

ESTRELLA MT. PARK BIRDWALK 7 09 22

CONDITIONS: Excellent. Clear skies with a few cirrus, cirrocumulus, altocumulus clouds. Wind 0-1 mph from the SW. Temperature 88 degrees F at 5:30 AM. Temperature 99 degrees F at walk conclusion, 8:15 AM, wind 1-2 mph from the SW.

ROUTE: Observations were made around the Nature Center prior to the 5:30 time. The group then caravanned to the Navy Area, walked the Mesquite Bosque, the Blue Gum grove, the grassy areas, and desert scrub near the new parking lot. We then walked the south riparian trail to the mitigated ponds east and south of the main Gila River channel.



PARTICIPANTS: Jamie Johnston, Ricardo Llamas, Drew Payne, Natalie Rivera, Paul Doucette, Pam Spinella (resources), Karen Martin (photography), and guides Tom Locascio and Joe Ford.

COMMENTS: As expected, the Gila River bed was mostly dry. There were a few small pools still present and a thin flow of water in some areas. The mitigated lakes remained almost full as some water is diverted into them to maintain the ecosystem used by water birds and the fish within the water. Egrets and heron were perched in the surrounding trees. Obviously there had to be fish available for their appetites. Mourning Doves and White-winged Doves were everywhere, if not in trees, then in flight here and there. Lesser Nighthawks were seen in the pre-dawn light before the sun breached the eastern horizon and Common Yellowthroats and a Yellow-breasted Chat serenaded us at the lakes. The Vermilion Flycatchers making forays from tree limbs, then returning to the same branch, are always a treat to watch.

SPECIES: Gambel's Quail 14, Pied Billed Grebe 1, Neotropic Cormorant 35, Double-crested Cormorant 6, Great Blue Heron 3, Great Egret 6, Snowy Egret 3, Green Heron 1, Black-crowned Night Heron 2, Killdeer 4, Eurasian Collared Dove 3, White-winged Dove 20, Mourning Dove 16, Greater Roadrunner 2, Burrowing Owl 2, Lesser Nighthawk 3, Anna's Hummingbird 2, Gila Woodpecker 5, Ladder-backed Woodpecker 2, Gilded Flicker 2, Vermilion Flycatcher 3, Loggerhead Shrike 1, Verdin 7, Cactus Wren 2, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher 4, Curve-billed Thrasher 5, Northern Mockingbird 2, European Starling 10, Common Yellowthroat 3, Yellow-breasted Chat 1, Abert's Towhee 4, Song Sparrow 2, Red-winged Blackbird 4, Great-tailed Grackle 6, Brown-headed Cowbird 8, House Finch 8 (36)

The eBird checklist and other details can be found at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, checklist #S114727457 under Estrella Mountain Park 7 09 22

Five bird lovers attended the program following the bird walk on "Birds of the Sonoran Desert" presented by Joe Ford. Most were able to answer the question as to which native bird has been adopted by the most states as their state bird.