

Trip Report

Thursday-Saturday, January 9-11, 2014

Santa Cruz Flats, Sweetwater Ponds, San Rafael Grasslands,

Fort Huachuca, Reed Park Zoo and Madera Canyon

Led by Melody Kehl and Donna Smith

Reported by George Wall



When we left the area, it was a beautiful day and it stayed nice the entire trip with cool temperatures in the morning and rising to pleasant in the afternoon. When this trip was planned, the leaders weren't really sure where we would go. As you can see we went to a lot of areas.

The participants were Bob Cirillo, Joe & Martha Emmons, David & Ruth Kennedy, Carol Sharplin, Donna Smith & George Wall. On Saturday, we picked up 3 more birders from the Tucson area along with our guide Melody Kehl and they stayed with us the entire day.

Our first stop was Santa Cruz Flats. This was a spur of the moment decision by Donna with the hopes of seeing the Crested Caracara and the Mountain Plover. We found about a dozen Crested Caracaras hopping around in nearby fields and then we saw the Mountain plover. Altogether we saw 27 species.

Our next stop was the Sweetwater Ponds and the nature trails there. We saw 41 species there including a Sora and Least Sandpiper. By the time we finished at Sweetwater, it was almost past 5:30 and time to go to the hotel before going to supper.

After a breakfast on Saturday morning, we left at 6:30 a.m. for a day of birding. We drove through the grasslands looking for a variety of sparrows and the Chestnut-Collared Longspur. A bonus was a White-tailed Kite and a Long-eared Owl. After leaving the grasslands, we went to Fort Huachuca for the Sinaloa Wren, but I am sad to say, we didn't see it. Our day wasn't over as Melody took us to a spot where we found the Spotted Owl. Just as it was getting dark and only a few blocks from our hotel, Melody took us to a couple of Burrowing Owls.

The next morning, we slept in a little before going to the Reed Park Zoo in Tucson. One of Tucson residents who was with us on Saturday, told us about the park and mentioned some good birds. We didn't go into the zoo – just the park. We saw 27 species there including a Lewis's Woodpecker and a Black-throated Gray Warbler. Then we then went to Madera Canyon where we picked up a lot more birds.

The 110 species seen were Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Gambel's Quail, Gould's Wild Turkey, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Harris's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Killdeer, Mountain Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Great Horned Owl, Burrowing Owl, Spotted Owl, Magnificent Hummingbird, Anna's Hummingbird, Lewis's Woodpecker, Acorn Woodpecker, Gila Woodpecker, Red-naped Sapsucker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Arizona Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Crested Caracara, American Kestrel, Merlin, Prairie Falcon, Hammond's Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Vermilion Flycatcher, Cassin's Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Mexican Jay, Common Raven, Horned Lark, Bridled Titmouse, Verdin, White-breasted Nuthatch, Cactus Wren, Canyon Wren, Bewick's Wren, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Western Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, Crissal Thrasher, European Starling, American Pipit, Phainopepla, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Painted Redstart, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Canyon Towhee, Abert's Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Baird's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Yellow-eyed Junco, Summer Tanager, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western

Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, House Finch, Pine Siskin, Lesser Goldfinch and House Sparrow.