



Arizona in Winter

February 1-5, 2023

Tentative Itinerary

February 1: Flight to Phoenix, Gilbert Water Ranch

If we have time in the afternoon, we will head to the Gilbert Water Ranch. There are bound to be lots of wintering birds present and we will start picking up our first lifers. There often is a rarity around.

Lodging: Overnight on the south end of Phoenix

February 2: Santa Cruz Flats, Pena Blanca Lake

A prime area for wintering birds is called the Santa Cruz flats, an agricultural area between Phoenix and Tucson. Targets are Crested Caracara, Mountain Plover, Chestnut-collared, and McCown's Longspur and Lark Bunting. We won't turn down Ferruginous Hawk or Burrowing Owl should we happen to run into one - and we probably will. We will also carefully check the Red Rock feedlot. After that, we will either head over to Pena Blanca Lake or work one of the access points of the De Anza trail; there are several opportunities.

Lodging: Overnight in Nogales

February 3: Patagonia area, San Rafael Valley

Patagonia is always worth a visit, winter or summer. The Paton's feeders should have a lingering Violet-crowned Hummingbird. Early morning we will spend in the San Rafael Grasslands, where a small number of Baird's Sparrows winter. We will need luck to see one. Other targets include longspurs, Short-eared Owl, Grasshopper Sparrow, Lillian's Eastern Meadowlark, and, on the way in, the Mexican subspecies of Eastern Bluebird. In the afternoon, we will visit Patagonia Lake State Park which is always delightful as there are a

variety of habitats.

Lodging: Overnight in Green Valley

February 4: Madera Canyon, Santa Cruz River Valley

We will get an early start with an attempt to find Rufous-capped Warbler at Florida Canyon. After spending a little more time in lower Madera Canyon including the Santa Rita lodge, we will try a variety of areas in the Santa Cruz River Valley, including Amado, Rio Rico, Tubac, and Tumacacori. The upper areas of Madera Canyon are typically relatively inactive in winter. We will head back to Phoenix in the late afternoon.

Lodging: Overnight near Phoenix

February 5: The Thrasher Experience. Flight from Phoenix back to Portland

Early morning we will visit an area west of Phoenix called the Thrasher Spot. Not only is there a chance for 5 species of thrashers including LeConte's, Crissal, and Bendire's, but we may also get to compare Sagebrush and Bell's Sparrow side by side. Before flying back to Portland, we will visit one more site en route.