

BIRD WALK ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK 11 11 17

CONDITIONS: This was a perfect day for birding. Only a slight breeze from the SW, clear skies with some cirrus wisps and cirro-stratus clouds accompanying 72 degree temperatures at inception and ending with 79 degree temperatures, all Fahrenheit

ROUTE AND COMMENTS: Birding began at the Nature Center, then participants caravanned to the east side of the park, walked through the Mesquite Bosque, Blue Gum Grove, grassy area, desert scrub and crossed over to the riparian trail on the south side of a dry Gila River Bed and onto the mitigated ponds. There were isolated sections with water due to fall flushing of the irrigation canals, but conditions were still very dry. The Phoenix International Raceway was in action and camping events within the park also probably flushed birds to safer areas. Warmer than normal temperatures through the fall may have been a factor as well. Last year some 67 species were seen on this walk compared to 37 species this year.



PARTICIPANTS: Tom Worcester, Paul Doucette, K.C. Jones (official with birding pictures available for the group to see), Gerry (photographer) and Linda Molinelli, Lee Bradley, Carolee Starr, Joe Gormley, Trish Glanfield, Jan Lilley, Sharon Beal, Wendell and Janet Thrush, Dave Sussman (photographer), Gordon Cooper, Poppe, Clint and Eileen Merritt, David Charles and guide Joe Ford (20)

SPECIES: Gambel's Quail, Pied-billed Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron, White-faced Ibis, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, gull species (Thayer's Iceland Gull (some discussion, suggesting it might have been a Ring-billed Gull), Mourning Dove, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Loggerhead Shrike, Common Raven, swallow species (Tree, Violet Green?), Verdin, Rock Wren, Marsh Wren, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Curve-billed Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, warbler species (Wilson's??), Abert's Towhee, Lark Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Great-tailed Grackle, House Finch (35)

HIGHLIGHTS: Adult Bald Eagle flying over, flocks of cormorants coming off the water and dropping back in, soaring Red-tailed Hawks.

Counts and other details are at eBird <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S40457687>

Fourteen people attended the program at the visitor center on "Birds of the Sonoran Desert".