

Salt River Picnic Areas Report

March 22, 2022

Leader: Dan Bohlmann

You couldn't ask for a more beautiful day because the sky was crystal clear and the wind wasn't blowing. The first stop was the Blue Point Rec area and as we walked down to the river we immediately saw at least 20 Greater Yellowlegs standing in the shallow areas of the river. When I've seen them in the past there has only been two or three, never groups this large. As we walked up and down the river we spotted Phainopeplas, Great-tailed Grackles, Verdins, Great Egret, Spotted Sandpiper, Killdeer, Rough-winged Swallows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Turkey and Black Vultures, Hammond's Flycatcher and a Black Phoebe. Speaking of Black Phoebes we spotted (looking through binocs) what we thought was one on the riverbank sleeping in the sand with its head tucked into its body. Very unusual for a phoebe unless it's dead. I walked over to investigate and it was a black and white sock doing a great impersonation.

The next stop was the Goldfield Rec Area. It proved to be the only bust of the trip. We saw only a Great Blue Heron and a flock of around a dozen Lesser Goldfinches. The next spot was Coon Bluffs Rec Area. It has a lot of trees that are always filled with birds. There were at least 10+ Vermillion Flycatchers(male and female) and almost every other tree had a Lucy's Warbler singing. There also were so many Phainopepla's and Red-winged Blackbirds in the trees that I gave up counting. We walked upstream and downstream about a mile and found Ladderback & Gila Woodpeckers, Aberts Towhees, Western, Ash-throated and Gray Flycatcher, Mourning Doves, House Finch, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, White-breasted Nuthatch, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-rump Warblers, Cardinals, Chipping Sparrow and Starlings.

The last spot was Granite Reef Dam Rec. Area. We had seen no ducks to this points so we figured they already migrated away by now. But after waiting a little bit along came a flotilla of ducks heading toward the dam. In the lead was a male Redhead followed by a male American Wigeon. They were followed by a mixture of Ring-necked(M+F) plus Buffleheads(M+F). Last came a mom and pop Ruddys and 3 juveniles. Before this parade went by there were a pair of Mallards(M+F) going by the wrong way bucking the trend.

So we had a total of 39 species and a total count of hundreds of feathered wonders which made for a very worthwhile day.