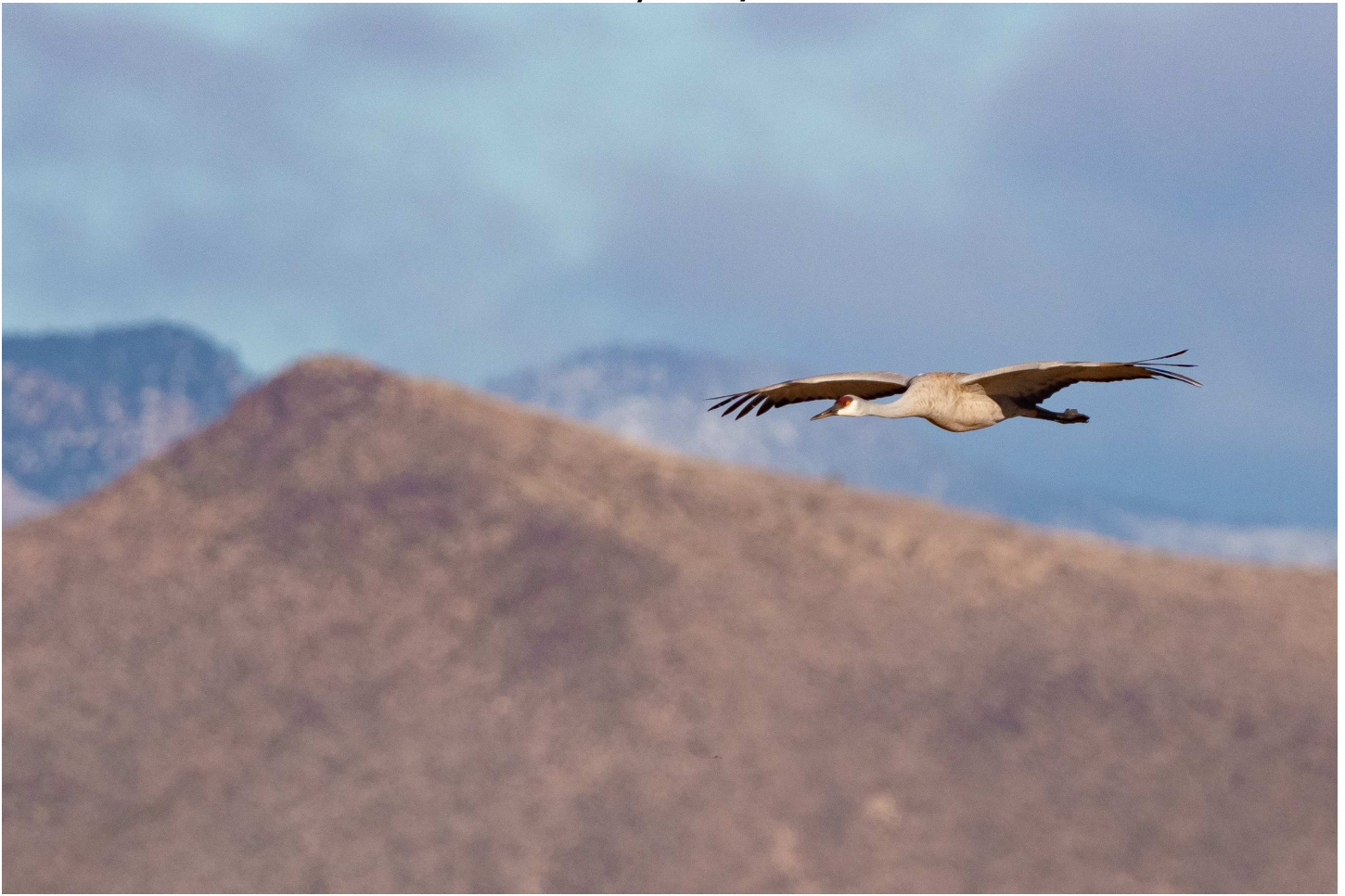




A [Tropical Birding](#) CUSTOM tour

## New Mexico: Winter Enchantment

February 12-20, 2021



*Tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes spend the winter in New Mexico's Rio Grande Valley*

TOUR LEADER: Phil Chaon

Photos by Phil Chaon, Jen Wong and Danielle Wong

## SUMMARY

New Mexico lies at an impressive biological crossroads. In a single state birds from the Great Plains, Rocky Mountains and Desert Southwest all converge in a spectacular array of habitats. In winter, this diverse community of birds is bolstered by hoards of wintering waterfowl and cranes seeking the precious waters of the Rio Grande. The extensive lakes and wetlands that surround the river teem with birds, concentrated there by the inhospitable desert landscape that surrounds this life-giving resource. The abundance and diversity of birds found here combined with spectacular scenery and a landscape with one of the most appealing color palettes on the continent make the state a fantastic birding destination throughout the year.

This was a custom tour with a photography focus and despite coinciding with one of the coldest winter storms in decades we had great success. While the unusual weather would have made finding some of the less common birds a difficult task on a birding tour, we found the snow and cold provided some wonderful and unique photo opportunities. In our week spent touring the state, we encountered almost all of the major birding targets and had one of the best encounters with the Rosy-finches I have had to date.

Our first morning in Albuquerque began with a sunrise on the impressive Sandia Mountains. Located only a few miles from the city center, these peaks rise to over 10,000 feet and are blanketed by an array of montane habitats. Lying at the southern end of the Rocky Mountains, Sandia Crest is the end of the line for wintering Rosy-finches and is probably the single best location in the country to see all three species.

As we wound our way up the peak we were greeted by flocks of **Cassin's Finches** gathering grit from the roadside, while a few **Clark's Nutcrackers** passed overhead. At the summit, the morning what bright and cold with a biting breeze that kept us alert as we searched for the areas star winter residents. After only a few minutes a swirling mass of pink descended into the small, gnarled spruces that dotted the peak. Over the next hour we had great looks at **Black, Brown-capped and Gray-crowned Rosy-finches** often from only feet away. The birds were so cooperative, we ended up leaving these range-restricted alpine jewels to go warm our hands and switch out some already full memory cards.

Further down slope we spotted an Abert's (Tassel-eared) Squirrel crossing the road and paused to check out this handsome and localized mammal. Exiting the car, a handsome male **Williamson's Sapsucker** and a few flyover groups of **Evening Grosbeak** livened things up. Soon, we were treated to a typical encounter with **Pinyon Jays**. A typical encounter means it was a complete surprise and out of nowhere we found ourselves inundated by over 100 of these rambunctious and nomadic corvids as they scoured the area in search of food. In a few minutes they were gone as quickly as they had come and we continued down to Albuquerque.

The afternoon was spent exploring Tingley Beach and the Rio Grande Nature Center in Albuquerque. While these sites gave us a good introduction to many of the areas more common birds, the real highlight was getting to spend some time with the exceptionally tame ducks occupying the ponds surrounding Tingley Beach. After a few hours of point-blank views of **Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck and Wood Duck** we made our way to Santa Fe for the night.

Overnight the temperatures plummeted and snow fell and in the morning we awoke to a snow-blanketed landscape. We once again headed out into the mountains, following the tracks of eager local skiers through the snow. A few **Clark's Nutcrackers** passing over on our way up gave us our first taste of mountain flavor. Arriving at the Santa Fe Ski Area all was quiet apart from a few industrious **Common Ravens**. As we explored further and as the temperatures began to warm a few more birds appeared – **Steller's Jays**, a pair of **Hairy Woodpeckers** and a distantly drumming **American Three-toed Woodpecker**. Getting ready to leave, we came across an incredibly confiding group of **Canada (Gray) Jays** socializing near the entrance to the ski area.

We spent nearly an hour with these friendly, fluffy jays watching them preen and enjoy some sunshine before departing. A roadside stop farther down had us spending some time with an industrious **Brown Creeper**, feeding with little care for the nearby observers. However, the poor weather was really suppressing bird activity and we decided lunch seemed like a better course of action.

Following a hot meal and some time to warm up we went in search of birds further east. Our first stop was snowed in and impassible, a rare occurrence for this location. Despite the lack of access we were still treated to a sleek gray **Townsend's Solitaire** scouring the roadside for berries and some spectacular scenery. Arriving at Las Vegas National Wildlife refuge things seemed birdier. Right away we found multiple Ferruginous Hawks – sitting in the gleaming sunshine and freshly fallen snow, it was easy to see how these stately birds earned the name *Buteo regalis*. Regal indeed. Exploring a little further we encountered our first **Loggerhead Shrikes** and a curious Coyote, bounding through the deep snow. With bad weather, these predators were laser-focused on finding food. Similarly the snow had pushed hundreds of **Horned Larks** onto the road where they searched for grit to aid in their digestion. Among the hundreds of Horned Larks a few **Savannah** and **American Tree Sparrows** had joined in as well. As we watched the whole flock burst into the air in a flurry of yellow-dots and bell-like calls. A **Northern Harrier** sailed through their midst, patrolling in search of a meal. We watched this buoyant raptor make slow passes over the fields until the light failed and we made our way back to Santa Fe through the steadily falling snow.

Overnight the winter storm persisted and as such we opted to head to lower elevations early to escape some of the weather. Dropping down into the Rio Grande valley, we headed to Bernardo Wildlife Management Area. Upon arriving we were greeted by the trumpeting calls and rambunctious antics of thousands upon thousands of **Sandhill Cranes**. Joined by a large contingent of **Ross'** and **Snow Geese**, the fields were full of life and interesting photo subjects. Before we could get started in earnest however, we ran into issues with one of our primary photo set-ups. After some attempts at trouble shooting we returned to Albuquerque for the afternoon where we managed to remedy the problem. While it had taken some birding time we were glad to be operational again, and with plenty of time to spend with the cranes over the next few days.

Our day began at Bosque del Apache with the world changed overnight. Shrouded in a muffled blanket of snow, the refuge looked completely transformed. Even a light flurry is unusual down here and so several inches of fresh powdery snow was something truly remarkable. Birds that would normally be tucked away congregated on the roads as hundreds of **White-crowned Sparrows**, **Savannah Sparrows**, **Song Sparrows**, **White-throated Sparrows** and **Western Meadowlarks** foraged along the roadside. A **Bald Eagle** sat motionless on a large dead snag in the water – a perch that this bird occupied continuously for the duration of our visit. With the order of things shaken up, we toured around in search of **Sandhill Cranes** and were soon rewarded. A sea of cranes sat hunkered together in an open field with the frosted Magdalena Mountains serving as a backdrop. A few lone birds provided nice portrait subjects but the cold kept the birds sedentary and difficult to work with.

By late morning the skies were clearing and we headed to where most birds had gone on this snowy morning – the feeders at the visitor center. Pulling into the parking lot, the entire area was packed with **Gambel's Quail**. Scurrying to and fro, their little crests bobbing madly as they chased each other from one side of to the other, occasionally stumbling in deeper snow drifts. A pair of **Crissal Thrashers** used their long bills to dig past the deep snow in search of food along the path. The resident **Curve-billed Thrashers** remained content gobbling suet at the feeders, joined by masses of **Pine Siskins**, **Brewer's Sparrows**, **Pyrrhuloxia**, **White-winged Doves**, **Canyon** and **Spotted Towhees**.



The day warmed rapidly from there and after a few of the famous green chile cheeseburgers at the nearby Owl Bar we came back to a completely different refuge. The sun was shining, the snow was gone, a **Merlin** sat watchful as we made a slow loop around the refuge. A group of **Wild Turkeys** sauntered down the road, closely trailed by a herd of **Collared Peccary**. The peccaries strolled within a few meters of us as they passed in an uncharacteristically unperturbed manner. Further along, a **Greater Roadrunner** escorted us down the drive, running just ahead of the car and stopping occasionally to cock its tail and look back in our direction. The bright sun really highlighted the iridescent wings and tail as we spent a nice long while photographing New Mexico's aptly chosen state bird. Continuing with the theme of iridescent gems, we soon found a **Bufflehead** swimming slowly in a small canal right beside the car. With the light nearly perfect we had a great session as it cruised slowly by, the oil-slick rainbow of colors dancing across its head. As evening approached we positioned ourselves to watch Bosque del Apaches most famous attraction as tens of thousands for **Snow Geese**, **Ross' Geese** and **Sandhill Cranes** streamed by on their way to roost. A cacophonous parade of waterfowl traipsed across the purpling sky until the light was all but gone in an elegant blend of chaos and serenity.

With the storm behind us and a clear dawn ahead we spent most of the morning at Bosque del Apache in the company of **Sandhill Cranes**, a dozen odd species of waterfowl and an extremely friendly **Say's Phoebe**. After a productive morning spent with cranes soaring off to various feeding locations in the valley, we found our way blocked by several thousand **Snow** and **Ross' Geese** that had decided to take a nap on the road. They were awakened when an **American White Pelican** decided to land among the horde. With every low pass it made, the geese grew more agitated with their unwelcome guest.

With the sea of geese dispersed we cruised out to some nearby ag fields to try our luck with the mixed flocks of bluebirds out there. We easily saw **Eastern**, **Western** and **Mountain Bluebirds** together feeding with **American Pipits** and **American Robins** in the fallow pastureland. The **Mountain Bluebirds** shone unbelievably bright in the midday sun, unfortunately a little-ways out of reach for photography but more than close enough for pleasant observation. The happily feeding group soon bolted for cover as a gorgeous "**Harlan's**" **Red-tailed Hawk** circled low overhead, and we soon left the area ourselves.

The afternoon found us winding through the nearby Magdalena Mountains. While the recent snows prevented us from climbing as high as we had hoped we still found plenty of new birds among the pinyon and Ponderosa dappled slopes. Large flocks of **Pine Siskins** flitted around giving their buzzy calls while **Red-breasted** and **White-breasted Nuthatches** seemed to creep along every tree. A **Red-naped Sapsucker** sounded off a few times upslope and several bold **Juniper Titmice** arrived to check out the commotion. A large dead Cottonwood played host to a troop of **Acorn Woodpeckers** who did not buck tradition and made their presence obvious. After some time watching them cavort and tend to their larders we wrapped up the day and headed south to Truth or Consequences, New Mexico.

Our penultimate day was spent exploring the southern part of the state, deep in the heart of the Chihuahuan Desert Shrublands and Nearctic Desert Grasslands. Our first stop of the morning was along the Rio Grande near Caballo Lake. The freshwater and trees dripping with mistletoe did the bulk of the work for us, attracting many birds in search of nourishment. The silvery-white berries of the mistletoes attracted a nice mix of frugivores, including **Western** and **Mountain Bluebird**, **Northern Mockingbird**, **Cedar Waxwing** and lots of **Phainopeplas**! We spent some time with a Ladder-backed Woodpecker working diligently on the lower sections of a cottonwood, only a few feet off the ground. Examining the nearby brush revealed a nice variety of sparrows including **Chipping**, **Song**, **Fox**, **Vesper** and **Lincoln's Sparrow**.

We followed the flocks of wigeon streaming overhead and a few miles down river found a group of several thousand **American Wigeon** in a dairy pond nearby.



While closer inspection didn't reveal anything rarer it was still nice to see such a mass of birds. The pond also contained a nice mixed group of gulls including a young **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, a relatively rare species for New Mexico. The campground at Percha Flats was in its typically birdy state. A brief wander around turned up **Rock Wren**, **Marsh Wren** and **Hermit Thrushes** among the more common species. We took some time to study the hundreds of **Dark-eyed Juncos** working the grounds and saw a nice variety including Gray-headed, Pink-sided, Oregon, Slate-colored, and Red-backed! Likely the most surprising bird we saw here was a **Bridled Titmouse** at the extreme NE corner of their range and in the wrong habitat! It was even kind enough to allow for some photos before moving on.

The afternoon was spent in the extensive desert grasslands around the Uvas Valley. The grasslands vary wildly depending on the previous years rains but we managed to turn up some interesting species despite the poor rains last year. Large flocks of **Sagebrush Sparrow** and a few **Sage Thrashers** were in the grassier margins, while a Sprague's Pipit called among the many **Horned Larks** that were flying around us. Nearby we encountered a vocal family group of **Cactus Wrens** and a single skulky **Bendire's Thrasher** (our 5<sup>th</sup> species of the trip). We ended the day admiring this stark and often barren landscape, amazed by the variety of life that has managed to eke out a living here.

The final day of the tour was spent birding our way back up the Rio Grande valley to Albuquerque. We started off at the Paseo Del Rio Campground. Though the water was low, **Pyrhuloxias**, **Cactus Wrens**, **Canyon Towhees** were all in abundance. A pair of **Redheads** and a **Hooded Merganser** were nice waterfowl additions. Elephant Butte Lake gave us some great early morning views of an exceptionally cooperative **Black-throated Sparrow** which gave great photographic opportunities as it perched on a nearby cactus. In the distance, the cascading song of a Canyon Wren echoed off the large dam, while **American White Pelicans**, **Western** and **Clark's Grebes**, and **Common Merganser** floated out on the lake.

In town we stumbled across a very productive feeding station. We spent some time along the road photographing the **Gambel's Quail** and hundreds of **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** visiting the grain scattered desert ground. A nearby lakeside overlook was a great spot to enjoy a wide vista of the lake and a chance to scan for some raptors. Several **Northern Harriers** and **Bald Eagles** kept us occupied while a **Merlin** and a close fly by **Prairie Falcon** spiced things up!

Several hours later we arrived in Albuquerque with some remaining light and closed out the day with one more session with the exceptionally close Wood Ducks, Canvasback and Lesser Scaup at Tingley Lagoons. It had been a whirlwind week full of challenges and surprises and many great bird encounters. We managed to see a huge swath of the birds, scenery and habitats New Mexico has to offer while taking the time to really slow down and appreciate some true avian spectacles.

## GALLERY



*Brown-capped Rosy-finches are endemic to the Rocky Mountains and the pinkest of the Rosy-finch species. (Phil Chaon)*



*Black Rosy-finch is the most common of the three species, all of which are pictured here. (Jen Wong)*





*Mountain Chickadees are common and personable residents of the mountains Of New Mexico. (Jen Wong)*

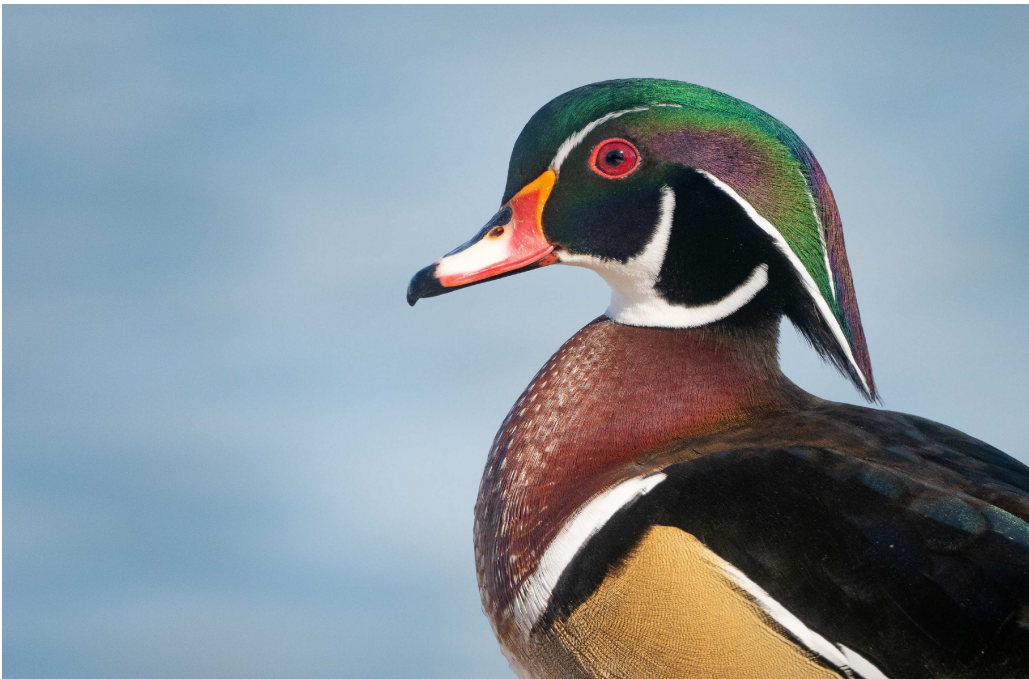


*Abert's (Tassel-eared) Squirrel is perhaps the most unique looking sciurid in North America and a highly variable species. (Danielle Wong)*





*You can never count on seeing Pinyon Jays but when they arrive, they make their presence known! (Jen Wong)*



*Certainly one of North America's most handsome ducks, there are few places better than Albuquerque to see them. (Phil Chaon)*





*A small group of Canada Jays were nice and cozy despite the cold morning temperatures.  
(Phil Chaon)*

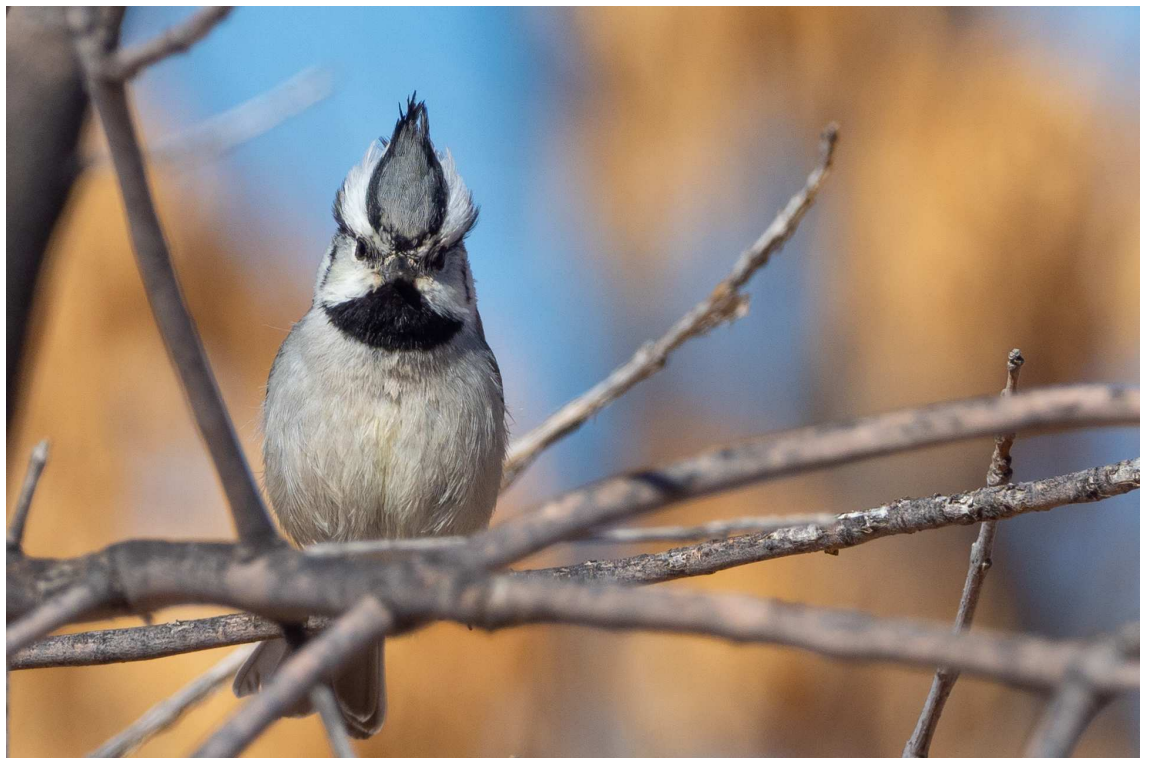


*This Coyote's camouflage was less than perfect among the freshly fallen snow (Danielle Wong)*





*It's possible to see 6 different regional forms of Dark-eyed Junco in New Mexico, the Gray-headed pictured here is the most common. (Jen Wong)*



*Bridled Titmouse crests look good at all angles. (Phil Chaon)*



*There are many ways to photograph the huge flocks of Snow and Ross' Geese at Bosque del Apache!*



*(Phil Chaon)*



*(Danielle Wong)*



*(Jen Wong)*



*The fierce gaze of a Western Meadowlark interrupted while foraging in the snow.  
(Jen Wong)*



*A curious group of Collared Peccaries came over to investigate us while photographing cranes.  
(Danielle Wong)*





*Black-throated Sparrows are always a welcome sight in the desert. (Phil Chaon)*



*After an unexpected freeze, open water was certainly a nice treat for this flock of Northern Shovelers. (Jen Wong)*





*The freeze gave us a chance to photograph individual Sandhill Cranes, isolated from the flock.  
(Danielle Wong)*



*Northern Harriers were always on patrol, diligently searching for prey from dawn til dusk.  
(Danielle Wong)*





*White-winged Dove near the feeders at Bosque Del Apache. (Phil Chaon)*



*A Sandhill Crane on the ice in the early morning glare (Phil Chaon)*



*A Ferruginous Hawk takes flight over the fields north of Bosque del Apache. (Jen Wong)*





*The light has to be just right to reveal the rainbow iridescence of a Bufflehead. (Danielle Wong)*



*A Phainopepla takes a break from feasting on glistening white mistletoe berries. (Phil Chaon)*





*Skittish and wicked fast, this Gambel's Quail only paused for a moment – just long enough!*  
(Jen Wong)



*A drake Canvasback swims through the last golden rays on the final day of the trip.*  
(Phil Chaon)

## BIRD LIST

The taxonomy of the bird list follows eBird/Clements (available here:

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist/download/>)

(H) indicates a species that was HEARD only.

(G) indicates a species recorded by the GUIDE ONLY.

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)		
<b>Snow Goose</b>	<i>Anser caerulescens</i>	Large numbers at Bosque del Apache, small numbers elsewhere.
<b>Ross's Goose</b>	<i>Anser rossii</i>	Present with Snow Geese in lower numbers.
<b>Cackling Goose</b>	<i>Branta hutchinsii</i>	A few present with most large groups of Canada Geese, especially along the Rio Grande in Albuquerque.
<b>Canada Goose</b>	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Wood Duck</b>	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	Common at Tingley Beach and Rio Grande Nature Center
<b>Blue-winged Teal</b>	<i>Spatula discors</i>	One or two early arrivals at Bosque del Apache
<b>Cinnamon Teal</b>	<i>Spatula cyanoptera</i>	Present in low numbers at Bosque del Apache
<b>Northern Shoveler</b>	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	Common and widespread.
<b>Gadwall</b>	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	Most were seen at Bosque del Apache, smaller numbers elsewhere
<b>American Wigeon</b>	<i>Mareca americana</i>	Uncommon and widespread. Huge flock at the dairy ponds near Percha Dam.
<b>Mexican Duck</b>	<i>Anas diazi</i>	A few pure birds at Bosque del Apache and Percha Dam State Park, many more hybrids.
<b>Mallard</b>	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Northern Pintail</b>	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Common at Bosque del Apache
<b>Green-winged Teal</b>	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Canvasback</b>	<i>Aythya valisineria</i>	A few seen at Tingley Beach
<b>Redhead</b>	<i>Aythya americana</i>	Three individuals at Paseo del Rio Campground
<b>Ring-necked Duck</b>	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	Uncommon and widespread, large numbers at Tingley Beach
<b>Lesser Scaup</b>	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	A few at Tingley Beach and Elephant Butte SP



<b>Bufflehead</b>	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	Uncommon at Bosque del Apache
<b>Hooded Merganser</b>	<i>Lophodytes cuculatus</i>	A few birds seen on the Rio Grande below Caballo Lake SP
<b>Common Merganser</b>	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Uncommon and widespread at sites along the Rio Grande
<b>Ruddy Duck</b>	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	Uncommon at Bosque del Apache
<b>Odontophoridae (New World Quail)</b>		
<b>Gambel's Quail</b>	<i>Callipepla gambelii</i>	Common at upland sites including Rock Point, Bosque del Apache and the Uvas Grasslands
<b>Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)</b>		
<b>Wild Turkey</b>	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	At least one large flock at Bosque del Apache
<b>Podicipedidae (Grebes)</b>		
<b>Pied-billed Grebe</b>	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Eared Grebe</b>	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Common at Elephant Butte SP
<b>Western Grebe</b>	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	Common at Elephant Butte SP
<b>Clark's Grebe</b>	<i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>	Uncommon at Elephant Butte SP
<b>Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)</b>		
<b>Rock Pigeon</b>	<i>Columba livia</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Eurasian Collared-Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Common and widespread
<b>White-winged Dove</b>	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	Common at sites along the Rio Grande
<b>Mourning Dove</b>	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Cuculidae (Cuckoos)</b>		
<b>Greater Roadrunner</b>	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>	Uncommon on the second half of the tour, especially around Bosque del Apache.
<b>Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)</b>		
<b>American Coot</b>	<i>Fulica americana</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Gruidae (Cranes)</b>		
<b>Sandhill Crane</b>	<i>Antigone canadensis</i>	Present in huge numbers along the Rio Grande especially at Bosque del Apache and Bernardo Wildlife Management Area.
<b>Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)</b>		

Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	A few around Bosque del Apache, Percha Dam SP and Caballo Lake SP
<b>Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)</b>		
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	One at Bosque del Apache
<b>Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)</b>		
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	Large numbers around Caballo Lake SP, Elephant Butte SP and the Caballo Dairy
California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	A few at Caballo Lake SP, Elephant Butte SP and the Caballo Dairy
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	One fly-over at Caballo Lake SP and one perched at Caballo Dairy
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	A few at Caballo Lake SP, Elephant Butte SP and the Caballo Dairy
<b>Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)</b>		
Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>	Uncommon and widespread. Small rookery setting up shop at Tingley Beach.
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Pelecanidae (Pelicans)</b>		
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	A few at Elephant Butte SP and one at Bosque del Apache
<b>Ardeidae (Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns)</b>		
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	Present at most sites with water
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	One present at Caballo Lake SP
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	A few at Tingley Beach SP
<b>Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)</b>		
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	One seen south of Bosque del Apache
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>	Common at Las Vegas NWR and Bosque del Apache
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	One at Percha Dam SP
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Uncommon and widespread
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	A few at Bosque del Apache and below Caballo Lake SP
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Common and widespread. Good looks at "Harlan's" Hawk near San Antonio



Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	A few at Bosque del Apache, a few at Las Vegas NWR
<b>Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)</b>		
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	One at Percha Dam SP and one at Tingley Beach.
<b>Picidae (Woodpeckers)</b>		
Williamson's Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus thyroideus</i>	One at Cienega Canyon in Cibola National Forest
Red-naped Sapsucker (H)	<i>Sphyrapicus nuchalis</i>	Heard calling in Water Canyon
Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	Several birds around the lower sections of Water Canyon
American Three-toed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides dorsalis</i>	Heard at the Santa Fe Ski Area
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>	Widespread and common
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>	A few seen at most montane sites
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	A few at Tingley Beach, Rio Grande Nature Center and Bosque del Apache
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)</b>		
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	Common and widespread
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	One very cooperative bird at Bosque del Apache
Prairie Falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	A close fly-by at Elephant Butte SP
<b>Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)</b>		
Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	A few along the Rio Grande at Tingley Beach and Percha Dam SP
Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>	Uncommon during the second half of the tour
<b>Laniidae (Shrikes)</b>		
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)</b>		
Canada Jay	<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>	A small group at the Santa Fe Ski Area
Pinyon Jay	<i>Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus</i>	A huge flock of over 100 birds seen in Cibola NF below Sandia Crest
Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	Uncommon and widespread at montane sites.

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	<i>Aphelocoma woodhouseii</i>	A few present along the road at Water Canyon
Clark's Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga columbiana</i>	A few fly-overs at Sandia Crest and below Santa Fe Ski Area
Black-billed Magpie (G)	<i>Pica hudsonicus</i>	A fly-by near Las Vegas NWR
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	Common and widespread near the Rio Grande
Chihuahuan Raven	<i>Corvus cryptoleucus</i>	Uncommon and widespread
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)</b>		
Mountain Chickadee	<i>Poecile gambeli</i>	Common in montane habitats
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	A few small groups along the Rio Grande at Tingley Beach and Rio Grande Nature Center
Bridled Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus wollweberi</i>	A surprise individual at Percha Dam SP
Juniper Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus ridgwayi</i>	A few in mixed flocks along Water Canyon
<b>Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)</b>		
Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>	Uncommon in Chihuahuan Desert Shrublands on the southern part of the tour
<b>Alaudidae (Larks)</b>		
Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	Uncommon and widespread. Huge flocks seen around Las Vegas NWR and Uvas Valley Grassland
<b>Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)</b>		
Bushtit	<i>Psaltiriparus minimus</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Regulidae (Kinglets)</b>		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	Remarkably uncommon this year – a few seen in mixed flocks at Percha Dam and Water Canyon
<b>Sittidae (Nuthatches)</b>		
Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>	Common and widespread
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	Common and widespread in Western Riparian Woodlands at Water Canyon and Tingley Beach
Pygmy Nuthatch (H)	<i>Sitta pygmaea</i>	Heard at Water Canyon and near Santa Fe



<b>Certhiidae (Treecreepers)</b>		
<b>Brown Creeper</b>	<i>Certhia americana</i>	A few birds seen below the Santa Fe Ski Area and at Percha Dam SP
<b>Troglodytidae (Wrens)</b>		
<b>Rock Wren</b>	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>	One bird at Percha Dam SP
<b>Canyon Wren</b>	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>	Several singing at Elephant Butte SP
<b>House Wren</b>	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	A few seen along the Rio Grande at Paseo del Rio and Caballo Lake SP
<b>Marsh Wren</b>	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	A few at Bosque del Apache
<b>Bewick's Wren</b>	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Cactus Wren</b>	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>	Several pairs seen at Uvas Valley Grasslands, Paseo del Rio and Elephant Butte SP
<b>Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)</b>		
<b>Curve-billed Thrasher</b>	<i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Sage Thrasher</b>	<i>Oreoscoptes montanus</i>	Nearly a dozen seen around Uvas Valley Grasslands
<b>Crissal Thrasher</b>	<i>Toxostoma crissale</i>	A few at Bosque del Apache and Caballo Lake SP
<b>Bendire's Thrasher</b>	<i>Toxostoma bendirei</i>	A surprise individual popped up at Uvas Valley Grasslands
<b>Northern Mockingbird</b>	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Sturnidae (Starlings)</b>		
<b>European Starling</b>	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)</b>		
<b>Eastern Bluebird</b>	<i>Sialia sialis</i>	A few present in most bluebird flocks along the Rio Grande
<b>Western Bluebird</b>	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	Large numbers at Caballo Lake SP, Percha Dam SP and Water Canyon Rd.
<b>Mountain Bluebird</b>	<i>Sialis currucoides</i>	Small flocks seen in open grasslands near San Antonio and on the way to Water Canyon
<b>Townsend's Solitaire</b>	<i>Myadestes townsendii</i>	Uncommon and widespread in montane habitats
<b>Hermit Thrush</b>	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	A few at Percha Dam SP
<b>American Robin</b>	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Bombycillidae (Waxwings)</b>		

Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	A few fly-over flocks
<b>Ptiliogonatidae (Silky-flycatchers)</b>		
Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>	Common at Percha Dam and Caballo Lake SP, especially around large patches of mistletoe
<b>Passeridae (Sparrows and Weavers)</b>		
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)</b>		
Sprague's Pipit	<i>Anthus spragueii</i>	One bird flushed at Uvas Valley Grasslands
American Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>	A few along the Rio Grande and in fields near San Antonio
<b>Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)</b>		
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes vespertinus</i>	A few small flocks around Cienega Canyon below Sandia Crest
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	<i>Leucosticte tephrocotis</i>	3 or 4 present at Sandia Crest, all of the interior subspecies.
Black Rosy-Finch	<i>Leucosticte atrata</i>	Around 40 individuals at Sandia Crest
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	<i>Leucosticte australis</i>	2 seen at Sandia Crest
House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	Common and widespread
Cassin's Finch	<i>Haemorhous cassinii</i>	Several flocks seen near Sandia Crest
Pine Siskin	<i>Spinus pinus</i>	Uncommon and widespread
Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	Common and widespread
American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Passerellidae (New World Buntings and Sparrows)</b>		
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	A few seen at Percha Dam SP and Caballo Lake SP
Brewer's Sparrow	<i>Spizella breweri</i>	Three birds seen at Bosque del Apache
Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>	Common in Chihuahuan Desert Shrublands during the second half of tour
American Tree Sparrow	<i>Spizelloides arborea</i>	One bird at Las Vegas NWR
Fox Sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>	One bird at Caballo Lake SP



<b>White-crowned Sparrow</b>	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	Common and widespread
<b>White-throated Sparrow</b>	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	One bird at Bosque del Apache and another seen at Caballo Lake SP
<b>Sagebrush Sparrow</b>	<i>Artemisiospiza nevadensis</i>	A flock of about 10 individuals seen at Uvas Valley Grasslands
<b>Vesper Sparrow</b>	<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Savannah Sparrow</b>	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	Common at Bosque del Apache
<b>Song Sparrow</b>	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Lincoln's Sparrow</b>	<i>Melospiza lincolnii</i>	A few birds at Caballo Lake SP and Percha Dam SP
<b>Swamp Sparrow</b>	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	One bird at Bosque del Apache
<b>Canyon Towhee</b>	<i>Melospiza fusca</i>	A few at Bosque del Apache, Paseo del Rio and Caballo Lake SP
<b>Rufous-crowned Sparrow</b>	<i>Aimophila ruficeps</i>	One or two birds around Elephant Butte SP
<b>Spotted Towhee</b>	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)</b>		
<b>Yellow-headed Blackbird</b>	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>	A large flock at Elephant Butte SP
<b>Eastern Meadowlark</b>	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Western Meadowlark</b>	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Red-winged Blackbird</b>	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Brown-headed Cowbird</b>	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	A few birds in the large blackbird flocks at Caballo Dairy
<b>Brewer's Blackbird</b>	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	Uncommon and widespread
<b>Great-tailed Grackle</b>	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	Common and widespread
<b>Parulidae (New World Warblers)</b>		
<b>Yellow-rumped Warbler</b>	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	Notably scarce this year with only a few seen at Percha Dam SP
<b>Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)</b>		
<b>Pyrrhuloxia</b>	<i>Cardinalis sinuatus</i>	Uncommon at Bosque del Apache, Paseo del Rio and Caballo Lake SP