

11/10/18

Estrella Mountain Regional Park Monthly Birdwalk

Clear conditions and in the low 50s, made for a pleasant start as 29 participants eagerly awaited the start of our November Birdwalk. Driving over to the east side of the park, we started the morning off in the Mesquite Bosque where we were greeted by a fierce Loggerhead Shrike, also known as the butcherbird. A pair of showy Vermillion Flycatchers, a personal favorite to many of the participants (and leaders!), and a female Phainopepla proved to be quite cooperative for the large flock of birders. As we worked west towards the large eucalyptus “grove” and the wide grass field we encountered a concentrated mixed-flock which consisted of a few Ruby-crowned Kinglets, some Lark Sparrows (which were also feeding in abundance in the grass field), a couple Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a Dark-eyed Junco (of the Oregon Race). Before heading back east towards the river we encountered a couple more highlights including a Red-naped Sapsucker (only seen by a few in the group) along with its sap wells it created and a pair of Red-shafted Northern Flickers, perched nicely ontop of a snag. Coincidentally, Nascar was having their races on this same weekend so crossing the road towards the river provided perhaps the most excitement of the day! Due to the abundance of rain in the valley over the fall (from some here-and-there storms and a couple hurricanes off the Pacific Coast) the desert has been quite green lately, and this was quite obvious in the Gila River. Much understory has grown in providing good habitat for sparrows, wrens, and other

understory-loving passerines. White-crowned Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a couple Orange-crowned Warblers were a treat for many on our way to the gravel-pit ponds/lakes. The “lakes” were pretty slow this morning with the only waterfowl present being ten Lesser Scaup and a lone Ruddy Duck. However, that wasn’t all we saw. A few immature Black-crowned Night-Herons, some Great Blue Herons and a Great Egret, a few calling and singing Marsh Wrens, and some Black Phoebe allowed for some to get good looks.

Overall a pretty slow morning with limited activity, but a great group of birders and a few nice highlights! As previously noted, our group consisted of 29 participants. Participants consisted of Tom Worcester, Laura and Pat Ellis, Elaine Alexander, Marc Shlossman, Sharon Manyx, Bill Todd, Jared Conaway, Glen and Lisa Conaway, Jorge and Nancy Lopez, Pete Scott, Erv Johnson, Aaron McKillip, Marleigh Fletcher, Haylie Hewitt, Nick and Jane Kaschak, Barb Meding, Karin Martin, Paul Doucette, Debbie Strand, and Dave and Doloris Sussman. Additionally Tom Locascio, Caleb Strand, and the park ranger Amanda Rothermal helped lead the walk.

For a complete list of the species seen/heard during the birdwalk visit this link on eBird: <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S49859034>

To those who have an eBird account and didn’t receive the checklist as being shared, or if you simply have questions regarding eBird, please email Caleb at strandcaleb@yahoo.com.

Hope to see y’all next month! :)