FIELD REPORT OF THE SHORT BIRDING TRIP TO THE SOUTHEAST ARIZONA, TUCSON – USA

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Nothern race of Vermilion Flycatcher - Photo by Richard Amable

BIRDING LOCALITIES OF INTEREST

MADERA CANYON – CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST

One of the most famous birding areas in the United States, is a north-facing valley in the Santa Rita Mountains with riparian woodland along an intermittent stream, bordered by mesquite, juniper-oak woodlands, and pine forests. Madera Canyon is home to over 250 species of birds, including 15 hummingbird species. Visitors from all over the world arrive in search of such avian specialties as the Elegant Trogon, Elf Owl, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Red-faced Warbler and Painted Redstart. (FoMC, 2022).

Madera Canyon - Photo by Richard Amable

SWEETWATER WETLAND PARK

The Sweetwater Wetlands is a water treatment facility, an urban wildlife habitat, and an outdoor classroom. As a water treatment facility, it is one of the most important facets of the City's Reclaimed Water System. Treated water filters through sediments beneath recharged basins and replenishes the local aquifer. This reclaimed wastewater is recovered by extraction wells during periods of high water demand and distributed for reuse in Tucson's golf courses, parks, schools and other large turf irrigation areas.

As an urban wildlife habitat, the Sweetwater Wetlands is a tranquil park where visitors can view native wildlife in an urban setting. This water-rich streamside riparian zone supports a huge variety of wildlife including dragonflies, raccoons, hawks, bobcats and dozens of other species that make the wetlands their full- or part-time home. (Birding Hotspots, 2022).

Sweetwater Wetlands Park - Photo by Cheryl Himmelstein

THE LAKES AT CASTLE ROCK

The Lakes at Castle Rock is located in the northeast part of Tucson. Bordered on the West by Catalina Highway and East by Bonanza. The Lakes at Castle Rock runs along Tanque Verde Road and extends South by the Tanque Verde Wash. (Birding Hotspots, 2022).

SABINO CANYON RECREATIONAL AREA

Located on the northeast corner of Sunrise Boulevard and Sabino Canyon Road at Sabino Canyon Recreation Area. With soaring mountains, deep canyons, and the unique plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert found here draw over a million visitors a year to the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area. The wonders of the desert foothills and rocky gorges of the Santa Catalina Mountains are marvelous and accessible. (Birding Hotspots, 2022).

STONEGATE RANCH

A small horse boarding facility with grass pastures on Tucson's unique Woodland Road.

The Lakes at Castle Rock - Photo by Richard Amable

Saguaru Cactus at Sabino Canyon - Photo by Richard Amable

THE KEY TO THE BIRD LIST

* = Species heard only
Red – IUCN Red List Category
IOC = International Ornithological Congress
NACC = North American Classification Committee
SACC = South American Classification Committee
CT = National Audubon Society Climate Report

THE BIRDS

SWANS, GEESE AND DUCKS – ANATIDAE

Gadwall – *Anas Strepera*
About six seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

American Wigeon – *Anas Americana*
Numerous seen Sweetwater Wetland Park

Mallard – *Anas platyrhynchos*
Dosens seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

Northern Pintail – *Anas acuta*
Ten seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

Redhead – *Aythya Americana*
One female seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

Ring-necked Duck – *Aythya collaris*
Seven seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

Ruddy Duck – *Oxyura jamaicensis*
One female seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and a pair seen at The Lakes at Castle Rock

NEW WORLD QUAIL - ODONTOPHORIDAE

Gambel's Quail – *Callipepla gambelii*
Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

GREBES - PODICIPEDIDAE

Pied-billed Grebe – *Podilymbus podiceps*
Six of then seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

HERONS & EGRETS – ARDEIDAE

The monophyly of the family Ardeidae has never been seriously questioned other than the treatment of *Cochlearius* in a separate, monotypic family. Sequence of genera (and some species within genera) derives from the phylogeny of Sheldon (1987), Sheldon et al. (1995), McCracken & Sheldon (1998), Sheldon et al. (2000), and some unpublished data from Fred Sheldon. The family is often (e.g., Martv≠nez-Vilata and Motis (1992) subdivided into four subfamilies, but these do not correspond precisely to the branching pattern of the molecular phylogeny of Sheldon et al. (2000), in which there is also some conflict depending on which molecular data-set is used (e.g., whether tiger-herons and *Cochlearius* are sister groups); thus, no subfamilial divisions are used here.

Green Heron – *Butorides virescens*
One seen at The Lakes at Castle Rock

OSPREY - PANDIONIDAE

Osprey - *Pandion haliaetus*
One seen at The Lakes at Castle Rock

HAWKS AND EAGLES - ACCIPITRIDAE

Northern Harrier – *Circus cyaneus*
One seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Most authorities split the Eurasian populations as Hen Harrier C. cyaneus (unrecorded in North America) from American C, hudsonius. (Sibley, 2015).

Cooper's Hawk – *Accipiter cooperii*
Two seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and another at Stonegate Ranch

Photo by Richard Amable

Red-tailed Hawk – *Buteo jamaicensis*

Three seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park, another seen at Tle Lakes at Castle Rock and one seen soaring up in the sky at Madera Canyon. The dark and variable populations breeding in western, central, and south-coastal Alaska, and in western Canada were formerly regarded as a distinct species, B. harlani (Audubon, 1831) [Harlan's Hawk], but are now treated as a race of B. jarnaicensis (see Mindell 1983). Most subspecies differ only slightly and on average in plumage, and are barely distinguishable except by subjective judgment and considering location. Krider's may be only a morph. Harlan's Hawk (B. j. harlani) is the exception, and is nearly 100% identifiable. (Sibley 2014).

Photo by Richard Amable

RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS - RALLIDAE

American Coot – *Fulica Americana*

Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

PIGEONS AND DOVES - COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon – *Columba livia*

Common. Previously known as "Rock Dove (e.g., Sibley & Monroe 1990, BOU <REF>, Gibbs et al. 2001), as well as some recent South American literature (e.g., Ridgely & Greenfield 2001, Hilty 2003). However, use of unmodified Rock Pigeon is incorrect according to general principles of English name usage because the Australian pigeons in the genus *Petrophassa* are also called "Rock Pigeon" (Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon, White-quilled Rock Pigeon). Dickinson & Remsen (2013) reverted to "Rock Dove" as primary name, and del Hoyo & Collar (2014) used "Rock Dove" as the only name.

Mourning Dove – *Zenaida macroura*
Common. Zenaida macroura and Z. auriculata [Eared Dove] constitute a superspecies (Mayr and Short 1970).

CUCKOOS – CUCULIDAE

Greater Roadrunner – *Geococcyx californianus*
Two very friendlies seen at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area

Photo by Tucson Audubon Society

TYPICAL OWLS – STRIGIDAE

Great Horned Owl – *Bubo virginianus*
One seen by the owner day before our arrival at Stonegate Ranch. Subspecies variation is clinal, mostly involving average color. In any specific location it should be possible to identify a visitor from a nearby region, and some subspecies are fairly distinctive, but more study is needed to define any regional groups. . (Sibley, 2015).

HUMMINGBIRDS - TROCHILIDAE

Broad-billed Hummingbird – *Cynanthus latirostris*
One seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

Anna's Hummingbird – *Calypte anna*
Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and at The Lakes at Castle Rock

WOODPECKERS – PICIDAE

The monophyly of the Picidae has never been seriously questioned. Within the Piciformes, evidence supports a sister relationship to the Old World Indicatoridae, Prychitko & Moore 2003, Cracraft et al. 2004, Fain & Houde 2004, Webb & Moore 2005, Benz et al. 2006, Ericson et al. 2006, Hackett et al. 2008). The linear arrangement and composition of genera below in general follows that of Short (1982), who placed the piculets in a separate subfamily, Picumninae, and divided the typical woodpeckers, Picinae, into six tribes, four of which have representatives in South America: Melanerpini for a broadly defined *Melanerpes* and *Sphyrapicus*; Campetherini for a broadly defined *Picoides* and *Veniliornis* (now *Dryobates*); Colaptini for *Piculus*, *Colaptes*, and *Celeus*; and Campephilini for *Dryocopus* and *Campephilus*. In general, Short's classification, culminating in a monographic treatment of the family (Short 1982), merged many previously recognized genera into many fewer, broadly defined genera. <incorp. Goodge 1972>. Genetic data (Webb & Moore 2005, Benz et al. 2006) that most of these groups are not monophyletic. Webb and Moore (2005), generally supported by Benz et al. (2006), recommended a classification with three tribes for the three major groups in the Picinae: (1) Malarpicini for *Colaptes*, *Piculus*, *Celeus*, *Dryocopus*, and several Old World genera; (2) Dendropicini for *Picoides*, *Veniliornis* (now *Dryobates*), *Melanerpes*, *Sphyrapicus*, and several Old World genera; and (3) *Campephilus*, *Chrysocolaptes*, and two Old World genera. Genetic data (Benz et al. 2006) support the monophyly and distinctiveness of the Picumninae (*Picumnus* and Old World *Sasia*, but not Caribbean *Nesoctites*) as the sister taxon to all other woodpeckers.

Acorn Woodpecker – *Melanerpes formicivorus*
One seen working at its cavity at Madera Canyon. Subtle differences in average size and plumage might be sufficient to allow identification of subspecies in the field, but more study is needed to assess variation. No differences in voice are known. (Sibley, 2015).

- Acorn Woodpecker (Pacific) – Melanerpes formicivorus bairdi
- Acorn Woodpecker (Southwestern) – Melanerpes formicivorus formicivorus group

Gila Woodpecker – Melanerpes uropygialis
Several seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and Stonegate Ranch

Ladder-backed Woodpecker – *Picoides scalaris*
One seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and few seen at Stonegate Ranch and also at The Lakes at Castle Rock

Northern Flicker – *Colaptes auratus*
Several seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Two populations reliably distinguished by multiple plumage differences, but intergrades are common across a very wide area. (Sibley, 2015).

- Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted) – Colaptes auratus auratus group
- Northern Flicker (Red-shafted) – Colaptes auratus cafer group

Acorn Woodpecker - Photo by Richard Amable

Gila Woodpecker - Photo by Richard Amable

Ladder-backed Woodpecker - Photo by Richard Amable

FALCONS - FALCONIDAE

Peregrine Falcon – *Falco peregrinus*

One seen flying over at The Lakes at Castle Rock. Three subspecies differ slightly in details of plumage color and pattern. Most are probably identifiable with reasonable confidence, although the reintroduced populations in eastern US comprise a fourth group and can be confusingly similar to Continental and Peale's.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS – TYRANNIDAE

Sibley & Ahlquist (1985, 1990) found that the Tyrannidae consisted of two major groups, the "Mionectidae" for *Mionectes* and several genera of small flycatchers placed in the subfamily Elaeniinae (sensu Traylor 1979a); Sibley & Ahlquist's data also indicated that the "Mionectidae" and Tyrannidae were not sister groups. Subsequent analyses (S. Lanyon 1985, W. Lanyon 1988a, b) did not support such a division. However, Chesser (2004) found the same deep division in the Tyrannidae, but found that the two groups were sisters. Tello et al. (2009) found that *Mionectes* was deeply embedded in the Tyrannidae and sister to *Leptopogon*. For detailed discussions of relationships among genera, see Traylor (1977) and W. Lanyon (1985, 1986, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c). [incorp. Birdsley (2002), Fitzpatrick 2004]. Tello et al. (2009) have conducted the first comprehensive, gene-based analysis of relationships within the family and have discovered a number of novel relationships not yet reflected in the classification above or the Notes below, including grouping of *Onychorhynchus*, *Myiobius*, and *Terenotriccus* with *Oxyruncus* (Oxyruncidae). Ohlson et al. (2013) proposed dividing the Tyrannidae into families: Onychorhynchidae (for *Onychorhynchus*, *Myiobius*, and *Terenotriccus*), Platyrinchidae (for *Calyptura*, *Neopipo*, and *Platyrinchus*), Tachurididae (for *Tachuris*), Rhynchocyclidae (for *Mionectes* through *Oncostoma*, with three subfamilies), and Tyrannidae (with remaining genera, divided into five subfamilies and several additional tribes); this was followed by Dickinson & Christidis (2014). See Franz (2015) correction of Tachurididae to Tachurisidae. See Fjeldså et al. (2018) for new information on relationships within the fluvicoline group. The current Tyranninae tentatively includes genera placed in the following subfamilies by other authors: Rhynchocyclinae, Fluvicolinae, Pipromorphinae, Hirundineinae, Elaeniinae, Triccinae, and Muscigrallinae. The tentative

linear sequence of genera within broadly defined Tyranninae follows the sequence of genera in Dickinson & Christidis (2014) for their Tachurisidae through Tyrannidae.

Black Phoebe – *Sayornis nigricans*
Two seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

Say's Phoebe – *Sayornis saya*
Two seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and one more at The Lakes at Castle Rock

Vermilion Flycatcher – *Pyrocephalus rubinus*
Three seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and more at Stonegate Ranch

Photo by Richard Amable

CROWS AND JAYS – CORVIDAE

For information on relationships among genera, see Peters (1962), Hardy (1969), Mayr and Short (1970), Goodwin (1976), Sibley and Ahlquist (1990), Sibley and Monroe (1990) and Espinosa de los Monteros (1997).
The genera in South America are part of a group of New World jays the monophyly of which is supported by genetic (Ericson et al. 2005, Ekman and Ericson 2006) and morphological characters. (Manegold 2008).

Mexican Jay – *Aphelocoma ultramarine*
Several groups seen at Madera Canyon. Two subspecies groups differ consistently in plumage and juvenile bill color, and slightly in voice and behavior. Could be considered for species status but connected by intermediate populations through Mexico. (Sibley, 2015).

- Mexican Jay (Arizona) – Aphelocoma ultramarina arizonae [wollweberi group] *
- Mexican Jay (Texas or Couch's) – Aphelocoma ultramarina couchii group *

Common Raven – *Corvus corax*
Two seen flying and vocaling really high in sky. Recent DNA studies reveal a significantly different population in California, which may also differ in size and proportions, but whether or not that form is identifiable in the field remains to be worked out. (Sibley, 2015).

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS – HIRUNDINIDAE

The swallows are a distinctive family with no certain close relatives (Sheldon & Gill 1996, REFS), although some data suggest a relationship to the Alaudidae (Treplin et al. 2008). Recent genetic data indicate that they may be part of a primarily Old World radiation of "sylvioid" families such as babblers and tits (Barker et al. 2004), including the Alaudidae (Johansson et al. 2008).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow – *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*
One seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Phillips (1986) treated the two groups as distinct species, S. serripennis [Northern Rough-winged Swallow] and S. ridgwayi Nelson, 1901 [Ridgway's Rough-winged Swallow]. Stelgidopteryx serripennis and S. ruficollis were formerly considered conspecific [Roughwinged Swallow], but sympatric breeding has been discovered in Costa Rica (Stiles 1981).

CHICKADEES AND TITMICE - PARIDAE

Bridled Titmouse – *Baeolophus wollweberi*
Three seen at Madera Canyon

VERDIN - REMIZIDAE

Verdin – *Auriparus flaviceps*
Several seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

WRENS - TROGLODYTIDAE

Traditional classifications (e.g., Mayr & Amadon 1951, Wetmore 1960, Meyer de Schauensee 1970) placed the Troglodytidae near the Sittidae, Certhiidae, Mimidae, and Cinclidae to reflect proposed relationships to those families (e.g., Beecher 1953). Genetic data (Sibley & Ahlquist 1990, Sheldon & Gill 1996, Barker et al. 2004, Voelker & Spellman 2004, Treplin et al. 2008) indicate a close relationship to the Polioptilidae.

Marsh Wren – *Cistothorus palustris*
One seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Eastern and Western populations differ substantially and consistently in song and singing behavior, and differ slightly in plumage and have been proposed for species status. In addition, Pacific birds differ at least in overall color from other Western birds, and a distinctively gray subspecies occurs in coastal southeast US. (Sibley, 2015).

- Marsh Wren (Western) – Cistothorus palustris paludicola group *
- Marsh Wren (Eastern) – Cistothorus palustris palustris group *

Verdin - Photo by Richard Amable

KINGLETS - REGULIDAE

Ruby-crowned Kinglet – *Regulus calendula*
Four seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and three seen at Madera Canyon

THRUSHES – TURDIDAE

The limits of the Turdidae, as traditionally defined (e.g., REFS) are almost certainly incorrect. Genetic data (Cibois & Cracraft 2004, Treplin et al. 2008, Sangster et al. 2010) indicate that the mostly Old World saxicoline genera are more closely related to members of the traditional Muscicapidae than to the Turdidae; this would require a merger of the two families or a transfer of the saxicoline genera (e.g., *Oenanthe*) to the Muscicapidae.
Within the remaining Turdidae, genetic data (Klicka et al. 2005, Sangster et al. 2010) indicate that *Myadestes* is more closely related to a group that includes the Old World genera *Stizorhina* and *Neocossyphus* than it is to other New World thrushes; Olson (1989) and Pasquet et al. (1999) proposed recognition of a separate subfamily for this group, Myadestinae.

American Robin – *Turdus migratorius*
One seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Formerly known in American literature as the Robin. Groups: *T. migratorius* [American Robin] and *T. confinis* Baird, 1864 [San Lucas Robin]. Variation is slight and clinal, with much overlap, and no subspecies are reliably identifiable. —Read more… (Sibley, 2015).

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS – MIMIDAE

Recent genetic data (Barker et al. 2002, 2004, Cibois & Cracraft 2004, Voelker & Spellman 2004, Johansson et al. 2008, Treplin et al. 2008) have confirmed once-controversial findings (e.g., Beecher 1953, Stallcup 1961, Sibley & Ahlquist 1980, 1984, 1985, 1990) that the Mimidae and Sturnidae are sister families, suggested originally by the morphological analysis of Beecher (1953). Within the Mimidae, genetic data (Hunt et al. 2001, Cibois & Cracraft 2004, Lovette & Rubenstein 2007, Lovette et al. 2012) indicate two main groups: (1) a Caribbean group that also includes *Dumetella*, and (2) *Mimus* + *Nesomimus* +*Toxostoma* + extralimital *Oreoscoptes*.

Northern Mockingbird – *Mimus polyglottos*

Two seen at The Lakes at Castle Rock

STARLINGS AND MYNAS - STURNIDAE

European Starling – *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common. Also known as the Starling or Common Starling. *Sturnus vulgaris* and *S. unicolor* Temminck, 1820 [Spotless Starling], of the western Mediterranean region, constitute a superspecies (Sibley and Monroe 1990).

WAXWINGS - BOMBYCILLIDAE

Cedar Waxwing – *Bombycilla cedrorum*

One seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

SILKY-FLYCATCHERS - PTILOGONATIDAE

Phainopepla – *Phainopepla nitens*

One seen at The Lakes at Castle Rock and another seen at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area

WOOD WARBLERS – PARULIDAE

Several genetic data sets indicate that the sister family of the Parulidae is the Icteridae (e.g., Bledsoe 1988, Barker et al. 2002, Yuri & Mindell 2002) [and get other subsequent REFS]. <incorp. Lovette & Bermingham 1999> The family was known in the older literature as "Compsothlypidae." Genetic data (Lovette et al. 2010) indicates that the traditional sequence of genera needs modification to reflect relationships among the genera, e.g., *Seiurus* is sister to all other Parulidae, and *Helmitheros* is then sister to all other genera.

Orange-crowned Warbler – *Oreothlypis celata*

Four subspecies groups may sometimes be distinguishable in the field. It may be possible to identify at least Pacific (V. c. lutescens) with certainty in the field, but differences are small and need clarification. (Sibley, 2015).

- Orange-crowned Warbler (Taiga) – Vermivora celata celata
- Orange-crowned Warbler (Interior West) – Vermivora celata orestera
- Orange-crowned Warbler (Pacific) – Vermivora celata lutescens
- Orange-crowned Warbler (Channel Islands) – Vermivora celata sordida

Phainopepla - Photo by Richard Amable

Yellow-rumped Warbler – *Dendroica coronate*

Four seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and two more seen at The Lakes at Castle Rock. Two populations often considered separate species; identifiable in all plumages by multiple features, as well as by call note. Audubon's includes two other distinctive forms south of the US and might be split further. (Sibley, 2015).

- Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle or Taiga) – Dendroica coronata coronata group *
- Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's or Western) – Dendroica coronata auduboni group *

NEW WORLD SPARROWS – EMBERIZIDAE

Genetic data (Bledsoe 1988, Sibley & Ahlquist 1990, Lougheed et al. 2000, Burns et al. 2002, 2003, Klicka et al. 2007, Sedano & Burns 2010 -- check Groth-Barrowclough etc.) indicate that the family Emberizidae as traditionally constituted is polyphyletic, with most genera occurring in South America belonging to the tanager lineage; some morphological data (Clark 1986) also support this. The only genera in South America traditionally placed in the Emberizidae for which genetic data indicate that they are true Emberizidae (now Passerellidae) are: *Zonotrichia*, *Ammodramus*, *Aimophila* (DaCosta et al. 2009), *Arremon*, and *Atlapetes*; the majority have been found to be members of the Thraupidae; see Note 1 under that family. Barker et al. (2013) and Klicka et al. (2014) found that even a more narrowly defined Emberizidae was not a monophyletic group and that recognition of a new family, Passerellidae, was required for all New World members of Emberizidae. This was adopted by Chesser et al. (2017). Klicka et al. (2014) also found that the phylogenetic relationships among genera and species in this family are not reflected in traditional linear sequences.

Rufous-winged Sparrow – *Peucaea carpalis*

Two seen at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area and another at The Lakes at Castle Rock

Rufous-winged Sparrow - Photo by Richard Amable

White-crowned Sparrow – *Zonotrichia leucophrys*

Several seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Best considered three identifiable forms, with Taiga group including pale-lored birds in the west and dark-lored in the east. Pacific is distinctive and always readily identifiable. Mountain and Taiga intergrade across a broad area, and Mountain is very similar to Eastern Taiga birds, but most should be identifiable by plumage and voice. —Read more… (Sibley, 2015).

- White-crowned Sparrow (Taiga or Gambel's) – Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys group
- White-crowned Sparrow (Mountain) – Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha
- White-crowned Sparrow (Pacific or Nuttall's) – Zonotrichia leucophrys nuttalli group

Black-throated Sparrow – *Amphispiza bilineata*

Two seen at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area. Two subspecies groups (Western and Texas) differ slightly in overall color, tail pattern, and size, but more study is needed to clarify potential differences. (Sibley, 2015).

Lark Sparrow – *Chondestes grammacus*

One seen at Stonegate Ranch

Lark Sparrow - Photo by Richard Amable

Savannah Sparrow – *Passerculus sandwichensis*

One seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Widespread Continental forms vary slightly in plumage and size, but are generally not distinguishable from each other in the field. Ipswich, Belding's, and Large-billed are all reliably identified, although intermediate populations and/or intergrades cloud the issue. In addition to plumage, differences in bill size, crown shape, and timing of breeding are useful. —Read more… (Sibley, 2015).

- Savannah Sparrow (Ipswich) – Passerculus sandwichensis princeps *
- Savannah Sparrow (Continental) – Passerculus sandwichensis sandwichensis group *
- Savannah Sparrow (Belding's) – Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi [guttatus group] *
- Savannah Sparrow (Large-billed) – Passerculus sandwichensis rostratus group *

Song Sparrow – *Melospiza melodia*

Several seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Extensive variation across its wide range can be partitioned loosely into the forms listed here, but variation is mostly clinal and all forms intergrade. Similar to Horned Lark and others, there are certainly better ways to subdivide the species, but more study is needed. (Sibley, 2015).

- Song Sparrow (Aleutian) – Melospiza melodia sanaka group
- Song Sparrow (Pacific Northwest) – Melospiza melodia rufina group
- Song Sparrow (California) – Melospiza melodia samuelis group
- Song Sparrow (Southwestern) – Melospiza melodia fallax group
- Song Sparrow (Eastern) – Melospiza melodia melodia group

Abert's Towhee – *Melozone aberti*

Eight seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and at The Lakes at Castle Rock

CARDINALS AND BUNTINGS – CARDINALIDAE

This group is treated as a family, following AOU (1998). Tordoff (1954a) defined the group on the basis of shared characters of the skull to consist of *Caryothraustes*, *Cyanocompsa*, *Passerina*, *Pheucticus*, *Cardinalis*, *Saltator*, and *Spiza*, as well as extralimital *Rhodothraupis*). Sushkin (1924) considered *Saltator* to be a thick-billed tanager rather than a cardinalid or emberizid. Klicka et al. (2000) failed to find genetic support for inclusion of *Saltator* in this family, and this was later confirmed by Klicka et al. (2007), whose genetic data showed that the Cardinalidae, as defined above, is highly polyphyletic. A monophyletic Cardinalidae would require removal of *Saltator* and *Parkerthraustes* and inclusion of *Amaurospiza*, and *Granatellus.* Barker et al. (2013) confirmed that the genera listed here are members of the Cardinalidae. The current sequence of species in this family is meaningless and will be re-evaluated once proposals are processed.

Northern Cardinal – *Cardinalis cardinalis*

One males seen at Stonegate Ranch. Two subspecies groups are reliably distinguished by bill shape and plumage pattern. (Sibley, 2015). Groups: *C. cardinalis* [Common Cardinal] and *C. carneus* (Lesson, 1842) [Long-crested Cardinal]. Also known as the Cardinal or Common Cardinal. *Cardinalis cardinalis* and the South American *C. phoeniceus* Bonaparte, 1838 [Vermilion Cardinal], may constitute a superspecies (Mayr and Short 1970, Paynter 1970).

- Northern Cardinal (Southwestern) – Cardinalis cardinalis superbus group
- Northern Cardinal (Eastern) – Cardinalis cardinalis cardinalis group

Pyrrhuloxia – *Cardinalis sinuatus*

One seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park

ORIOLES AND BLACKBIRDS - ICTERIDAE

Red-winged Blackbird – *Agelaius phoeniceus*

Over 70's seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and mostly females. Two subspecies groups represent extremes of variation and are reliably distinguished by plumage and differ slightly in song, but intermediate populations exist. Populations in southern Florida may differ in song and plumage and deserve more study. (Sibley, 2015).

- Red-winged Blackbird (Typical) – Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus group
- Red-winged Blackbird (Bicolored) – Agelaius phoeniceus californicus group

Great-tailed Grackle – *Quiscalus mexicanus*

Two seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Populations west of southeastern Arizona differ slightly in size, female plumage color, and possibly voice, and differ significantly in DNA, from birds farther east. These may be identifiable (they have even been suggested as possible species) but more study is needed to work out identification criteria and to assess an apparent contact zone in southeastern Arizona. (Sibley, 2015).

FINCHES - FRINGILLIDAE

House Finch – *Carpodacus mexicanus*

Several seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park and more at Madera Canyon

Lesser Goldfinch – *Spinus psaltria*

Five seen at Several seen at Sweetwater Wetland Park. Adult males occur in two distinctive forms – Black-backed and Green-backed – that show strong geographic basis, but variation and the occurrence of each type well within the range of the other suggests that this color difference represents a morph rather than a subspecific difference. (Sibley, 2015).

OTHER WILDLIFE

RODENTIA (CASTORIDAE & SCIURIDAE)

Arizona Gray Squirrel – *Sciurus arizonensis*
Seen several at Madera Canyon and Sweetwater Wetland Park.

CARNIVORA (CANIDAE, PROCYONIDAE & MEPHITIDAE)

Coyote - *Canis latrans**
Heard only

WILD PIGS (TAYASSUIDAE)

Collared Peccari - *Pecari tajacu*
Seen one deceased at the roadside on the way to Madera Canyon

FIELD GEAR USED

- Razor UHD 8x42mm Vortex Optics binoculars
- Razor 85MM Vortex Angular Scoping Scope
- PRO-GT Vortex Tripode
- eBird APP
- Merlin App
- Samsung Galaxy S10 Phone and Phone Scope Adapter

REFERENCES AND TITERATURES

- Sibley, A. David. 2014. *The Sibleys Guide to Birds (Second Edition).* Random House LLC. New York.
- Kays, W. Roland and Don E. Wilson. 2009. *Mammals of North America (Second Editions)*. Princeton University Press. New Jersey.

MORE PICTURES OF THE BIRDING SITES

Juniper-oak woodlands at Madera Canyon – Photo by Richard Amable

Juniper-oak woodlands at Madera Canyon – Photo by Richard Amable

Desert grassland at Madera Canyon – Photo by Richard Amable

Accomodation at Madera Canyon – Photo by Richard Amable

Suitable mesquite habitat near The Lakes at Castle Rock – Photo by Richard Amable

Saguaro Cactus at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area – Photo by Richard Amable

Catstails Plant at Sweetwater Wetland Park – Photo by Cheryl Himmelstein

Deset Broom plant at Sweetwater Wetland Park – Photo by Cheryl Himmelstein

Palo Verde and Saguaro Cactus at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area – Photo by Richard Amable

Sabino Creek at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area – Photo by Richard Amable

Palo Verde and Saguaro Cactus at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area – Photo by Richard Amable

Saguaro Cactus at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area – Photo by Richard Amable

Stonegate Ranch photo by Stonegate Ranch

Sunset at Stonegate Ranch – Photo by Richard Amable

Richard Amable at Sweetwater Wetland Park – Photo by Cheryl Himmelstein

Richard Amable at Stonegate Ranch – Photo by Cheryl Himmelstein

THE END