

# MADERA CANYON BIRDS

December 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019

A complete checklist of Madera Canyon birds is available for download on the Friends of Madera Canyon web site (link below) and in print at the Visitor Information Station as you enter the Canyon and in some brochure boxes attached to trail map panels in the Canyon. To learn of unusual species being seen in the Canyon and Arizona in general, go to the local birding hotline on the web at: <http://birding.aba.org/maillist/AZ>.

## General Summary:

Abundant tropical storm moisture this fall has triggered an abundance of wild seed and resulted in a good flow for Madera Creek. Winter sparrows have yet to discover the seed crop. Perhaps abundance of food elsewhere has delayed their arrival to the Madera Canyon area. The forecast for the winter 2017-18 is for much of Arizona including Madera Canyon to be warmer and wetter than normal.

## Read the following for more bird possibilities:

**Quail/Turkey:** Three species of resident quail can be found in and near Madera Canyon. Only the **Montezuma Quail** can be found in the canyon proper and rarely out on to the grasslands. Though common in Madera Canyon they are seldom seen. Look for them crossing the road or any trail and listen for the distinctive calls and song in quiet areas of the canyon. **Gambel's & Scaled Quail** occur on the grasslands and in desert scrub habitats at the base of and below Madera Canyon. **Gould's Wild Turkey** can be found nearly anywhere in Madera Canyon, particularly at feeding stations.

**Diurnal Raptors:** Most of the raptors near Madera Canyon will be encountered along the Whitehouse Canyon Road from Green Valley. **Red-tailed Hawks** are fairly common, frequenting roadside power poles. Less numerous are **American Kestrels** perched and **Northern Harriers** cruising over the grasslands. **Cooper's Hawks** and occasionally **Sharp-shinned Hawk** may be found in the Canyon proper. **Northern Goshawks** are rare residents in the Canyon and when found are usually at higher elevations. Other raptors less frequently encountered include: **Golden Eagle**, and **Prairie & Peregrine Falcons**. **Loggerhead Shrikes** often perch along Whitehouse Canyon Rd below the Canyon.

**Doves/Cuckoos:** A few hardy **Mourning & White-winged Doves** remain in the Canyon through winter, frequenting feeding stations. **Band-tailed Pigeons** are scarce in the mountains during the winter. **Greater Roadrunners** are common all year around Proctor and down into the desert.

**Nocturnal Birds:** Five species of Owls occur in the Madera Canyon during winter, they are difficult to find during the day but may be heard after dusk. **Great Horned Owls** are most often encountered (heard) from the lower portion of the Canyon. **Western Screech-Owls** are common in the desert washes and around the Proctor Road area. **Whiskered Screech-Owls** are common within the Canyon, they can be heard from any of the parking/picnic areas from Whitehouse upwards and sometimes can be seen poking their head out of a cavity during the day. **Northern Pygmy-Owls** occur throughout the Canyon from the Proctor Road Area & up Canyon and can sometimes be heard calling during the daytime. **Spotted Owls** inhabit the forests of the upper Canyon and are difficult to find because of scarcity and remoteness. **Barn Owls** are rarely encountered.

**Hummingbirds:** A few **Anna's** and **Costa's** Hummingbirds may winter in the desert washes at and below Proctor. A few **Magnificent** and **Anna's** winter near feeders. An adult male **Blue-throated Hummingbird** has been defending the feeders at the Santa Rita Lodge through the fall and remain throughout the winter. This species has become rather rare in this mountain range during the past several years.

An adult male **Elegant Trogon** has again remained in Madera Canyon for the winter. Most of the observations lately have been along the creek between Proctor Road and the Madera Picnic Area.

**Woodpeckers:** **Acorn Woodpeckers** are very conspicuous around all the parking/picnic areas above Proctor Rd. **Ladder-backed Woodpeckers** are common along the Proctor trail and down into the desert. **Arizona Woodpeckers** are generally found from Proctor and higher in the Canyon. A few **Gila Woodpeckers** wander into the Canyon during the winter. **Hairy Woodpeckers** are uncommon in the forested area high in the mountains. **Red-naped** and **Williamson's** (rare) **Sapsuckers** can be found in the Canyon, particularly at berry bushes. **Northern (Red-shafted) Flickers** are common throughout the Canyon in the winter.

**Flycatchers:** **Say's Phoebe** can usually be found near the entrance station and along Proctor Road. Other flycatchers that could be encountered include: **Greater Pewee** (rare), **Hammond's**, **Gray**, & **Ash-throated Flycatchers**, **Cassin's Kingbird** (rare) and **Black Phoebe**.

An occasional **Plumbeous Vireo** may remain in the lower portion of the Canyon through the winter. **Hutton's Vireos** are fairly common throughout the Canyon; identification becomes the challenge with the return of the abundant wintering **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**.

**Mexican Jays** are a standard feature throughout the Canyon. **Steller's Jays** (uncommon) are in the fir forest high on the mountains. The **Common Ravens** are the only ravens to be found in the Canyon. **Chihuahuan Ravens** may be found near Green Valley. **Western Scrub-Jays** are rare in this canyon.

**White-breasted Nuthatches**, **Bridled Titmice**, **Bushtits**, **Brown Creepers**, and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** are commonly found in flocks in the juniper-oak woodlands. **Verdins** are permanent residents found in the mesquite grasslands at and below Whitehouse Picnic Area. Look for **Orange-crowned** (uncommon), **Yellow-rumped**, **Black-throated Gray** (uncommon), **Townsend's**, and **Olive Warblers** in these mixed species flocks. A few **Painted Redstarts** setup winter territories along Madera Creek and get active when the flocks pass through their territory.

Five species of **wrens** are often found in and around the Canyon: **Cactus** at lower elevations, **House**, **Bewick's**, **Canyon**, and **Rock** in the Canyon. **Winter** and **Pacific Wren** have been found in past winters in the Canyon but are not to be expected. **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** are present in winter, though rare. **Black-tailed Gnatcatchers** might be found in the mesquite grasslands below Proctor. **Black-capped Gnatcatchers** are being reported along the Proctor loop trail.

During the winter, thrushes gravitate towards berry producing bushes anywhere in the Canyon; **American Robins** are uncommon and irregular, **Eastern Bluebirds** are uncommon at higher elevations, **Western Bluebirds** are present in low numbers, **Townsend's Solitaires** are rare, and **Hermit Thrushes** are common all year. **Northern Mockingbirds** and **Curve-billed Thrashers** remain along Whitehouse Canyon Rd year round. **Crissal Thrashers** can

sometimes be found along Proctor Road. **Phainopeplas** are common in the mesquite grassland all year.

**Hepatic Tanager** is the only tanager that regularly overwinters. A few **Northern Cardinals** and **Pyrrhuloxias** can be found in the mesquite grasslands on the way up to the Canyon and around Proctor. **Green-tailed, Spotted,** and **Canyon Towhees** can be found throughout the Canyon, particularly along the Canyon bottom. Normally there would be lots of sparrows in the grasslands below the Canyon, so far not this winter. The route between Florida Wash and Proctor Rd has been productive for sparrows. Possibilities include: **Cassin's** (rare), **Rufous-winged, Rufous-crowned, Chipping, Brewer's, Black-chinned** (uncommon), **Grasshopper** (rare), **Vesper, Lark, Black-throated, Savannah, Lincoln's,** and **White-crowned Sparrows,** and **Lark Bunting.** **Dark-eyed Juncos** (of several subspecies) are common throughout, particularly around feeders and **Yellow-eyed Juncos** that nested high on the mountain come down to feeders in winter.

**Eastern (Lilian's) Meadowlark** is common in the grasslands; sometimes **Western Meadowlarks** may be found. **Scott's Orioles** rarely overwinter. **Lesser Goldfinches, Pine Siskins,** and **House Finches** dominate the feeders in the Canyon. Other finches are typically rare in the Canyon.

See an unusual bird or one not on this or the bird checklist, email:  
[info@friendsofmaderacanyon.org](mailto:info@friendsofmaderacanyon.org).

To learn what unusual species are being seen in the canyon and Arizona in general, link to:  
<http://birding.aba.org/maillist/AZ>

## Laurens Halsey for The Friends of Madera Canyon

### Note to eBirders:

If you are entering eBird data for Madera Canyon there are a number of eBird hotspots in Madera Canyon. There are hotspots for each of the parking & picnic areas, feeding stations, and a number of the trails. Please use these hotspots when ever possible and do not merge a hike or drive through the canyon into one checklist. Also beware that the Pima – Santa Cruz County line cuts east-west through Madera Canyon. County boundaries are important for eBird data collection, analysis, & reporting. The county line crosses Madera Canyon Road at the Madera Picnic Area, about at the midpoint of the big parking area on your left as you head up canyon. If you can see the Santa Rita Lodge, you are in Santa Cruz County so please use the “Madera Canyon—Santa Rita Lodge” hotspot. Otherwise use the “Madera Canyon—Madera Picnic Area” hotspot. If birding at the Bog Springs Campground, which is bisected by the county line, use the “Madera Canyon—Bog Springs campground” unless the birds you are noting are on the north side of the campground, then create a personal spot that is in Pima County.