

BIRD WALK AT ESTRELLA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL PARK

December 10th, 2016, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM to 10:30 AM

Conditions: 40 degrees F at beginning: 71 degrees at finish: clear skies with some cirrus: light breeze 1-3 mph from the west.



The walk began on the east side of the park, avoided the Navy Camping Area, which had a large group of campers, traveled west through Velvet Mesquite, Palo Verde, several large Blue Gum (Eucalyptus) trees and into the grassy meadow areas before moving into the desert scrub and eventually along the riparian area along the south shore of the Gila River. There was water in places offering some nice pools for shorebirds. We ended at the mitigated ponds north of the sand and gravel operation. A distance of approximately 1.5 miles was covered.

Participants: Jerry and Linda Molinelli, Mike Costello, Tanya Keigley, Lee Bradley, Vera Markham, Erv Johnson, Paul Doucette, Wendell and Janet Thrush, Joe Ford, and guide for the day, Caleb Strand (12)

Species: Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Gambel's Quail, Pied-billed Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, White-faced Ibis, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Sora, American Coot, Black-necked Stilt, Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Mourning Dove, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, American Kestrel, Gray Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Verdin, Marsh Wren, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Mountain Bluebird,

American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, American Pipit, Phainopepla, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Abert's Towhee, Lark Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Great-tailed Grackle, House Finch, House Sparrow, Ladderback Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Rock Wren, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Crissal Thrasher, Common Yellowthroat, Dark-eyed Junco, Lesser Goldfinch, Common Gallinule, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Belted Kingfisher, Anna's Hummingbird (67)

Highlights: 1. The Vermilion Flycatcher male with vivid red-orange contrasts 2. A small flock of Mountain Bluebirds, male and female 3. Black-necked Stilts in flight with the Long-billed Dowitcher (nice to see species getting along) 4. The two soaring Red-tailed Hawks 5. Large flocks of Mourning Doves perched in trees and lifting off the ground 6. Two Northern Harriers floating across the mountain side 7. An Osprey in transit with a "kill" in its talons. 8. White-crowned Sparrows singing constantly 9. Three Phainopeplas in flight, their white wing bars and black color against a clear blue sky.

Counts and other details are at eBird <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S32972060>

39 young people and adults attended the program, "Geology Underfoot" held near the Coldwater Trailhead. Thanks to Saint Thomas Aquinas Grade School in Avondale for a fine group of students.

