

Sonoran Audubon field trip to Hassayampa River Preserve, Sunday, February 23, 2020

There was quite a bit of rain the day before this field trip, although amounts varied in the metropolitan area of Phoenix, and near Wickenburg, where the Hassayampa River Preserve is located. The trails at the preserve were fine to walk on (although river crossings, including our planned walk to Lyke's Lookout, were closed), but the skies remained mostly cloudy, a reason why I attribute to low numbers and variety of bird sightings on this day (morning). After our field trip, and during lunch, skies were clearing, though.

We walked around Palm Lake, and took the trails named Mesquite Meander, the River Ramble, and Willow Walkway. The water gave us sightings of Mallards, American Coots, Sora (maybe as many as three), and Pied-billed Grebe - which made a most unusual and loud call like a Howler Monkey. A few Red-winged Blackbirds were heard. Other birds sighted were Abert's Towhee, Lesser Goldfinch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, House Finch, and a trio of woodpeckers: Gila, Ladder-backed, and (Gilded) Flicker. A Song Sparrow was heard. A Phainopepla was seen from the parking lot. Interesting non-bird sightings were a colorful Rock Squirrel, and some badger footprints on the trail!

It was a nice birding outing, but, too bad, the sky was not brighter during our trail-walking.

Richard Kaiser, leader