

ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN PARK BIRDWALK 8 13 22

CONDITIONS: 6:15 AM: Skies cloudy, mostly stratus and stratocumulus, 90% cover, 84 degrees F and no measurable breeze: 8:45 AM: skies clear with a few high cirrus and cirrocumulus clouds, NE wind 1-2 mph. Relative Humidity near 55%

ROUTE: The pattern was similar to past walks. Observations made around the Nature Center, further observations through the east side of the park taking in the Mesquite Bosque, Blue Gum Grove, irrigated grass areas, median area with desert scrub mostly, riparian trail north of a very minimal Gila River and on to the mitigated ponds east of Vineyard Avenue.

PARTICIPANTS: Eleven birders joined us on this walk.

COMMENTS: This was a “muggy” morning with high humidity. The early cloud cover moderated the temperature as “ol sol” was prevented from causing a rise in the heat index. The Gila River was dry in many places with only a few pools and a minimal stream flow. The enhanced silence was perhaps caused by birds busy with taking care of juveniles and with no motivation to spread bird song in this very warm time of year. White Winged Doves, so obviously present in the two previous months, were only represented by one or two individuals and the Morning Doves were the most common dove species seen. The ever present Vermilion Flycatchers were still around and Verdins were still a bit vocal. It was just a typical August summer day with our feathered friends seeking shady areas. Our only raptor was the Turkey Vulture. A few egrets were hanging around the ponds, but the numbers were small compared to last month.

PROGRAM: Six birders attended the program following the walk at the Nature Center, “Birds of the Sonoran Desert”

SPECIES: Gambel’s Quail 8, Neotropic Cormorant 15, Double-crested Cormorant 4, Great Blue Heron 1, Great Egret 2, Snowy Egret 2, Green Heron 3, Turkey Vulture 1, Killdeer 2, Eurasian Collared Dove 3, White-winged Dove 4, Mourning Dove 13, Greater Roadrunner 2, Burrowing Owl 1, Lesser Nighthawk 1, hummingbird species 1, Gila Woodpecker 4, Gilded Flicker 4, Black Phoebe 1, Vermilion Flycatcher 3, Loggerhead Shrike 1, Verdin 11, Cactus Wren 2, Curve-billed Thrasher 2, Northern Mockingbird 3, European Starling 16, Abert’s Towhee 4, Lark Sparrow 17, Song Sparrow 1, Brown-headed Cowbird 1, House Finch 8, Lesser Goldfinch 2

Details and other information can be found at eBird (Cornell Lab of Ornithology), checklist #S116887558 Estrella Mountain Park 8 13 22.