridled





Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, Black-throated Gray Warbler and others in the evergreen oaks. Then it was back to the Ramsey Canyon Inn for lunch, followed by a hike up the trail of the adjacent Ramsey Canyon Preserve. Some of the highlights from our hike included multiple Western Wood-Pewees and Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, as well as a single unexpected Buff-breasted Flycatcher. We later wrapped up the day with

another great dinner at the inn and a short owling adventure that provided close views of cooperative Western Screech-Owl.

Monday, August 12 – This morning we hit the road for Mt. Lemmon and the Santa Catalina Mountains. Our first stop along the scenic Catalina Highway was the Babad Do'ag Vista, where we found Gilded Flicker and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher in the Sonoran Desert habitat. Continuing higher, we stopped in Juniper-Oak habitat at the Hoodoo Vista. Here we found a migrant Olive-sided Flycatcher and a Zone-tailed Hawk that circled overhead providing extended views. The remainder of our time on Mt. Lemmon was spent in higher elevation pine forests, where we enjoyed multiple crowd-pleasing views of Red-faced Warbler and Painted Redstart, along with many other species including Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, Olive Warbler and Grace's and Hermit Warblers. Later, on the way back to Ramsey Canyon we made a short stop at the Benson water treatment facility where we found our first water and shorebirds of the tour, including Cinnamon Teal, Mexican Duck, Black-necked Stilt, Long-billed Dowitcher and Baird's Sandpiper.



Tuesday, August 13 – The Patagonia area was our destination this morning, but we made our first stop near Sonoita, where we found Cassin's and Western Kingbirds, Chihuahuan Raven, Chihuahuan Meadowlark and a migrant flock of Lark Buntings. Once in the Patagonia area we started our birding along Harshaw Creek Road. Strategic stops in locations with large roadside sycamores yielded a variety of interesting species, including Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Gray Hawk, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Thick-billed Kingbird, Western Tanager and the very rare Rose-throated Becard. Next, we enjoyed an hour of birding at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds. Some of the species we found here included Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Gila Woodpecker, Phainopepla, Abert's Towhee and Yellow-breasted Chat.

After a picnic lunch in the shady town park, we drove through the grasslands of the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area on the way back to Ramsey Canyon. We found a variety of birds of interest here including Northern Beardless Tyrannulet and both Botteri's and Cassin's Sparrows. After a late afternoon break at the inn



and dinner in town, we wrapped up the day with a very successful nightbird outing in Carr Canyon. Starting at a lower picnic area we heard the soft calls of one or more Elf Owls and enjoyed scope views of a spotlighted Common Poorwill perched in a dead tree. We then continued higher along the Carr Canyon Road to a location where two Whiskered Screech-Owls responded nicely and provided close views as they called back and forth to each other.





hummingbird later identified as a hybrid Berylline x Broad-billed. Other species seen well at the feeders included Bridled Titmouse and Lesser Goldfinch, while a Painted Redstart showed nicely in the feeder area and three species of vireos – Plumbeous, Hutton's and Warbling – were seen in the taller oaks overhead. Following lunch in one of Madera Canyon's picnic areas, we spent time enjoying the busy feeders of the Santa Rita Lodge (and checking out the gift shop!), where a Berylline Hummingbird that provided extended views was a highlight. Later, on the way back to Ramsey Canyon, we made a second visit to the Benson water treatment facility, where we found many of the same species as our previous visit, along with Wilson's Phalarope and White-faced Ibis.

Thursday, August 15 – We set out early on a full-day road trip to the scenic Chiricahua Mountains, where we started with a search for Montezuma Quail that proved successful with two along the road, a great start to the day! We then took a hike up the trail in the South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon in hopes of tracking down an Elegant Tropic – a species that is more challenging at this time of year when they

Wednesday, August 14 – Several started the day before dawn in the parking lot of the inn, where Common Poorwill, Mexican Whip-poor-will and Whiskered Screech-Owl were all heard. Later, we departed for Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains. Our first stops on the way were in scenic Box Canyon, where we found Rock Wren, Scott's Oriole, Varied Bunting and after a bit of effort, the rare Five-striped Sparrow.

Once at Madera Canyon, we started by watching the feeders of the Madera Kubo B&B, where we had several views of a



are less vocal. Unfortunately, the trogons were elusive, but the Acorn Woodpeckers and Mexican Jays were conspicuous, several more Painted Redstarts showed well and Cindy directed our attention to a quietly feeding Arizona Woodpecker adjacent to the trail. Following the hike, we moved on to the George Walker House at a slightly higher elevation, where with just a short wait, all had good views of the rare White-eared Hummingbird at the feeders. Happy with our successful morning (Montezuma Quail and White-eared Hummingbird!), we continued on to Rustler Park in the Chiricahua's higher elevations. Here we enjoyed a picnic lunch and located a variety of montane species, including Band-tailed Pigeon, Greater Pewee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Pygmy Nuthatch and Western Bluebird. Later, as we started our descent on the Chiricahua's west slope, we made a quick stop in Pinery Canyon, where we found Mexican Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Grace's Warbler and Western Tanager.

For the return trip to Ramsey Canyon, we made a loop via Willcox to check the water treatment pond. This was a great decision as the pond was loaded with birds.



Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets and Wilson's Phalaropes were some of the most abundant species, but we also located Sora, Long-billed Dowitcher, Baird's Sandpiper, White-faced Ibis, Yellow-headed Blackbird and others. It was hard to leave, but it had been a full day, so we pushed on and completed the drive to Sierra Vista, where we enjoyed dinner together at a Mexican restaurant in town before returning to the inn for the night.

Friday, August 16 – For our final full day together we decided to keep the driving to a minimum and enjoy locations near our base in Ramsey Canyon. We started back at



the Brown Canyon Ranch where we found many of the same species we had seen on our earlier visit and caught everyone up with Verdin and Lucy's Warbler. Next, we did some "drive-by birding" down a nearby residential road where we found family groups of Scaled Quail and Cactus Wren. We then drove down to explore near the San Pedro River at the San Pedro House. The heat of the day kept us to the shady areas near the welcome center, but we still found nice birds such as Gila Woodpecker, Abert's Towhee, Blue Grosbeak, and Lazuli and Varied Buntings.

Later, after lunch back at the inn and an early afternoon siesta, we returned to lower Carr

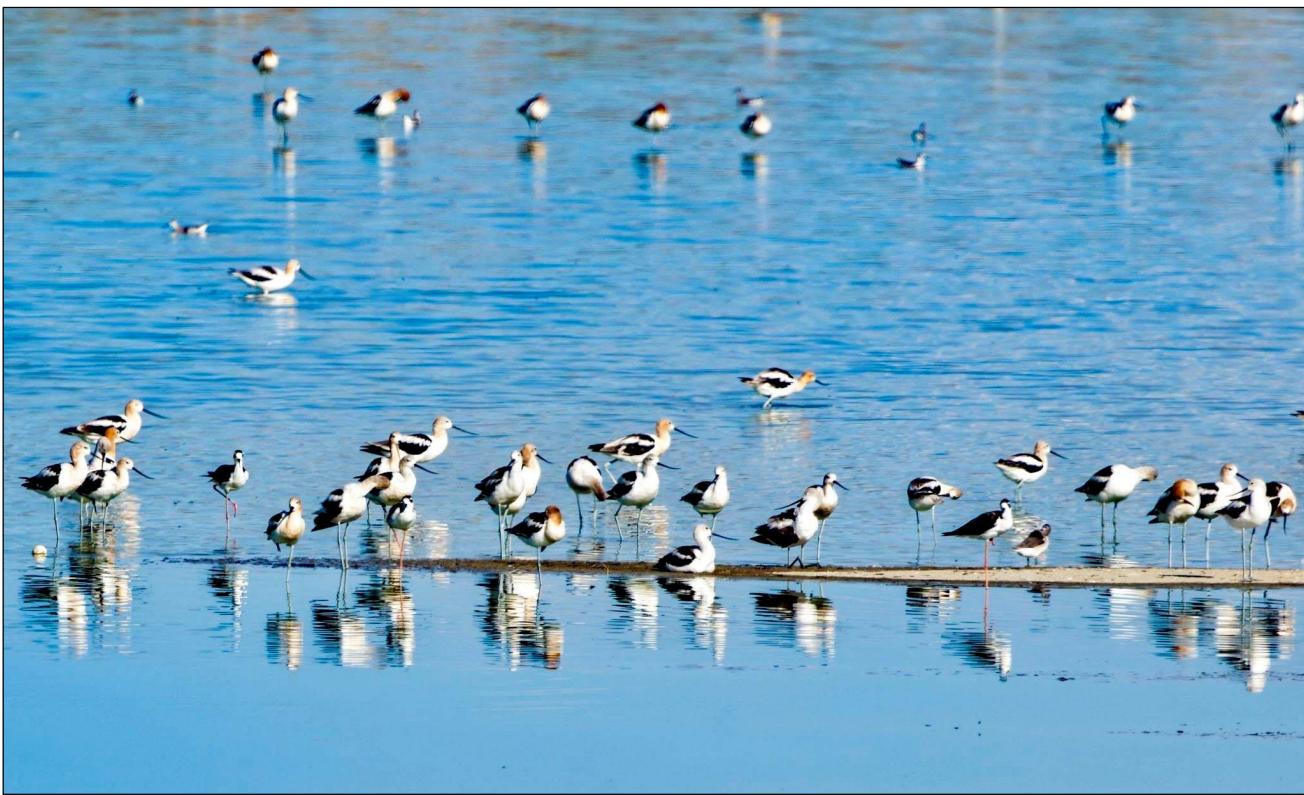
Canyon for easy birding in the picnic area and at the Carr House, where we enjoyed species typical of the oak habitat such as Bridled Titmouse, Bewick's Wren and Black-throated Gray Warbler a final time and Dana directed our attention to our first (and only) Western Flycatcher of the tour. To wrap up the birding on the tour, we made a roadside stop in lower Ramsey Canyon where we found Gambel's Quail, Curve-billed Thrasher, Canyon Towhee and a very cooperative Swainson's Hawk. Then it was back to the wonderful Ramsey Canyon Inn to pack up (or watch the hummingbird feeders one more time!) before enjoying a final dinner and checklist session together.

Saturday, August 17 – All good things must come to an end and sadly, that was the case with this trip. After a full breakfast prepared by one of the inn's chefs, we departed Ramsey Canyon for the return trip to the Tucson Airport and said our goodbyes with fond memories of a great Arizona birding adventure together!

Bird Sightings List:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/266302>





Tour Summary Photos

Page 1 – Berylline Hummingbird at Santa Rita Lodge **Page 2** – Black-throated Sparrow and Pyrrhuloxia at Brown Canyon Ranch **Page 3** – Red-faced Warbler and Zone-tailed Hawk at Mt. Lemmon **Page 4** – Lucifer Hummingbird at Ash Canyon Preserve, Rose-throated Becard from Harshaw Creek Road **Page 5** – Whiskered Screech-Owl in Carr Canyon, Five-striped Sparrow in Box Canyon **Page 6** – White-eared Hummingbird at George Walker House, Varied Bunting in Box Canyon **Page 7** – Blue Grosbeak at Brown Canyon Ranch, Band-tailed Pigeon near Rustler Park **Page 8** – Painted Redstart at Mt. Lemmon, Cave Creek Canyon trail view, American Avocets (and others) at Willcox.

Kip Miller photos