

12/08/18

Estrella Mountain Regional Park Monthly Birdwalk

With dense fog in the air, and heavy precipitation falling from the sky, a flock of 22 eager birders huddled around the Visitor Center for the Estrella Monthly Birdwalk. Upon starting the walk at the east end of the park by the mesquite bosque, the bird activity was evidently down due to the thick fog. A couple chipping Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warblers fed in the mesquites but they were the only somewhat cooperative birds we encountered until we reached the large eucalyptus trees towards the middle of the park. A "laughing" Gila Woodpecker provided the group with good views as did some Lark Sparrows in the large grass field. Mixed in with a large flock of about 150 Mourning Dove and about 30 Lark Sparrows was a noisy, yet shy, American Robin. In the desert-scrub habitat on the north side of the park we ran across a small flock of White-crowned Sparrows which allowed for good views as they sat on-top of the short salt bushes. The group was provided with a neat comparison between Black-tailed and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers when we had both species actively feeding and calling in the brush. Before crossing the road to the river, an adult male Vermillion Flycatcher perched-up nicely as it displayed its awesome beauty. After crossing the road, which was much easier than the month prior (when the NASCAR races fell on the same date as the birdwalk!), we hiked down to the water where we were greeted by a vocal pair of Greater Yellowlegs and three Spotted Sandpipers constantly flying around and giving their whistled calls. On our way to the gravel pits to the east, a rattling Belted Kingfisher made a short appearance, a couple Wilson's Snipes flushed up from some wet vegetation, and a Green Heron landed in a small tamarisk, allowing for good views. Upon reaching the end of the walk, at the two gravel pits, a calling Least Bittern (giving its rail-like "kek-kek-kek outburst call), a weeping Sora, and a squeaking Virginia Rail kept themselves hidden in the reeds, along with Marsh Wrens, Song Sparrows, and Common Yellowthroats. Out on the lake were 14 Ruddy Ducks, a few Pied-billed Grebes, the regular American

Coots, and a lone female Bufflehead. A pair of Ospreys finished our morning of birding.

Tallying 54 species of birds altogether, we had a nice morning, despite the beginning being quiet. To view the checklist of species we saw look up the following link:

<https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50533380>

The 22 participants/leaders were Tom Locascio, Eddie Gibb, Jerry and Linda Molinelli, Paul Mocko, Wendall and Janet Thrush, Haylie Hewitt, Mark and Ellen Brogie, Erv Johnson, Jim Consolloy, Cynthia Cilyo, Brian Aut, David Glaeseman, Laura and Pat Ellis, Anne Eslar, Jared Conaway, Lisa Conaway, Caleb Strand, and Paul Doucette.

Thanks to all who came! We look forward to hopefully seeing you next month!