

Mingus Mountain Trip Report

Thursday, September 16th, 2021

Leaders: Donna Smith and Dan Bohlmann

The day we had was absolutely perfect with 60 to 70 degree temperature and a cool breeze off and on. The last time we tried this trip we were blocked by closed forests due to threat of fire and the time before that it was heavy thundershowers. We stopped first at the bottom of the mountain where we were greeted by Acorn Woodpeckers which showed up all day. There were also lots of Mourning Doves flying around and Turkey Vultures trying to form a pot called a kettle. A few of us saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk flying overhead as we drove up.

The next spot we stopped was a small lake with a few fisherman who maybe knew the lake was stocked with fish. We had a lot better luck than they did. We hiked to the other side of the lake that had a lot of reeds but no ducks, blackbirds or shorebirds. We climbed up into the forest above the lake hoping to hear some bird activity. Usually in the forest 90 percent of the time it's quiet and then suddenly a combined flock of chickadees, titmice, nuthatches and warblers show up with a lot of bird calls occurring. That's what occurred for us when a flock of Pygmy and White-breasted Nuthatches showed up with some Yellow-rumped Warblers. After they left they were followed by some Western Bluebirds and two types of Woodpeckers, a Hairy and believe it or not a Downy. I hadn't seen one of those in Arizona in forty years. He was definitely a little over 6 inches versus 9 for the Hairy. The third spot we went was out into a meadow south of the lake. We heard more birds scolding in the forest which we recognized as Stellar's Jays and headed for them. As a result we saw more Western Bluebirds, Dark-eyed Junco's, a Townsend's Warbler and a Chipping Sparrow.

We then drove to the top of the mountain to the lookout. We could see all the way to the red rocks of Sedona. The bird of the day was spotted at

the top of a Fir tree standing out like a bright red Christmas bulb. It was a male Hepatic Tanager. It stayed there for 15 minutes as camera shutters clicked as oohs and aah's were heard. Then mysteriously another one appeared out of the greenery that was orange and not yellow like the female. It must have been an immature male. As soon as he appeared they both flew off. We then focused on a Black Hawk that was a long ways away on another peak on top of a microwave tower. A scope showed that it had one white band on its tail so it was indeed a true Black Hawk. The scope also revealed that two birds on top of a snag a long distance away were Ash-throated Flycatchers. We finished off the day by having our picnic lunches at a Day Use Area. We checked out several campgrounds afterward but by that time all the birds were taking their afternoon siestas along with the campers.

Dan Bohlmann