

# Arizona

25 August-9 September 1998

## Participants:

Alan & Chris Amery

Amanda Callaghan

Bob & Sue Hampson

Adam Kellett

David Long

Veronica & Hugh Owen

Keith & Ann Powrie

David & Ann Smith

Anthony Spraggins

Connell & Anona Walford



Picture: Anna's Hummingbird

## Leaders:

Vaughan Ashby

Stuart Healy

**Day 1:** Departed London at 11.00 & after a re-fuelling stop at Chicago O'Hare, arrived in Phoenix at 17.00. After picking up the hire vehicles we drove south for about 2 ½ hours to Tucson, our base for the next 3 nights. Birding en-route was limited to that we saw out of the minibus windows such as Turkey Vultures & Mourning Doves.

**Day 2:** In Tucson Mountain Park along the way to the Desert Museum we picked up a few common species including Cactus & Rock Wrens & Curve-billed Thrasher. We spent most of the morning at the museum seeing new species. The bird we wanted most from here was Costa's Hummingbird but we had to settle for a female! Other birds included Gila Woodpecker Verdin, Purple Martin (lots), Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Phainopepla, Northern Cardinal, Yellow Warbler & Hooded Oriole. Nearby, at the intersection of Sandario and Mile Wide roads, we found Harris's Hawk & Gilded Flicker. In the afternoon we headed to the Catalina Mountains and spent most of our time in Rose Canyon, where we were hoping for Red-faced Warbler. Despite much searching however, we didn't come across any, the only birds singing were Plumbeous Vireo & Grace's Warbler. Everything else we found was mostly through hard work and included Pygmy & White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creeper, Mountain Chickadee, Western Bluebird, Olive, Wilson's, Hermit & Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warblers, Pine Siskin & Lincoln's Sparrow. Other interesting birds were a pair of soaring Peregrine Falcons and a dead female Red Crossbill hanging from a length of fishing line. On the way down the mountain, a stop at Windy Point produced White-throated Swift, Canyon & Bewick's Wrens, Virginia's Warbler & Spotted Towhee.

**Day 3:** We started at San Xavier Mission where several Burrowing Owls were an immediate find at the cemetery but Rufous-winged Sparrow (adult and two young) proved very elusive before we all saw them well. We then tried for the thrasher 'grand slam' but found only Curve-billed & Crissal, in the process however, we also saw Gambel's Quail, Cooper's Hawk, Greater Roadrunner, Inca & White-winged Doves, Gilded Flicker,

Canyon & Abert's Towhees, Blue Grosbeak and Lark & Black-throated Sparrows. Next, we headed to Marana Pecan Grove. On the way, a fortuitous stop for Lark Bunting on Trico Road also produced Bendire's Thrasher perched on a power pole, singing, on a late August morning at almost 100 degrees! The pecan grove was quite productive despite being very hot, with Peregrine Falcon, Common Ground-dove, Vermilion Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, Horned Lark, Townsend's, Wilson's & MacGillivray's Warblers and lots of Lark Sparrows & Lesser Goldfinches. A brief stop at Green Valley sewage ponds shortly before they closed at 2pm was also productive if extremely hot. Shorebirds were numerous and we saw Least, Western, Baird's & Spotted Sandpipers, a juvenile Long-billed Curlew, lots of Wilson's Phalaropes, Green-winged & Cinnamon Teal & a few Northern Shovelers. Mid-afternoon we birded the lower portion of Madera Canyon where it was fairly quiet. Among the birds seen between the Santa Rita Lodge and Proctor Road were Acorn Woodpecker, Greater Roadrunner, Mexican Jay, Broad-billed, Anna's, Black-chinned & Magnificent Hummingbirds, Black Phoebe, Western Wood-pewee, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Hutton's & Warbling Vireo's, Painted Redstart, Yellow-eyed Junco and Black-headed & Blue Grosbeaks. We ended the day in the grassland where Cassin's & Botteri's Sparrows were still singing, and eventually saw Botteri's before heading back into Tucson with an unscheduled stop to let a Tarantula cross the road!

**Day 4:** Back to the Madera Canyon grassland and soon picked up Cassin's Sparrow. At Florida Wash a Varied Bunting was perched up and singing, but Bell's Vireo was less co-operative. Also here were Ash-throated Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, MacGillivray's & Virginia's Warblers and a Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, which we nearly trod on! Next we headed up-canyon in search of trogons. It took us quite some time to find a male Elegant Trogon, initially elusive but eventually very co-operative & still acting territorially very late in the season. Our search was enlivened by the presence of an adult and cub Black Bear within a few yards of us! Other birds in the canyon included Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Hermit & Black-throated Gray Warblers. We then tried unsuccessfully to find Lazuli Bunting along the perimeter road at Nogales Sewage Ponds as they were temporarily closed to birders, but a flock of 70 White-faced Ibis were a consolation. After checking into our hotel in Nogales for a 2-night stay, we visited Kino Springs where we saw both adult and immature Gray Hawks, Black-bellied Whistling-duck, Tropical Kingbird & Belted but no Green Kingfisher, possibly because of the number of fishermen.

**Day 5:** Our day at California Gulch turned out quite eventful. As Stuart went to unlock his van at 3:30am, he realised that the key was in the vehicle, so a call to a locksmith was required! As if that were not enough, the other van had a flat tyre about halfway into the gulch. However, we decided to "get the sparrow" first and fix it later. The season's most co-operative Five-striped Sparrow was singing at the second stream crossing, but spent most of its time perched very low and difficult to see. Fortunately, however, the bird at the first stream crossing was also singing and very co-operative. Other birds in the gulch included Zone-tailed Hawks, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Nashville, Yellow, Wilson's & MacGillivray's Warblers, Western & Summer Tanagers & Varied Bunting. On the way out we saw a group of about 20 Bushtits. We spent the afternoon at Kino Springs where it was very hot and buggy (chiggers), but again we could not find a Green Kingfisher. We saw a decent variety of species though, including Gray Hawk, Least & Spotted Sandpipers, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Belted Kingfisher, Willow Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, Barn, Northern Rough-winged, Bank & Tree Swallows, Lucy's Warbler, the only Eastern Bluebird of the tour and lots of Lazuli Buntings.

**Day 6:** We spent a very productive morning at Patagonia Lake State Park in less than ideal conditions, most of the east trail was flooded and very muddy. Migrants were however, very much in evidence and we saw over 50 species in about 4½ hours including Western Grebe, Neotropical Cormorant, Black-bellied Whistling-duck, Green Heron, Sora Rail, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Northern Beardless-tyrannulet, Dusky Flycatcher, Dusky-capped & Olive-sided Flycatchers, Northern Mockingbird (doing a perfect Western Scrub-Jay impersonation), lots of Bell's Vireo's still singing, Orange-crowned, Lucy's, Yellow, Nashville, Virginia's, Wilson's & MacGillivray's Warblers & Lazuli Bunting. A stop at Paton's did not produce many hummingbird species, just Broad-billed, Anna's, Violet-crowned, Black-chinned & Rufous/Allen's, but the number of individuals was very

impressive and the warmth of the welcome very pleasing, even if a very large dead tree did decided to fall over at the bottom of the garden, waking those in a slumber in the afternoon heat, rather abruptly! A quick check of the Roadside Rest failed to produce Thick-billed Kingbird and confirmed that the Rose-throated Becards had abandoned their second nesting attempt. We did see two trip birds here though, American Black Vulture and Western Tanager. We found Thick-billed Kingbirds at the stream crossing on nearby Salerno Road where another good find was a Greater Pewee, not so much that it was present but the fact that it was singing enabling us to find it. After checking into our hotel in Sierra Vista for a 3-night stay, we ended our day with a brief visit to the San Pedro House for Lesser Nighthawk but disappointingly, we saw only two. That evening Stuart was saddened to learn that "Smitty", the custodian of the Spotted Owls & famous Arizona birder had died earlier in the day.

**Day 7:** Started the day in Garden Canyon grassland where Botteri's, Cassin's & Grasshopper Sparrows were still singing and large flocks of Lark & Chipping Sparrows were present. Large numbers of Violet-green Swallows were on the wires. Sawmill Canyon was very quiet but plenty of Buff-breasted Flycatchers were still present, some still feeding young and a very co-operative Strickland's Woodpecker was working a tree at the canyon entrance as we arrived. We then walked nearly a mile up the steep Scheelite Canyon but were unable to find a Spotted Owl as they had been radio tagged a few weeks previous and had become elusive. We did however, find Dusky & Cordilleran Flycatchers, Wilson's, Townsend's, Nashville, Virginia's, Black-throated Gray & a superb Red-faced Warbler which made the effort seem worth it except for Vaughan who fell over coming down! The afternoon visit to Ramsey Canyon was slow except for Swainson's and Zone-tailed Hawks along the entrance road and White-eared Hummingbird at the feeders. An early evening visit to Beatty's in Miller Canyon was however, very productive and we saw 11 species of 'hummers' from 5:30-6:30pm: Broad-billed, White-eared (several), Violet-crowned Blue-throated, Magnificent, Black-chinned, Anna's, Costa's (immature male), Calliope (female), Broad-tailed & numerous Rufous/Allen's types. Our last bird of the day came in Carr Canyon where a very friendly Whiskered Screech-owl allowed all participants to get outstanding views. After 6 days in the field our trip list stood at 171!

**Day 8:** We began at the Highway 90 crossing of the San Pedro River and saw about 50 species here from 6:15-9:45am. In the grassland, in addition to the breeding and still singing Botteri's & Cassin's Sparrows, many migrant/wintering sparrows were now present and we saw Lark, Chipping, Brewer's & Vesper. Other breeding residents still present and vocalising included Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Tropical Kingbird, Yellow Warbler & Summer Tanager. Migrants seen were Olive-sided, Dusky & Hammond's Flycatchers, Nashville, MacGillivray's & Wilson's Warblers, Green-tailed Towhee, Lazuli & Lark Buntings. A brief visit to Sierra Vista sewage ponds on the way back to town produced only a few species including White-faced Ibis, Sora Rail, Swainson's Hawk and lots of Yellow-headed Blackbirds. For most of the group, the middle of the day was spent visiting Tombstone and seeing the OK Corral & Boothill Cemetery. Those who braved the heat and bugs at St. David Monastery were rewarded with almost 30 species included Zone-tailed Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Northern Beardless-tyrannulet, Olive-sided & Pacific-slope Flycatchers, MacGillivray's Warbler & Brewer's Sparrow. Late afternoon at Beatty's was also rewarding, but less so today for 'hummers' as we concentrated on nearby birds which included Western Scrub-jay, Cassin's Vireo, Virginia's & Black-throated Gray Warblers & Western Tanager. However, the best was yet to come. Acting on a tip from another visitor, we slowly drove the road as we left Miller Canyon and bingo, male and female Montezuma Quail perched on a rock just a few feet away. We ended the day in Garden Canyon trying to relocate Grasshopper Sparrow, which we did, but unfortunately seen only briefly as darkness fell. Our first Bullock's Oriole of the trip was also in the grassland. Our attention now turned to Western Screech-owl but it proved very difficult (often the case post-breeding). Stuart however persevered and eventually coaxed the bird out for everyone to have fantastic views perched in the open for about a minute. Once again Stuart's skill had given us a very difficult bird. During the search for the owl, many Common Poorwills had been calling on this warm and moonlit night and our good fortune continued as on the drive back all the occupants of both vans saw a very co-operative bird sitting on the 'blacktop' (we call it tarmac!). It would

have been a rather amusing sight for a bystander to see two minibuses driving along the road side by side at 5 mph with their headlights full on! A excellent end to a very productive day.

**Day 9:** On our way to the Chiricahuas, we spent the morning at Whitewater Draw in the Sulphur Springs Valley with Chihuahuan Raven, Harris's & Swainson's Hawks & a couple of Northern Harriers on Davis Road on the journey. Whitewater Draw was very productive, however, not so much for waterbirds as one might expect, but more so for migrants. In the only heavily vegetated area (next to the south pond) in addition to the regular Great Horned & Barn Owls (the former of which gave superb photographic opportunities), we found a good selection of migrants including Western Wood-pewee, Dusky & Gray Flycatchers, Warbling Vireo, Orange-crowned & Wilson's Warblers, 2 Northern Waterthrushes, Painted Redstart, Clay-colored Sparrow (normally very rare in Arizona) & Lazuli Bunting. Amongst the birds on and around the ponds were Black-crowned Night-heron, Grey Plover, American Avocet, Long-billed Curlew, Baird's Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Ring-billed Gull, Vermilion Flycatcher, Lark Bunting & Yellow-headed Blackbird. Arriving in the Chiricahuas, Pinery Canyon Road was a little less productive than hoped for because of the strong wind. In particular, Mexican Chickadee was very elusive and despite the fact that we found a few small flocks, only a few saw them. Other species along the road included Band-tailed Pigeon, Greater Pewee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and our only Hepatic Tanager of the trip (unfortunately a heard only for most participants). Rustler Park was not much better but we did find more Mexican Chickadees and around 6 Hermit Warblers (how about that for an oxymoron!). Other birds here included Hairy Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush and Wilson's & Grace's Warblers. We spent the night at the delightful Portal Peak Lodge.

**Day 10:** We began on Paradise Road looking for and seeing Black-chinned Sparrow and Western Scrub-jay. The sparrow was very elusive, but by walking the slopes we eventually found quite a few and got some excellent views. The jays, on the other hand, were very co-operative flying up and down Silver Creek. Other birds seen or heard during our search included Cooper's Hawk, Band-tailed Pigeon, Western & Cassin's Kingbirds, Cactus, Rock & Bewick's Wrens, Verdin, Curve-billed Thrasher, Black-throated & Rufous-crowned Sparrows & Green-tailed Towhee. A stop at the George Walker House failed to produce Juniper Titmouse but other birds seen or heard around the feeders were Acorn Woodpecker, Blue-throated, Magnificent & Rufous Hummingbirds, Greater Pewee calling from the creek, Northern Cardinal, Black-headed Grosbeak, a lone Brewer's Sparrow, Lesser Goldfinch & an extremely tame Pine Siskin. Next, we drove the Rustler Park Road again in search of Mexican Chickadee and this time we found a large and co-operative flock and everyone saw them well. Other birds along the way were Olive-sided Flycatcher, Hutton's Vireo, Hermit Warbler. We made another unsuccessful stop at the George Walker House for the titmouse and then decided to find the bird "the old fashioned way" near Paradise Cemetery and it didn't take too long to find one! A stop at Dave Utterback's yard in Portal was very productive despite the constant moderate rainfall. We saw a total of 11 hummingbird species here in good numbers: Broad-billed (unexpected), Violet-crowned, Blue-throated, Magnificent, Black-chinned, Anna's, Calliope (several females), Broad-tailed, many Rufous/Allen's type with a single adult male Rufous that was definitely not dominant among all the immatures. The real highlight was however, a superb male Lucifer Hummingbird. After a successful stop on Portal Road for Scaled Quail (for everyone except Vaughan who kept looking the wrong side of the bush!), we headed north towards the White Mountains via the deserts of New Mexico. We saw little along the way except for a single Sharp-shinned. Back in Arizona, a quick check of Luna Lake in virtual darkness produced only Pied-billed Grebe & Spotted Sandpiper while Great Horned Owl was seen atop a telephone pole on the last leg of the journey into Springerville for a 2 night stay.

**Day 11:** It was cold atop the 10,200 feet Green's Peak around 6:30am as everyone gathered with great expectancy in the "powerline cut" just below the tower. Stuart had seen a male Blue Grouse as recently as 19<sup>th</sup> August so was quite hopeful. However, after about 20 minutes of failing to attract a bird, the enthusiasm was beginning to wane. Several of us then worked the West Woods to try and locate the bird, as the rest watched the clearing in case we flushed one. Fortunately, it did not take long to find a male Blue Grouse, initially located by his wing beats. We walked methodically towards the sound and quickly located the bird and managed to steer it

towards the rest of the group. It then flew across the clearing and perched 25 feet up in a tree at the edge of the East Woods. Because of the steepness of the slope, eye level views from around 50 feet were the order of the day for everyone. For good measure, the bird partially displayed. Among the other birds that we found in the Green's Peak area were 2 Solitary Sandpipers (in a small pond on FR117 near Highway 260), Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's), Wilson's & Townsend's Warblers, Gray-headed Junco & Vesper Sparrow. After breakfast at the County Cafe in Greer we found Green-tailed Towhee & Red Crossbill in the RV resort behind the cafe. Next, we headed to the Little Colorado River south of town to look for American Dipper. Since Stuart had missed it here a couple of weeks ago, he therefore wasn't very hopeful. As we arrived at the parking area several parties were fishing, increasing concern, however, immediately on leaving the vehicles and walking the few yards to the river, bingo, American Dipper at very close range, just a few yards from a family of four who were fishing! We immediately moved on to South Fork to look for Pinyon Jay, Clark's Nutcracker and Townsend's Solitaire, arriving around 11:00am. As expected, the jays had headed out for the day, although we did hear a couple. No sign of the nutcracker either but we did find Townsend's Solitaire perched high on a snag. We found some 20 species between the river and campground including Hairy Woodpecker, Belted Kingfisher, White-throated Swift, Western Wood-pewee, Olive-sided, Hammond's & Dusky Flycatchers, Say's Phoebe & Western Scrub-jay. Next, we headed east to Nelson Reservoir where there were plenty of boaters and fishermen at the North end but the south (marshy) end was quiet. Here we found very little except for Redhead, lots of Sora Rails, a couple of (heard only) Virginia Rails, & Yellow-headed Blackbird. Moving on to Nutrioso for Lewis' Woodpecker, normally reliable and easy to find in the Cottonwoods near the Post Office, and today was no exception with an estimated 12-15 birds present in various states of plumage, providing excellent views. Continuing east through the beautiful scenery, we visited Luna Lake where someone called out "bird with a white head" and to the delight of everyone it was an adult Bald Eagle. Luna Lake is one of the few places that they breed in Arizona. Our target birds here were Williamson's Sapsucker and Mountain Bluebird. As we exited the vehicles near the campground, a male Williamson's Sapsucker flew over our heads and into the forest. After a 30 minute cat and mouse game, everyone finally got to see the bird. He would fly from tree to tree, starting at the base and working up into the needles. It was just a matter of catching him at the base of the trunk to get a good look. No sign of the Mountain Bluebirds that are normally reliable here but we saw about 25 species including Osprey, Lewis' Woodpecker, Belted Kingfisher, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Say's Phoebe, Western Bluebird & Lark Sparrow. Our final stop of the day was at Becker Lake back in Springerville where at around 6:00pm in cold & windy conditions we saw Pied-billed Grebe, White-faced Ibis, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ruddy Duck, Common Merganser, Sora Rail, American Coot, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, 2 Black Terns and several hundred Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

**Day 12:** Our only Common Nighthawks of the trip were seen in Springerville, by just a couple of the group as they went for early morning coffee. We began the day at South Fork in an attempt to catch Pinyon Jays before they left the roost, but unfortunately we missed them again (another birder had heard them earlier). However, it wasn't a wasted journey since we did find Northern Goshawk and several Townsend's Solitaires. After searching most of yesterday for Mountain Bluebird, we found a flock of 50+ birds feeding low in a field on Highway 260 at the intersection with FR117. What a treat for everyone, that colour of blue is to die for! We continued on to Sunrise Campground where our target birds were Gray Jay & Clark's Nutcracker. Red Crossbills were calling as we began the search with light rain falling. It wasn't long before we saw a single Clark's Nutcracker flying from the campground up the mountain towards the ski area. We trudged around the campground as the rain continued sporadically, making us nearly give up at one point. Stuart left the campground briefly to check on the road to the ski area (closed because of the holiday) and just as he returned heard the whistles of Gray Jays, which the group were already watching! We had excellent views as 4 birds foraged around the campsites. Not too much else seen here except Band-tailed Pigeon, American Crow, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Virginia's, Townsend's & Wilson's Warblers. Over at Sunrise Lake we soon found our target Savannah Sparrow, another very local breeder in east central Arizona. A Common Loon was on the lake together with Eared Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Canada Goose, American Wigeon, 2 Buffleheads & Northern Harrier. We left the beautiful White Mountains after a mostly successful day and a half to begin the sightseeing portion of the trip. As we approached

Petrified Forest NP, a good looking adult Golden Eagle was perched on a pole along Highway 180 and gave the amusing sight of several of the photographers led by Vaughan, creeping up to the fence to photograph it (it could have seen a Jack Rabbit at 2 miles let alone 4 humans at 100 yards!). Another Golden Eagle was seen in the Petrified Forest but birds in this environment are very scarce. Although the NP checklist is around 300 in addition we saw only Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Killdeer, Violet-green, Cliff & Barn Swallows, Common Raven, Rock Wren & surprisingly, House Sparrow! The Petrified Forest was however, an amazing sight with all the calcified logs although the Painted Desert was not at its best on a cloudy, grey day. Driving on to Flagstaff for a 2 night stay we passed through the most spectacular thunderstorm, which cleaned the minibuses nicely!

**Day 13:** A mostly sightseeing day at the south rim of the Grand Canyon, which was very busy on this holiday weekend. En route from Flagstaff along Highway 180 we saw a large flock (100+) of Pinyon Jays and everyone got good 'scope views of perched birds. In the park proper, we came across a total of 17 species while admiring the views: Turkey Vulture, White-throated Swift, Steller's, Western Scrub & Pinyon Jays (all near the rim), Common Raven, Mountain Chickadee, Juniper Titmouse, Pygmy & White-breasted Nuthatches, Rock & Canyon Wrens, Western Bluebird, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler, Gray-headed Junco, House Finch & Pine Siskin. It seemed almost sacrilegious however, to birdwatch with the stunning views of the Grand Canyon around us! In mid-afternoon most of the group took a sightseeing flight over the canyon and the remainder birded in the forest, along FR302 that starts near the airport. Nothing new but the 15 species included Rufous Hummingbird, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Clark's Nutcracker, Plumbeous Vireo & Lazuli Bunting with most activity was centred on a small wet area. The group who took the sightseeing flight over the Grand Canyon were blessed with good weather and agreed that it was an experience of a lifetime. On our return to Flagstaff, we birded the burn area along FR151 (Hart Prairie Rd) to look for Three-toed Woodpecker. Very little activity as dusk approached with only Great Horned Owl (heard), Williamson's Sapsucker and an unidentified nighthawk of interest. Everything except flight pattern pointed to Common but we left it as unidentified.

**Day 14:** We returned to FR151 to look for Three-toed Woodpecker, again unsuccessfully. Only a few birds seen including Hairy Woodpecker, Plumbeous Vireo & Red Crossbill. Next, we headed to the Snowbowl area to get better views of Clark's Nutcracker and saw several perched birds. Other birds included Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Townsend's Solitaire, Orange-crowned Warbler, Vesper Sparrow & Red Crossbill. Birding our way back to Phoenix along Lower/Upper Lake Mary and Mormon Lake was very disappointing with few waterbirds present and the holiday weekend boaters and fishermen probably didn't help us. Of interest were several White-faced Ibis (all lakes), many Sora Rails at Lower Lake Mary, and 6 Black Terns at Upper Lake Mary and numerous Western Grebes at Mormon Lake. We were hoping for Clark's which apparently bred there this year for a first county record. A stop at Stoneman Lake produced only a soaring Peregrine Falcon and a few Northern Pintail. Eventually arriving back in Phoenix after some monumental traffic jams, we headed out to the ponds at Gilbert Wildlife Area where it was 110+ degrees. We were relieved to find some water (and hence birds) since the ponds are so variable and often dry. We saw a good selection of 25 species including Cinnamon Teal, Black-crowned Night-heron, Sora Rail, Common Moorhen, Black-necked Stilt, Greater Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper and the first Long-billed Dowitchers of the trip.

**Day 15:** Our last morning and a few hardy souls decided to bird, despite the long flight back to London ahead. Fortunately, it was a relatively cool morning. birding the river at 115<sup>th</sup> Avenue was a little difficult due to construction, but we found 30 species in an hour including Great & Snowy Egrets, Great Blue, Green & Black-crowned Night-herons, White-faced Ibis, Osprey, Sora Rail, Hammond's Flycatcher, Blue & Black-headed Grosbeaks, Pyrrhuloxia, Northern Cardinal & Western Tanager. A stop at El Mirage Road pond added 2 more species to our trip list; Lesser Yellowlegs Semipalmated Plover. Also present were Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Long-billed Dowitcher, Least, Western & Baird's Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalarope & many Common Moorhens. Finally, we departed Phoenix about 14.00 on our return flight via San Francisco. Over the two weeks we travelled 2000+ miles, had some fun, saw and heard 247 species of birds, 22 over target, and saw some stunning scenery.