

April/May 2023: Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona and California

An intense search for regional specialties in 5 US States

By Anders Bacher Nielsen

Spotted Owl (Mexican), Cave Creek Canyon, Arizona



White-tailed Ptarmigan, Loveland Pass, Colorado



Five-striped Sparrow, Montosa Canyon, Arizona

The (crazy) Idea

It all started with some SAS bonus points which would expire end 2023. Looking at the world and the possibilities, The US quickly became the only realistic destination. Initially the plan was to fly to Los Angeles, rent a car for the full duration of the trip, starting with the mountains of eastern California continuing through Death Valley with the main part of the trip being around 2 weeks in Arizona enjoying a longtime wish to see this part of the US in prime springtime. Then finally driving back to Los Angeles via Salton Sea.

Usually when I have done birding trips to the US, I have always blended in wine or restaurant highlights or spent time exploring the nature without targeting a special bird. I then became aware of the few locations for the two types of prairie-chicken and the Gunnison Sage-Grouse and that it was prime season for them too. I had believed the prairie trip and the Arizona trip to be two separate trips and a sane person had probably kept that idea. However, suddenly the idea of applying a more hardcore birdwatching angle to the trip emerged. Like the one I would do in Ecuador or the Philippines. One of my challenges were that in the short time of planning, I had not been able to find someone else to travel with and very few would embark on such demanding trip. So, I knew that I would be travelling mostly by myself.

I added first Colorado to the plan – flying from Los Angeles to Denver same day as I arrived from Copenhagen. The madness had started. Then I added New Mexico and west Texas to try for Lesser Prairie-Chicken and one of my long-time wish birds – Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Then Big Bend National Park in Texas came into the picture for a few Texas target birds without driving too much to the east. Then – using eBird – I started to realize how little (relatively speaking) I needed to drive east in Texas to get the chance for a few more Texan specialties. When I discovered that Green Jay (I love jays) could be seen as far west as Brackettville, so that city determined my most Eastern spot. This is also a good spot to look for a handful of other specialty birds with this being their most western range.

So, this report is an attempt to sketch out an itinerary to maximize the number of “local species” in certain parts of the US in the fewest possible days. It was very intense, especially travelling alone, and it is recommended, if possible, to be minimum two persons. See below itinerary for details, just a fun fact is that I drove around 5500 miles the first 14 days but was rewarded by picking up 96 (lifers) of my 102 long target list dipping only on 6 species. There were birds I could have prioritized, but I was never in the right habitat at the right time (e.g Dusky Grouse, Mountain Pygmy-Owl and Common Poorwill). Also another 12 species were added to my US list, but they had been seen before in Central America. So overall I was very satisfied that the ambitious trip paid off.

One note to the bird list at the end of the report. This trip was planned and prioritized to find target lifer birds special for the regions I visited. This mean that I did not check carefully for gulls, waders (unless a lifer), swallows, swifts, and non-distinct smaller brownish/greyish birds I saw driving or walking towards a target spot. That sparrow-like bird would most likely be a Song or a Vesper sparrow or another sparrow I had already seen, so I often skipped following it to identify it fully. So, some birds more commonly seen on a US trip were most likely not seen or noted. As stated, this was a trip to see as many target birds as possible. Also a few locations for the more regular birds, were not noted down and if noted it is usually the first time, I saw the bird.

I rented a 4x4 car in Colorado (pick-up and return in Denver airport) and a regular medium car in California (LA).

I brought The Sibley Birds 2nd ed and my old National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America 3rd ed.



Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (CA)



Brown-capped Rosy-Finch (CO)

Itinerary (short):

Colorado:

- 18-April: Flight CPH-LA, afternoon flight Los Angeles-Denver
- 19-April: Mountain birding around Denver (with guide Ryan Dibala)
- 20-April: Pawnee Grassland, Colorado (with guide Ryan Dibala)
- 21-April: Morning, Brush for Greater Prairie-Chicken, then drive to Walden
- 22-April: Morning Coalmont, then drive to Hayden, missed attempt to reach Crested Butte due to closed mountain pass (see text)
- 23-April: Morning failed attempt to reach Sharp-tailed Grouse lek, drive to Crested Butte/Gunnison via main roads
- 24-April: Morning Gunnison Sage Grouse, then Crested Butte for new attempt for Rosy-finches, then drive to Rockwell (New Mexico). Evening check for dirt road to Lesser Prairie-chicken lek (LONG DAY)

New Mexico:

- 25-April: Morning Lesser Prairie-Chicken, then drive to Del Rio, Texas

Texas:

- 26-April: Morning N of Brackettville, birding in the city of Brackettville, then drive to Big Bend NP
- 27-April: Morning search for Colima Warbler in Big Bend NP, then drive to Portal, Arizona

Arizona:

- 28-April: Birding Cave Creek Canyon (lower altitudes)
- 29-April: Birding Cave Creek (higher altitudes)
- 30-April: Morning birding around Portal, afternoon drive to Tucson via Willcox
- 1-May: Birding S of Tucson with guide
- 2-May: Birding Mt Lemmon with guide
- 3-May: Lucifer Hummingbird site morning, then full day drive to Santa Fe
- 4-May: Drive to Denver. Failed (last) try for Mountain Plover and Red-naped Sapsucker. Stay in Denver.

California:

- 5-May: Morning flight Denver-Los Angeles. Drive to Sepulveda for Lawrence Goldfinch. Drive to Lancaster
- 6-May: Morning, Lake Los Angeles for Bell's Sparrow and California Thrasher. Afternoon drive to Aspendell for Grey-crowned Rosy-Finch and back to night in Bakersfield
- 7-May: Morning, Maricopa for LeConte's Thrasher, Gorman Rd for Tricolored Blackbird, Angeles NF--Grizzly Flat Rd. Failed attempts for Snowy Plover at Oxnard. Night in Ventura
- 8-May: Morning Snowy Plover, Coal Oil Point. Birding part over at 08:30am. Relax, food and wine in Santa Barbara. Night in Santa Barbara
- 9-May: Morning drive along HW 1 to Lay. Flight back to Copenhagen



Thick-billed Longspur (CO)



Chestnut-collared Longspur (CO)

Colorado part:

This was my target list for Colorado. Highlighted in **blue bold** are those I managed to see/hear in Colorado:

- **Ferruginous Hawk**
- Prairie Falcon
- **White-tailed Ptarmigan**
- **Greater Prairie-chicken**
- **Sharp-tailed Grouse**
- **Greater Sage-Grouse**
- **Gunnison Sage-Grouse**
- Mountain Plover
- Northern Pygmy Owl
- **White-throated Swift**
- **American Three-toed Woodpecker**
- Red-naped Sapsucker
- Cassin's Sparrow
- Clay-colored Sparrow
- Lark Bunting
- **Chestnut-collared Longspur**
- **Thick-billed Longspur**
- Gray-crowned Rosy-finch
- **Brown-capped Rosy-finch**
- Black-Rosy-finch
- **Pine Grosbeak**

In Colorado, the weather and the general conditions were very tough this year. Mountains had a lot of snow, dirt roads you can normally drive on were under thick layer of snow (e.g. the Sharp-tailed Grouse lek in Hayden, at least the one I attempted to visit). In Mt Crested Butte, the locals claimed that the area was usually snow-free in end April but this year there were two meters of snow along the streets in the residential area.

Pawnee Grassland was extremely windy and cold the day I visited and looking for birds was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Also, my expectations to the bird calendar were a bit optimistic/unrealistic. Target sparrows had yet not arrived, and birds like Red-naped Sapsucker and Mountain Plovers were also few and erratic. Cassin's and Clay-coloured Sparrow, I saw later, but it was a major disappointment to leave the US without having seen a Mountain Plover. Are you here mid/end May, it is much easier (but then other birds are harder or has left). I spent almost a full day April 20th at Pawnee and 3-4 hours May 4th at Hannover Road east of Pueblo without luck with the plover. Prairie Falcon, Northern Pygmy-Owl and Dusky Grouse are not birds you can really plan for, and that luck you sometimes have, I did not have on this part of my trip. The area around Crested Butte should be excellent for Dusky Grouse if you walk up the mountains, but my schedule did not allow for that. For the Rosy-finches, one can say that the Brown-capped is the regional target rosy-finch, but I have hoped for a hattrick here. I arrived at Crested Butte in the afternoon April 23rd and that morning all three species (mostly Brown-capped but 2 Black and 1 Grey-Crowned) had been

feeding at Blackstock drive (see eBird for details). In the afternoon only Brown-capped came down. Next morning, after the Gunnison Sage Grouse viewing, I prioritized to return to the feeding ground but no Rosy-finches at all that morning as the weather was nice and sunny. They come down when it is snowing. However, the morning after, when I was in New Mexico, all three species came to the feeder area. That is birding. I had expected to look for the Rosy-finches at Silverthorne but apparently all feeders have been taken down (since 2023) as flocks of birders have apparently annoyed the locals. My initial planning was made using 2022 sightings on eBird so since that year, Rosy-finches at feeders have certainly been trickier to find. I knew I could still try for Grey-crowned in California, but Black Rosy-finch, I then knew would be another sad miss.

Red-naped Sapsucker are also more difficult in April/early May and occurs more erratic. My only attempt was on my way back to Denver at Evergreen Lake 4-May but as I was about to get out of my car a huge thunderstorm came right over the lake. I saw this as a sign that my Colorado birding just had to be difficult, and I gave up. However, coffee is good at the large parking place.

Was it not for my excellent guide **Ryan Dibala** (www.gobirdingman.com), I would have seen much less, and I would love to return to Colorado and bird more with Ryan a month later than I did. I highly recommend him, not only for being an excellent birder, but also simply for being a great guy.



Greater Sage-Grouse, Coalmont, Colorado



Greater Prairie-Chicken, Near Brush, Colorado

Sharp-tailed Grouse was another sad experience with a bird I had expected to see. Maybe I should have investigated the locations of the various leks more beforehand. There are two populations – the one in the mountains and the one on the grassland. Given the 2023 April winter conditions, I could have focused on the grassland population. It is rather north, basically in Nebraska. I went to the spot (around noon) where a group of grouses had been seen early one other morning. It seems completely odd that such birds were seen there but many eBird sightings confirms this and I should have planned my trip to be there one

morning at dawn. Instead, I relied on the Steamboat/Hayden area and probably did it wrong. Around that date I was there (23-April) there were only few sightings of larger groups of sharp-tailed grouses on eBird. When I look at eBird now, I see that more large groups were reported 27-April. I tend to think that I looked the wrong place. By the date I was there, road 80 closer to Hayden seemed to be the best spot (based on eBird reports for days before). However, the road to the lek was not drivable (I parked my car at a huge snow scooter rental by a small frozen lake) and the walk to the lek (around 4-5 miles) was not clear to me as there were no mobile reception and it was all covered in snow. Supposedly, it is after the second hilltop. eBird had a group of grouses listed around the first hilltop, but I would assume that the GPS coordinates were not entirely precise. At least there were no birds there the early morning of 23-April. From the parking space to the first hilltop, I had to walk 1½-2 miles in fairly deep snow. I continued for another 2 miles (still in snow) and never saw something that could qualify as hilltop number 2. Without the snow, I am sure it has been obvious. Luckily – and that was just about my only luck in Colorado – a single Sharp-tailed Grouse sang just as I left the car in darkness to do my walking. That was the bird voice I have practiced the most so no doubt and single birds had been seen in that area where I parked. Looking at eBird reports later in April, the place to be is the lek around road 46/46B (closer to Steamboat), but there were simply no eBird reports there in mid-April. This bird should be reliable, but I simply never met anyone qualified to be asked. Another huge disappointment, partly due to possible poor planning, but also the unusual harsh winter conditions.

New Mexico part:

Only target bird here was Lesser-Prairie Chicken. A bird in critical decline, which is basically very difficult to understand when you often drive miles and miles with grassland on each side of your car. I had a very magnificent dawn with 4-5 displaying males and a handful of females. Please contact me directly (andersbacher@yahoo.dk) for details.

I also saw Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in New Mexico where it is less common than in Texas.



Lesser Prairie-Chicken (NM)

Texas part:

Texas holds several key birds, especially the further east you go. The target bird list for Texas was the following and I managed to see/hear all target birds:

- Golden-fronted Woodpecker
- Couch's Kingbird
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
- Black-capped Vireo
- Yellow-throated Vireo
- Green Jay
- Black-crested Titmouse

- Long-billed Thrasher
- Colima Warbler (heard only)
- Olive Sparrow
- Cassin's Sparrow
- Clay-colored Sparrow
- Blue Grosbeak



Mexican Jay (AZ)



Yellow-Throated Vireo (TX)

Arizona part:

This was the main destination and the reason for the trip at all. It is an amazing state to bird watch in and I pretty much cleaned up my list, however, a few painful misses. I birded May 1st and 2nd with the excellent guide **Keith Kamper** (keithkamper@gmail.com) who also comes highly recommended, both for his birding skills and his great personality. We had some amazing days together.

My last morning Cave Creek Canyon I enjoyed the great company of the local guide **Elaine Moisan** (emoisan2011@hotmail.com) with whom I saw an amazing range of grassland lifers in or just outside Portal. Elaine is also highly recommended. Remember to agree on the fee – a general note – but we never discussed the cost of the guide service until mid of the birding and that was not optimal. We made a good compromise and as stated, a very good morning around Portal. The target bird list for Arizona was long but the birding rarely disappoints in that state.

- Mexican Duck
- Gray Hawk
- Montezuma Quail
- Scaled Quail
- Greater Roadrunner
- Spotted Owl
- Western Screech-Owl
- Whiskered Screech-Owl
- Elf Owl
- Mexican Whip-Poor-Will
- Rivoli's Hummingbird

- Blue-throated Hummingbird
- Violet-crowned Hummingbird
- Lucifer Hummingbird
- Broad-billed Hummingbird
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird
- Rivoli's Hummingbird
- Elegant Trogon
- Arizona Woodpecker
- Gilded Flicker
- Greater Pewee
- Cordilleran flycatcher

- Buff-breasted Flycatcher
- Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet
- Ash-throated Flycatcher
- Western Kingbird
- Cassin's Kingbird
- Tropical Kingbird
- Thick-billed Kingbird
- Rose-throated Becard
- Bell's Vireo
- Hutton's Vireo
- Gray Vireo
- Plumbeous Vireo
- Mexican Jay
- Chihuahuan Raven
- Bridled Titmouse
- Juniper Titmouse
- Mexican Chickadee
- Canyon Wren
- Black-tailed Gnatcatcher
- Bendire's Thrasher
- Curve-billed Thrasher
- Crissal Thrasher
- Virginia Warbler
- Lucy's Warbler
- Black-throated Gray Warbler
- Grace's Warbler
- Yellow-breasted Chat
- Painted Redstart
- Red-faced Warbler
- Olive Warbler
- Canyon Towhee
- Botteri's Sparrow
- Cassin's Sparrow
- Rufous-winged Sparrow
- Clay-colored Sparrow
- Black-chinned Sparrow
- Five-striped Sparrow
- Lark Bunting
- Yellow-eyed Junco
- Pyrrhuloxia
- Blue Grosbeak
- Lazuli Bunting
- Chihuahuan Meadowlark
- Scott's Oriole

I missed only 2 of 66 target species. The most painful miss was the Rose-throated Becard. In the period leading up to my visit a female bird had been seen with less and less regularity in the Tubac area. Apparently, that bird that have wintered there. The morning and afternoon we went out looking, the closest we got was a possible call from a single bird (I did not hear or recognize it, but my bird guide did). We never saw a bird nor heard another call. It was later confirmed a few days later that the bird seemed to have moved to another part of that forest. So, truly unlucky, but you cannot win them all. I never truly looked for the Mountain species of the Pygmy Owl or the Common Poorwill, but they could be target species for other trips. Again I dipped on the Prairie Falcon. A bird you just cannot really plan to see. Another painful miss was the Montezuma Quail and that bird we really tried to find. This is not a bird you can plan to see, it is a bird you flush or are lucky to suddenly see. Not rare, but rarely seen. You can of course also be lucky that they come across a feeder or know a nesting area.

California part:

The target bird list for California was not long and excluding the Prairie Falcon (my nemesis bird in the US), I managed to see/hear all target birds.

- Prairie Falcon
- Sora (heard only)
- Snowy Plover
- California Thrasher
- Le Conte's Thrasher
- Hermit Warbler
- Bell's Sparrow
- Tri-colored Blackbird
- Gray-crowned Rosy-finch
- Lawrence Goldfinch



Selection of Kingbirds. From top left: Cassin's, Thick-billed (living up to its name), Tropical and Western

Itinerary (long):

19-April: Rocky Mountains, Colorado:

After an almost sleepless night at the sad and very noisy Super 8 by Wyndham Wheat Ridge/Denver West (not recommended at all) I met at the parking lot with my local guide for the next two days. To decrease the fee, we had agreed to use my car and I also drove, which was a bit crazy being jetlagged and only having had 1-2 hours of sleep. We drove up to a mountain area (The Goshawk) and had a great introduction the more common birds of Colorado and after 20 minutes the first target bird – a Pine Grosbeak – flew in and sat in a top of a tree. Hereafter we drove to the Loveland Pass which was very windy this morning. We were lucky here as I don't think I would have had the stamina to scan for a distant White-tailed Ptarmigan for hours. We got up, went out, played the voice once and a bird flew up right next to us. Conditions were extreme, very cold, and windy. On the way down we had a great stop with Canada Jay (close) and Townsend's Solitaire. Later the day we walked at the Fern Lake Trailhead in very shifting conditions (sun, snow, rain, wind within 30 minutes) looking for primarily Northern Pygmy-Owl and American Three-toed Woodpecker. Scenery was amazing but we lacked the luck you sometimes need to see birds like those, but we did a nice Golden Eagle flying low over the trees. With White-throated Swifts seen in a distance at a random stop, the day only brought 3 of my target species but I had now realised that Colorado birding in mid-April can be a challenging experience. Had I not had Ryan, I would have seen none of my target birds.

20-April: Pawnee Grassland

I had mistakenly expected a mild day after the extremely cold and tiring first day. It turned out to be an even harder day. Looking for birds at Pawnees this early into the year is like looking for a needle in a haystack. Unless you look for Horned Larks or Brewer's Sparrows. We missed the Mountain Plover after carefully scanning the areas around Briggsdale School driving slowly the dirt roads several times. We gave up and started to focus on the Long-Spurs. We managed to see first to see small flocks of Chestnut-collared

Longspur (what a beauty) and after many hours of scanning we saw a large flock of McCown's Longspurs. Here we had left the car and walked around. A flock of birds flew quickly near us, and we realised that this was something interesting. Luckily, we were able to re-find the group and we had good close looks. The last Lapland Longspurs seems to have left as there were no reports the days before. Another highlight was a dark-morph Ferruginous Hawk, another lifer. With another 3 target birds the trip had started a bit slow, but I have had too unrealistic expectations to the birding in this somehow early part of the prime season and the difficulty of seeing Rosy-finches at feeders was also a surprise to me. I drove Ryan back to his home in Arvada and then returned to stay in Brush (a lot of driving that day) and this was the first night where I slept more than a couple of hours.

21-April: Morning Brush for Greater Prairie-Chicken, then drive to Walden

The day started in darkness, driving out to the Greater Prairie-Chicken lek on the staircase like roads (X, 52, 50). I went out here the day before, and generally it is a good advice to go out familiarizing yourself with the roads, the GPS coordinates, and the landscape in daylight for these lek experiences. Before sunrise, the first males started to display and call. After some tough days, it was amazing to just sit and enjoy these fantastic birds. I sat in the car, 50-75 meters from the lek which is slightly elevated. 12-15 birds were present and before the sun was up, the females had disappeared. The tough times in Colorado was indeed not over, but the feeling of this trip being a good idea was growing with one of the key birds seen and watched so well. On the way back to a surprisingly good breakfast at the hotel (Boarders Inn), I had nice close-up views of a group of Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

The rest of the day was spent driving to Walden in a somehow unfocused way through Pawnee Grassland bringing me into both Wyoming and Nebraska in helpless quest to miraculously see a Sharp-tailed Grouse or a Mountain Plover and with no expectations, you rarely get disappointed. At Walden in the afternoon, I drove to the Greater Sage-Grouse Coalmont lek to check it out in daylight, as stated, always a good advice. The Walden reservoir was all frozen and very few birds were around.

22-April: Morning Coalmont, Drive to Hayden, attempt to reach Crested Butte

Fantastic pre-dawn trip to the Coalmont Greater Sage-Grouse lek with 10-12 displaying males. Driving SW I spent 45 minutes at the Rabbits Ear Pass to listen and look for American Three-toed Woodpecker. It was snowing and windy and this attempt was unsuccessful, but after another 5-10 minutes' drive on Route 40, an all-black upper-winged woodpecker with some white on the back crossed the road. Given the black wings and the area, I ruled out other woodpeckers and even if I never re-found it despite searching, another of my target birds were ticked. Only possible other woodpecker would be Hairy, but it seems to be rarer if present at all at this altitude and general dark appearance (despite sub-species variations) led to conclude on Three-toed Woodpecker, but clearly not a satisfying view.

I had a hearty and well-deserved breakfast at Steamboat Springs. After realizing that the Sharp-tailed Grouse lek was not a walk in the park (see above) I took a bold decision to skip this species and decided to drive to Crested Butte (far south) to focus on rosy-finches. Google maps suggested to use the Kebler pass. However, in my written notes places in my luggage was a list of closed mountain passes, a note I completely forgot about as Google maps use to inform you about this. I started the trip in Craig, and it all went fine until first warning at the cross between road 133 and road 12 (Kebler corner). It simply stated Kebler Pass closed and still my hopes were that it was another pass than the one leading to Crested Butte. There was no reception for my GPS and no other cars/open houses to ask. So I took the very wrong decision to at least drive up and see if it was true. 10 miles up the dirt road, there was suddenly a muddy section and with no fence down to the right hilly side, I quickly got in a dangerous situation as I needed to speed up in order to not get stuck in the mud, but the car moved from side to side in the mud moving slowly forward. At times I was 2 meters

from the edge, but adrenaline had taken fully over so I sensed no fear. The mud section was only around 100 meter and hereafter I continued nicely until a 6-meter-tall ice block completely closed the road around 20 miles north of Crested Butte. I failed to get to Crested Butte that day I decided to go all the way back to Craig (4 hours' drive back). With no reception at all, I could not figure out an alternative way to Crested Butte. This was crazy and the I had some self-criticism on that drive back north. Only upside was that I would now give Sharp-tailed Grouse another chance. Advise, read your planning notes, check alternatives while you have reception and don't always trust Google maps.

23-April: Morning failed attempt to reach SHTG lek, drive to Crested Butte/Gunnison

As described above, this attempt to reach the Sharp-tailed Grouse lek failed so hereafter I took a passable road to Gunnison and then went straight to the lovely village of Crested Butte. Main target was rosy-finches and as written above I was only partly successful in this. However, the area is very beautiful.

24-April: Gunnison Sage Grouse and long drive to Rockwell, New Mexico.

This day was special – and the main reason for initially altering my first plans and adding Colorado to the trip. Having read about the split of the Sage Grouses some years ago, I had a wish to see both species. The Gunnison Sage Grouse is much rarer, and the most striking difference is their extremely long black “ponytail” which they flip over their head when they are displaying – not unlike headbanging to a heavy metal concert. I managed to get an agreement via Patrick Magee (pmagee@western.edu) to reserve a seat in the viewing trailer, this morning. I was picked up at my hotel in Gunnison around 4.15am by a volunteer and she escorted me to the container around 40 minutes away. We sat with each our scope in a magical morning where the birds shared the plains with a coyote (which seem to leave the birds completely in peace). Just beside the container is the parking lot where one can drive up without reservation but after just 30 minutes the code of conduct was broken as they left their cars to get better looks. The container is just by that parking lot, but it gives a better overview slightly elevated. Also the birds are to the left of the container and the parking lot was to the right of the container. Both options should get to see the birds but despite being utterly cold, the container is surely more comfortable.

Around 6:45AM we were done, I gave the rosy-finches another go - failed - and then started the long drive south to Rockwell in New Mexico. That day I drove from temperatures of -15 degrees Celsius to +32 degrees Celsius so a rather long day. Main target the day after was Lesser Prairie-Chicken and as usually I went to the lek the later afternoon before to be completely sure about road conditions, distances and where to position myself.

25-April: Morning Lesser PRCH lek, then drive to Del Rio, Texas

This early morning was spent at the Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek. It is a very sensitive species, so I will keep details out of this report. The area between Rockwell and Tatum is interesting for smaller birds (e.g Clay-colored and Cassin's Sparrow) and especially the eBird location **Caprock Migrant Trap** along road 380 was extremely interesting with several lifers. One of my target birds I got here when two Scissor-tailed Flycatchers suddenly flew into a tree. A bird I had not expected to see in NM and later, I only had one other distant view of this bird in Texas. Also a very active Great-Horned Owl was chased around by smaller birds and flew from tree to tree. Swainson's Hawks seems to be nesting there and close looks of that bird was very nice.

After a late breakfast in the very sleepy village of Tatum, I drove straight to Del Rio in Texas. I had expected to be birding in the Amistad National Recreation area, but it looks better from pictures than in reality. At

least, I never found a vantage point and the birding in Del Rio, North of and in Brackettville was so great that I am not sure one miss out much skipping Amistad.

In the afternoon I try to bird the area around Duck Pond Road, but all accesses were closed so it required a bit of playback to lure out two of the target birds, Couch's Kingbird and Yellow-fronted Woodpecker (which I did not see later on the trip, not even at Big Bend). Water Dr is an acceptable place to use, but it was not without the classical paranoia whether I was trespassing. Never found out why all gates were closed. The water bodies did not hold anything interesting besides Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. The late afternoon, I spent in Moore Park in Del Rio, very nice small area with great views of Vermillion Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat and other good birds. Focus was now to prepare most optimally for the next day where many target birds were on the menu.

26-April: Morning N of Brackettville, birding in the city of Brackettville, then drive to Big Bend NP

It remains a mystery to me, why a State Park can choose to have closed 3 weekdays in a row (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) every week. This is the reality at Kickapoo Cavern State Park. I still decided to spend the early morning at the entrance by road 674. When deciding to go, I have hoped that the gate was at the State Park and not down by the main road. I took the liberty of jumping over the fence as it seemed so difficult to understand that birders could at least not walk the dirt road leading up to the park entrance. On this walk I saw the only Blue Grosbeak (lifer) on the trip. Canyon Towhees and Olive Sparrows were other lifers seen well here before I was met with a very unpleasant ranger who jumped straight to threatening me that he would call the police if I did not leave immediately. My next target bird was the handsome Black-Capped Vireo which it took me some efforts to see on my way back to Brackettville (around halfway back). Back in Brackettville, my two target birds were Green Jay and Yellow-throated Vireo, and both were seen after some searching. Especially the Jay I only heard when I had basically given up and had opened my door to my car. Two noisy birds showed themselves beautifully. I saw both species at the Red Bridge Park which is a restricted area. However, at the entrance (I came in from the north side) I quickly explained my purpose and got a sticker in my front window. It is a great area to walk around in.

With Green Jay, my list was complete for this "small" detour, and I started my long drive west with a stopover in Big Bend National Park. I arrived at the visitor center in the afternoon and on my drive from Marathon to the park (route 385) I saw my first Greater Roadrunner (a long-time favorite bird which I now saw for the first time) and the only Crested Quail on my trip (a bit surprising I did not see more). At the visitor center the first Scott's Oriole of the trip was seen and on my sunset drive to Terlingua I had a perfect view of another Greater Roadrunner in a bare tree with the sunset behind and a Lesser Nighthawk flying along the road.

27-April: Morning search for Colima Warbler, then drive to Portal, Arizona

Last bird on my Texas list was Colima Warbler and for reasons unknown I had expected this to be fairly easy. One bird has been seen along the Pinnacle Trail at Boulder Meadow Campsites the day before but after 3 hours listening and some playback, I managed only to hear the bird. Really a disappointment and with the drive I had ahead of me to Arizona, I had to stop around 11am, realizing that this was indeed not an easy bird (at least for me).

I drove almost straight to Portal with a few resting/birding stops to look for Mexican Duck but failed to see it. I arrived after dark and the only place to stay in Portal seems to be Portal Peak Lodge and they have left the key in my door so I could go straight to bed after a long day. Now the trip changed to a much more relaxed type of trip with more birding and less driving. The first 10 days have been very productive but also extremely demanding.

28-April: Birding Cave Creek Canyon (South Fork Road, Turkey Creek Junction, Paradise)

I had booked a two day stay at the Southwest Research Station (SWRS) and I can highly recommend doing the same. Two nights will be sufficient and the cabins, the people, and the food (included in the nightly fee) were all great. I made the arrangement that I could join this morning breakfast. I was there 1 hour too early as the time changes from New Mexico time to Arizona time. The mobile clock changes within a few 100 meters forth and back, which is very confusing. This early hour was spent at their hummingbird feeder which attracted both Rivoli and Blue-Throated Hummingbird. After breakfast I went to the South Fork Road and the only bird group had already spotted a female Elegant Trogon just after the bridge, I quickly got great views of this target bird. I continued walking on the track and had great views of a couple of Red-Faced Warblers and a Painted Bunting. Mexican Jays are all over the place. Also, a Plumbeous Vireo, again back by the bridge, sat perfectly clear on a branch high up but good enough for a great photo and another lifer ticked. After lunch I drove up the Turkey Creek Junction with 3 target species, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Mexican Chickadee and Grace's Warbler. I missed the Chickadee, but the two other species seems reliable – but not easy – at this spot. I walked 2-300 meters in the direction towards Paradise scanning for these birds. I later drove to Paradise to the George Walker House with more feeders. Here I got 3 lifers (Arizona Woodpecker, Bridled and Juniper Titmouse) and a lot of amazing birds. Sometimes you need some easy birds. At dusk I enjoyed the view of 2 Elf Owls flying around just above my head at a small parking lot near the SWRS.

29-April: Birding Cave Creek Canyon, higher elevations (Barfoot and Rustler Park)

This morning after breakfast, I drove with packed lunch to the higher elevation locations Barfoot and Rustler Park. Distances are small but speed limit is 20-25 MPH, and the scenery is stunning, so it is a good idea with a packed lunch. Target birds were Greater Pewee, Olive Warbler and Mexican Chickadee. Greater Pewee I saw briefly in the last turn before the Barfoot Park. None of these birds are truly easy up here, but at least the Chickadees came in rather quickly at the Barfoot Park. Here after I called in what sounded like an Olive Warbler and after some skulking in the trees above me, it suddenly looked at me from a branch with the rising sun making its head shine even brighter. One of the highlights of the whole trip, such an amazing and interesting bird. Greater Pewees seems to like sitting far away in a top of a tree and that was the only sight I got of it, but I was able to get as close as 50 meters. This was in Barfoot Park only and compared the Rustler Park seemed very quiet and unproductive. Clearly, also a bit later in the day but since it had recently burned, there were only few good trees. On the way back to the station, I stopped at the Turkey Creek Junction and had better looks at both Grace Warbler and Buff-breasted Flycatcher now. The new luxury of being able to re-visit a site paid off. That evening, I went owling with a local guide called James. It was windy and we were not particular lucky. However, a pair of Whiskered Screech-Owls were calling just above us, and we got great views. Also, we heard Mexican Whip-Poor-Wills in the distance at a spot I cannot remember but they should be rather common when you just drive up a bit.

30-April: Morning birding around Portal with guide, afternoon drive to Tucson

This morning I was picked up by the local guide Elaine Moisan (emoisan2011@hotmail.com). We had planned to focus on the grassland around Portal as this was where most of my key birds still missing were to be found. We quickly saw a Thick-billed Kingbird (that bird fully qualified to its name) right in Portal together with the handsome Lucy's Warbler. We were lucky to get Crissal Thrasher coming into Rodriguez feeder and when we later saw Bendire's Thrasher and possibly the last Lark Bunting in the area a bit outside Portal the excitement was great. The guide knew a good spot for Botteri's Sparrow and after less than 60 seconds we were lucky to have a bird flying into a low bush. What a start of the day. We later went to a reliable spot for a day-roosting Western Screech-Owl (private property).

We birded only the morning and I had a difficult choice to make. Should I drive the quickest way to my next stop – Tucson - or should I go all the way up to the top again and try for a Spotted Owl (Mexican) that has been seen day-roosting the previous days around Pinery Canyon Campground. When I realised, I could drive down on the other side and avoid coming all the way back to the station I went up. The day before, a group of birders had missed it, so after having climbed the mountain for the second day in a row, I was very happy to see a young American birder sitting with a French couple just enjoying this magnificent owl. I descended the mountain on the other side hitting road 181/186 and taking that route to Willcox and then Tucson. On my way I had two “easy” lifer birds I have missed so far. Along road 186 I got plenty of Chihuahuan Meadowlark and at Lake Cochise in Willcox I saw a few Mexican Ducks (among many waders and 10 Wilsons Phalaropes). I arrived at Tucson while still light and I can highly recommend staying at Motel 6 - Tucson Downtown as it is well placed for main roads going south and it is walking distance to the downtown of the surprisingly pleasant city of Tucson. For the first time on the trip, I treated myself with the luxury of relatively fine dining and a late beer.

1-May: Birding S of Tucson: Tubac, Patagonia

This morning, with guide, I went straight to look for Five-Striped Sparrow at Montosa Canyon. Here we also saw Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet and Lucy’s Warbler among other nice birds. Then we went to the Tubac area looking for Rose-throated Becard at the De Anza Trail area. There had been erratic and few sightings of the resident female bird the days before and as stated above we did not manage to see it. Area is great and just before the entrance to the trail we saw newly arrived Tropical Kingbirds and the trip’s only Gray Hawk. Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Hutton’s Vireo and Bell’s Vireo were other birds seen a few places in the very south of Arizona after the Becard dip. Later we waited 15-20 minutes at the feeders at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds before the Violet Crowned Hummingbird showed up. We checked several places for Canyon Wren which were high up on my wish list, but we had no luck. The situation for the next day’s birding was a bit tricky as the road up on Mt Lemmon had been closed 1st May due a fire and of the birds still missing on my list would be very difficult to get elsewhere.

2-May: Full day birding Mt Lemmon

Luckily the road was re-opened the May 2nd and it turned out to be one of the most successful of all the days on my trip. First target bird to be seen was Gilded Flicker just before we started the drive up the mountain. Rufous-winged and Black-Chinned Sparrow showed well on the way up. We tried again several times for Canyon Wren and at the 3rd attempt we first saw a Rock Wren, then the target wren came up very close and we had prolonged close looks. At another stop we saw the tricky Grey Vireo and here we also got Virginia Warbler. In the nice little village Summerhaven we saw the last bird on the wish list – Cordilleran Flycatcher – always high up in the trees. Also Red-faced Warblers were common and first time I saw them since Cave Creek Canyon.

3-May: Lucifer Hummingbird morning, then full day drive to Santa Fe

Now I was back on the road again doing some serious driving and I started visiting the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary which at that time seemed to be the most reliable spot for Lucifer Hummingbird, the last hummingbird on my list. It had appeared erratic around the Portal feeders but mostly early morning and often a female. After 15 minutes small talking with the amazing and kind people who maintain the sanctuary, a beautiful Lucifer Hummingbird male appeared at one of the feeders. On my way to the Sanctuary I had kept an eye open for a possible Montezuma Quail in the early morning, and I continued that search after the hummingbird (checking the very few eBird reports from the previous days) but it was

unsuccessful. One of those birds you often see “by accident” unless you know a local reliable spot. I drove almost directly to the nice town of Santa Fe (almost too nice after my taste) but certainly worth a visit.



Canyon Wren (AZ)

4-May: Drive to Denver. Failed (last) try for Mountain Plover and Red-naped Sapsucker. Stay in Denver.

Another early start – my internal watch had adjusted to birdwatching, so I was on the road by 6am, driving straight to my second and last chance for Mountain Plover. I truly gave Hanover Road (SE of Colorado Springs) and the bird a fair chance but after 3-4 hours of driving, walking and watching, I gave up. Need to come back for that bird. One great thing that came out of it was that I saw my first male Lark Bunting in the Chico Basin Ranch area. A much better view than the female at Portal. As stated above, I did an attempt to get see Red-naped Sapsucker but failed. This bird is easier later in the spring, but still a very painful miss.

I drove to my Denver Downtown hotel with my luggage and returned the car in the airport and took the train/bus back to central Denver. I wanted a great evening celebrating the successful two first weeks. Very surprised to find such quality place just next to a main train station, I treated myself with great food and wine at this great place, Sunday Vinyl. Would love to be there on a wine/music night -celebrating when I have seen all the Colorado dips from this trip.

5-May: Morning flight Denver-LA. Drive to Hansen Dam for Lawrence Goldfinch.

Now my California experience had started. I have birded California several times but never with the dedication to find localized specialties like Lawrence’s Goldfinch and Tri-colored Blackbird.



Lawrence's Goldfinch, Hansen Dam, CA



Bell's Sparrow, Lake Los Angeles (CA)

After picking up my car, I went straight into the Los Angeles rush hour, and it is so funny to go from millions of cars to zero cars as I turned off to Hansen Dam. It took me much longer than expected to get my bins on a Lawrence's Goldfinch. Plenty of birds and many Lesser Goldfinches and only on my way out I suddenly spotted a flock of them landing in a small water pool in a larger dirt road area outside the actual vegetation. Such a relief when you see a bird this way. This part of the trip was much more relaxed than the first 2 weeks and I took a detour to Lancaster via Quail Lake which I checked for Tri-colored Blackbird (but did not see it conclusively).

6-May: Lake Los Angeles for Bell's Sparrow and California Thrasher. Drive to Aspendell and back

This morning was very successful and after around an hour of pleasant birding west of Lake Los Angeles (outside the fence) I had seen and photographed well Bell's Sparrow and California Thrasher. The Thrasher was in the higher vegetation around a ditch 200 meters in from the road.

I then drove to the area around Isabella Lake but actually never understood the area. One main road was closed, maybe just that day, so I never got anywhere near a lake or the Southfork Wildlife area where many Tricolored Blackbirds (and 5 Soras!) had been seen/heard. A nice Greater Roadrunner walked near me at a car cemetery but instead of potentially wasting more time here (having already spent 2 hours driving and walking around to find a route to suitable habitat) I started the drive up the mountains. All the time, I have hoped that a few Grey-crowned Rosy-Finches would stay in Aspendell well into May, and they did. It is a long but beautiful drive for one bird, and I literally turned around and drove back 30 seconds after I saw a mixed flock close-up. However, I did stop for a 45 minutes' walk at the nicely located lake (Intake Two) just north of Aspendell on the right hand driving back. Then I drove back for the night in Bakersfield.

7-May: Maricopa for LeConte's Thrasher, Gorman Rd for Tricolored Blackbird, Angeles NF--Grizzly Flat Rd.

Second last birding morning was spent in the Maricopa area for one target bird, LeConte's Thrasher. The usual eBird spot is Petroleum Club Road but it seems to include the whole area and for a single newbie again it could be like searching for a needle in a haystack. One observation stated Cadet Road and a big water tank, and when I realised that Cadet Road was a bit further away (1-2 km), then I quickly found the water tank and 2 LeConte's Thrashers.



California Thrasher (CA)



Le Conte's Thrasher (CA)

I then went to the location Gorman Post Rd (not far from Quail Lake) for another attempt for Tricolored Blackbird and a clear example just flew over my head. There was a small partly overgrown lake, and I quickly got a Sora to return my playback. Never saw it but have to live with that.

All California target birds – except one – was now ticked off. I made some failed attempts for that last bird (Snowy Plover) at the Oxnard shores, but it was very difficult to find a great entry to the beach, some roads were closed due to the late time, others I walked through garbage to reach some water but never saw that bird, but many others. I spent the night in Ventura.

8-May: Morning Snowy Plover, Coal Oil Point.

I went early out at the Coal Oil Point in Santa Barbara. Parking at West Campus seemed impossible to do legally but a local ensured me that no one would enforce those rules this early in the morning. From the campus area there is a path and a wooden staircase to the beach. I walked a bit in the direction of Isla Vista but realised that the fenced area was in the other direction. Just near the fenced area the first cute Snowy Plovers walked around. I got great pictures, and the birding part of the trip was over 08-May, 08:30am.

I drove to the recommendable Orange Tree Inn, where I could still not check in. I had a great breakfast at the nearby Daily Grind. Hereafter I walked around in Santa Barbara until the first wine tasting rooms opened at 12pm. It was a very good place to spend the last day with relaxation, food and wine in Santa Barbara.



Snowy Plover (CA)

9-May: Morning drive along HW 1 to LA. 1:50pm flight back to Copenhagen

Bird list (following - still - National Geographic Birds of North America 3rd Ed.)

1. Eared Grebe: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
2. Pied Billed Grebe: no specific notes
3. American White Pelican: Colorado
4. Brown Pelican: Santa Barbara, California
5. Double-crested Cormorant: no specific notes
6. Black-crowned Night-Heron: no specific notes
7. Green Heron: no specific notes
8. Snowy Egret: no specific notes
9. Great Egret: no specific notes
10. Great Blue Heron: no specific notes
11. White-faced Ibis: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
12. Canada Goose: no specific notes
13. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: Brackettville (TX)
14. Wood Duck: Brackettville (TX)
15. Mallard: no specific notes
16. Mexican Duck: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
17. Gadwall: no specific notes
18. Green-Winged Teal: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
19. American Wigeon: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
20. Northern Pintail: no specific notes
21. Northern Shoveler: no specific notes
22. Blue-winged Teal: no specific notes
23. Cinnamon Teal: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
24. Canvasback: no specific notes
25. Redhead: no specific notes
26. Ring-necked Duck: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
27. Ruddy Duck: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
28. Common Merganser: South Platte River Crossing (CO)
29. Turkey Vulture: first seen at Pawnee Grassland (CO)
30. Black Vulture: one fly-over bird in Southern Arizona
31. Osprey: no specific notes
32. Northern Harrier: Moraine Park (CO)
33. Golden Eagle: First seen soaring at Fern Lake Trailhead, seen 3 places in total, all CO
34. Bald Eagle: Georgetown Lake, Colorado
35. Cooper's Hawk: no specific notes
36. Zone-tailed Hawk: Tubac area (AZ)
37. Gray Hawk: Tubac, De Anza trail parking area (AZ)
38. Red-tailed Hawk: no specific notes
39. Swainson's Hawk: Road 14 near Coalmont (Co) and Caprock Migrant Trap (NM)
40. Ferruginous Hawk: Dark morph seen at Pawnee Grassland
41. Crested Caracara: seen a few times, but exact location not noted
42. American Kestrel: this handsome raptor was seen throughout the trip
43. Merlin: richardsonii: Pawnee Grassland
44. Peregrine Falcon: Pawnee Grassland
45. Wild Turkey: Male playing in front of 3 females at the AMNH/Southwest Research Station, Arizona
46. White-tailed Ptarmigan: Loveland Pass

47. Greater Prairie-Chicken: lek outside Brush, Colorado
48. Lesser Prairie-Chicken: New Mexico, sensitive species, contact me for more info
49. Sharp-tailed Grouse (heard only): North of Hayden, Colorado
50. Greater Sage Grouse: Coalmont lek, Colorado
51. Gunnison Sage Grouse: Waunita Viewing Trailer, arrange via [Viewing Site | Siskadee](#)
52. Gambel's Quail: no specific notes
53. Scaled Quail: Only seen on crossing road 385 to Big Bend National Park from Marathon
54. Sora (heard only): Gorman Post Rd, California
55. American Coot: no specific notes
56. Sandhill Crane: North of Hayden, Colorado
57. Black-bellied Plover: Coal Oil Point Reserve
58. Snowy Plover: Slightly west from the Coal Oil Point Reserve (marked breeding area)
59. Killdeer: several sightings at Pawnee Grassland while checking for Mountain Plover
60. American Avocet: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
61. Black-necked Stilt: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
62. Spotted Sandpiper: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
63. Whimbrel: Oxnard Beach (CA)
64. Long-billed Curlew: Oxnard Beach (CA)
65. Sanderling: Oxnard Beach (CA)
66. Least sandpiper: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
67. Long-billed Dowitcher: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
68. Wilson's Phalarope: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
69. Common Snipe (heard only)
70. Ring-billed Gull: Pawnee Grassland (CO)
71. Rock Dove: no specific notes
72. Mourning Dove: no specific notes
73. Eurasian Collared-Dove: no specific notes
74. White-winged Dove: common in AZ
75. Common Ground-Dove: Seen several times south of Tucson (AZ)
76. Inca Dove: Portal (AZ)
77. Greater Roadrunner: Seen twice around Big Bend NP (TX) and once close by at Isabella Lake (CA)
78. Great Horned Owl: Nesting bird with chick at Old Saint Vrain Rd (CO) and a very active bird at Caprock Migrant Trap (NM)
79. Spotted Owl (*lucida*): Pinery Canyon Campground (AZ)
80. Western Screech-Owl: at a private property just outside Portal (AZ)
81. Whiskered Screech-Owl: A couple seen at night at 42 Forrest Road near AMNH and one at a day roost at the South Fork Road (AZ)
82. Elf Owl: 2 birds seen at dusk at 42 Forrest Road just passing AMNH (AZ)
83. Lesser Nighthawk: One bird flying along my car at dusk while driving from Big Bend NP to Terlingua
84. Mexican Whip-poor-will: Heard at slightly higher elevations at Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
85. White-throated Swift: Old Saint Vrain Rd (CO)
86. Violet-Crowned Hummingbird: Paton Center for Hummingbirds (AZ)
87. Lucifer Hummingbird: Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary (AZ)
88. Broad-billed Hummingbird: Feeders in Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
89. Blue-throated Hummingbird: At the feeders at AMNH (AZ)
90. Rivoli's Hummingbird: At the feeders at AMNH (AZ)
91. Black-chinned Hummingbird: most common hummingbird on the trip
92. Costa's Hummingbird: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ)

93. Anna's Hummingbird: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ)
94. Broad-tailed Hummingbird: Feeders in Cave Creek Canyon
95. Calliope Hummingbird: Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary (AZ)
96. Elegant Trogon: South Fork Road, Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
97. Belted Kingfisher: No notes
98. Acorn Woodpecker: common throughout
99. Lewis Woodpecker, Mount Lemmon, Arizona
100. Golden-fronted Woodpecker: Duck Pond Road area in Brackettville (TX)
101. Gila Woodpecker: among many sightings also seen in the middle of Tucson
102. Northern Flicker: first seen at Pawnees Grassland (CO)
103. Gilded Flicker: Foothills of Mount Lemmon (AZ)
104. Ladder-backed Woodpecker: first seen at the Caprock Migrant Trap (NM)
105. Arizona Woodpecker, Feeder area at George Walker House near Paradise, Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
106. Downy Woodpecker: first seen at Fern Lake Trailhead (CO)
107. Hairy Woodpecker: first seen at Fern Lake Trailhead (CO)
108. American Three-toed Woodpecker: Rabbits Ear Pass (CO)
109. Greater Pewee: Cave Creek Canyon, Barfoot Park (AZ)
110. Olive-sided Flycatcher: Seen a few times in California
111. Western Wood-Pewee: Seen a few times in California
112. Hammond's Flycatcher: Montosa Canyon (AZ)
113. Gray Flycatcher: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ)
114. Pacific-slope Flycatcher: Montosa Canyon (AZ)
115. Cordilleran Flycatcher: Mount Lemmon (AZ)
116. Buff-breasted Flycatcher: Turkey Creek Junction, Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
117. Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet: Montosa Canyon (AZ)
118. Black Phoebe: Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
119. Say's Phoebe: Seen throughout and nesting at AMNH (AZ)
120. Vermillion Flycatcher: this beautiful bird seen several times in TX and AZ
121. Brown-crested Flycatcher: Portal and Patagonia Roadside Rest Area (AZ)
122. Ash-throated Flycatcher: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp and Portal (AZ)
123. Dusky-capped Flycatcher: Patagonia Roadside Rest Area (AZ)
124. Western Kingbird: First seen at the Waldrop Rest Area along road 380 (NM)
125. Cassin's Kingbird: First seen at the Marathon Cemetery (TX)
126. Tropical Kingbird: De Anza Trail parking area (AZ)
127. Couch's Kingbird: Duck Pond Rd, Brackettville (TX)
128. Thick-billed Kingbird: few birds seen only once in Portal (AZ)
129. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: a super target bird seen much less than expected. First seen at the Waldrop Rest Area along road 380 (NM) where two birds suddenly flew up in a tree
130. Loggerhead Shrike: ebird location, Pawnee NG Bird Tour—Stops 9-11 (CR-104) (CO)
131. Black-capped Vireo: Small flock along road 673 N of Brackettville at random stop. Not a quick find.
132. Yellow-throated Vireo: 2 birds together in Red Bridge Park, Brackettville
133. Bell's Vireo: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ) and not uncommon in AZ
134. Hutton's Vireo: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ) and not uncommon in AZ
135. Gray Vireo: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ)
136. Plumbeous Vireo: South Fork Road, Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
137. Cassin's Vireo: Portal (AZ)
138. Steller's Jay: Seen both in Colorado and Arizona
139. Gray/Canada Jay: Loveland Pass (CO)

140. California Scrub-Jay: no specific notes
141. Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ)
142. Mexican Jay: Seen in Big Bend (TX) and later very common in Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
143. Green Jay: Red Bridge Park, Brackettville (TX)
144. Black-billed Jay: Fern Lake Trailhead and town of Nederland, both CO
145. American Crow: no specific notes
146. Chihuahuan Crow: The dominant crow species from around 50 miles N of Rockwell (NM)
147. Common Raven: first seen at Loveland Pass (CO)
148. Horned Lark: abundant at Pawnee Grassland (CO)
149. Violet-green Swallow: no specific notes
150. Cliff Swallow: Lake Circular Drive, Willcox (AZ)
151. Northern Rough-winged Swallow: no specific notes
152. Barn Swallow: no specific notes
153. Wrentit: Few observations in California
154. Bridled Titmouse: Feeder area at George Walker House near Paradise, Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
155. Juniper Titmouse: Feeder area at George Walker House near Paradise, Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
156. Black-crested Titmouse: Dominant Titmouse species in TX
157. Black-capped Chickadee: First seen at The Goshawk, Clear Creek County (CO)
158. Mexican Chickadee: Cave Creek Canyon, Barfoot Park (AZ)
159. Mountain Chickadee: First seen at The Goshawk, Clear Creek County (CO)
160. Verdin: seen a few places in Arizona
161. Bushtit: no specific notes
162. Brown Creeper: AMNH (AZ)
163. White-breasted Nuthatch: First seen at The Goshawk, Clear Creek County (CO)
164. Red-Breasted Nuthatch: First seen at The Goshawk, Clear Creek County (CO)
165. Pygmy Nuthatch: Cave Creek Canyon, Barfoot Park (AZ)
166. House Wren: AMNH (AZ)
167. Berwick's Wren: heard much more than seen, throughout the trip but common in Big Bend NP (TX)
168. Cactus wren: Feeders in Portal (AZ)
169. Rock Wren: Mount Lemmon (AZ)
170. Canyon Wren: Mount Lemmon (AZ)
171. American Dipper: Fern Lake Trailhead (CO)
172. Ruby-Crowned Kinglet: First seen at The Goshawk, Clear Creek County (CO)
173. Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher: no specific notes
174. Black-tailed Gnatcatcher: fairly common in South of Tucson (AZ)
175. Western Bluebird: no specific notes
176. Mountain Bluebird: North of Hayden (CO)
177. Townsend's Solitaire: Loveland Pass (CO), Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ)
178. Hermit Thrush: Common Cave Creek Canyon, Barfoot Park (AZ)
179. American Robin: no specific notes
180. Northern Mockingbird: no specific notes
181. Brown Thrasher: Chico Basin Ranch area (CO)
182. Long-billed Thrasher: single bird overflying (low) a dirt road around Del Rio (TX)
183. Sage Thrasher: First seen at Pawnee Grassland (CO) but also around Waldrop Rest Area (NM)
184. Bendire's Thrasher: Near Rodeo on the AZ/NM border
185. Curve-billed Thrasher: the dominant Thrasher species in TX, NM and AZ
186. California Thrasher: Lake Los Angeles (CA)
187. Crissal Thrasher: Rodriguez feeder, Portal (AZ)

188. Le Conte's Thrasher: Cadet Road in direction of a huge water tank in the Petroleum Rd area (CA)
189. European Starling: no specific notes
190. Phainopepla: no specific notes, but seen several times in S Arizona
191. Nashville Warbler: Tubac area (AZ)
192. Virginia Warbler: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ)
193. Colima Warbler (heard only): Big Bend National Park (TX)
194. Lucy's Warbler: Portal and Montosa Canyon (AZ)
195. Audubon's Warbler: Aspendell (CA)
196. Myrtle Warbler: no specific notes
197. Black-throated Gray Warbler: Seen well at Turkey Creek Junction Cave Creek Canyon
198. Townsend's Warbler: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ)
199. Hermit Warbler: Angeles NF--Grizzly Flat Rd (CA)
200. Grace's Warbler: Turkey Creek Junction, Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
201. Yellow Warbler: no specific notes
202. Wilson's Warbler: throughout the trip
203. Common Yellowthroat: Brackettville (TX)
204. Rufous-capped Warbler: Patagonia Roadside Rest Area (AZ)
205. Yellow-breasted Chat: Seen surprisingly often, best views in Brackettville (TX) but also one at the Rodriguez feeder in Portal (AZ)
206. Painted Redstart: South Fork Trial, Cave Creek Canyon (AZ)
207. Red-faced Warbler: South Fork Trial, Cave Creek Canyon and Mount Lemmon (AZ)
208. Olive Warbler: Cave Creek Canyon, Barfoot Park (AZ)
209. Summer Tanager: Patagonia Roadside Rest Area (AZ), but seen regularly
210. Hepatic Tanager: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ) but seen regularly
211. Western Tanager: Mt. Lemmon, Gordon Hirabayashi RA, Prison Camp (AZ) but seen regularly
212. Olive Sparrow: seen at the track from road 673 to Kickapoo Cavern State Park (TX)
213. Green-tailed Towhee: Aspendell (CA)
214. Canyon Towhee: first seen at the track from road 673 to Kickapoo Cavern State Park (TX)
215. Abert's Towhee: no specific notes
216. Spotted Towhee: seen in small numbers throughout the trip
217. Botteri's Sparrow: Seen just outside Portal (AZ)
218. Cassin's Sparrow: Waldrop Rest Area along road 380 (NM)
219. Rufous-winged Sparrow: Mount Lemmon (AZ)
220. Rufous-crowned Sparrow: Mount Lemmon (AZ)
221. Chipping Sparrow: Waldrop Rest Area along road 380 (NM)
222. Clay-colored Sparrow: Waldrop Rest Area along road 380 (NM)
223. Brewers Sparrow: Pawnee Grassland (CO)
224. Lark Sparrow: most common sparrow throughout the trip, many small migrating groups
225. Black-chinned Sparrow: Mount Lemmon (AZ)
226. Black-throated Sparrow: First along road 673 N of Brackettville (TX), then at Portal feeders (AZ)
227. Five-striped Sparrow: Montosa Canyon (AZ)
228. Bell's Sparrow: Lake Los Angeles (CA)
229. Lark Bunting: first seen (female) near Portal (AZ), later a nice male at Chico Basin Ranch area (CO)
230. Lincoln Sparrow: Caprock Migrant Trap (NM)
231. Song Sparrow: throughout in small numbers
232. Vesper Sparrow: Common at Pawnee Grassland (CO)
233. White-crowned Sparrow: First seen in Brush (CO)
234. Dark-eyed Junco: "Pink-sided" and "Gray-headed" in Colorado, "Oregon" in Santa Barbara (CA)

235. Yellow-eyed Junco: Small flock seen at the AMNH, but common at Barfoot Park (AZ)
236. Chestnut-collared Longspur: Longspur Lair, Pawnee Grassland (CO)
237. Thick-billed Longspur: Longspur Lair, Pawnee Grassland (CO)
238. Black-headed Grosbeak: First seen at Big Bend NP (TX), then a few other observations
239. Northern Cardinal: seen throughout the trip
240. Pyrrhuloxia: Feeders in Portal (AZ)
241. Blue Grosbeak: Only seen once at the track from road 673 to Kickapoo Cavern State Park (TX)
242. Lazuli Bunting: one female seen at AMNH (AZ). Surprising not to more
243. Painted Bunting: Brackettville (TX)
244. Western Meadowlark: first seen at South Platte River Crossing (CO)
245. Chihuahuan Meadowlark: Common along the road 186 from Cave Canyon Creek to Willcox (AZ)
246. Yellow-headed Blackbird: large flock just outside Brush (CO)
247. Red-winged Blackbird: first seen at South Platte River Crossing (CO)
248. Tricolored Blackbird: Gorman Post Rd (CA)
249. Common Grackle: first seen at South Platte River Crossing (CO)
250. Great-tailed Grackle: First seen at the Caprock Migrant Trap (NM)
251. Brewer's Blackbird: Pawnee Grassland (CO)
252. Brown-headed Cowbird: first seen at South Platte River Crossing (CO)
253. Hooded Oriole: frequent visitor to feeders in Portal (AZ)
254. Bullocks Oriole: frequent visitor to feeders in Portal (AZ)
255. Scott's Oriole: Seen first at the visitor center at the Bend NP, later common around Portal (AZ)
256. Grey-crowned Rosy-Finch: Aspendell (CA)
257. Brown-capped Rosy-Finch: South of Crested Butte (CO)
258. Cassin's Finch: First seen at The Goshawk, Clear Creek County (CO)
259. House Finch: seen throughout the trip
260. Pine Grosbeak: The Goshawk, Clear Creek County (CO)
261. Pine Siskin: First seen at The Goshawk, Clear Creek County (CO), then it was off the radar
262. Lesser Goldfinch: Feeders at Portal and by far the most dominant Goldfinch at Hansen Dam (CA)
263. Lawrence's Goldfinch: A flock bathing in a small water pool around Hansen Dam (CA)
264. Evening Grosbeak: Feeders in Portal
265. House Sparrow: few birds seen throughout the trip