

Page Springs Fish Hatchery Report

October 9, 2017

Leader: Dan Bohlmann

We began our trek at the large settling ponds of the hatchery walking around the perimeter of the complex. We encountered a Great Blue Heron in a dead snag right when we got out of the cars. Then the usual cast of characters that hang around ponds began showing up such as both Phoebe's (Black and Say's) and both Grackle's (Common and Great-tailed). At the only pond of the six that had a Cottonwood tree providing shade was the favorite of the ducks, 6 or so Mallards, 2 American Wideons and 6 American Coots. We continued from there onto a trail that went through a Mesquite Bosque and then around a wetlands meadow. We spotted a female hummingbird (maybe a Black-throated) and a Chipping Sparrow as we came out of the Mesquites. Hiking along the perimeter of the marshy meadow we heard a Verdin and then heard a Ladderback Woodpecker which we finally located in a tree across the meadow. While we were searching for the woodpecker a Red-winged Blackbird flew by and a Red-tailed Hawk appeared high overhead. We continued on until we reached an area in the meadow that had tall sunflowers with birds flying in and out. It turned out to be a combined flock of Lesser Goldfinches and Pine Siskin. We hiked further on until we came to Oak Creek itself, lined with Cottonwoods and Sycamores. We weren't there too long when a Belted Kingfisher came chattering by flying downstream and he made several encores up and down the creek just for us. As we were completing our circle around the complex we saw a Northern Flicker and a Mourning Dove fly by and then heard a Gila Woodpecker. As we walked by the Caretaker's house we saw an Abert's Towhee, House Finch, an American Kestrel and a kettle of Turkey Vultures.

Then we drove over to the main hatchery near the trout raising tanks and

followed some trails hoping to see something new but found only a Wilson's Warbler and a Raven. We decided to give up and have our picnic lunch at some shaded picnic tables near the hatchery. While we were eating lunch I looked up and saw what I first thought was that Raven sitting on a chain link fence around the big trout breeding pond. I picked up my binoculars and discovered that Raven had a hawk beak! It actually was a Common Black Hawk! I don't think I had ever seen a Black Hawk perched before, always they were flying. How unusual to see one perched on a low 4 foot high fence with all the people around(not real close by). I don't know if he was eyeing our lunches or the trout in the pond, but he was facing our way. Several people in our group got great pictures of him. He definitely was the bird of the day! So we had a total of 27 species.

Attendees were: David and Ruth Kennedy, Babs Buck, Hinde Silver, Vera Markham, Fran Baughman and Dan Bohlmann, Leader