



## DESCRIPTION

In the summer of 2003 Willie and I were exploring one of Patton's old training camps in the nearby desert. Looking south, I saw what looked like water. Hoping it wasn't a mirage, we headed in that direction and found a mecca for birds and dragonflies. So far we've recorded over 120 birds there!

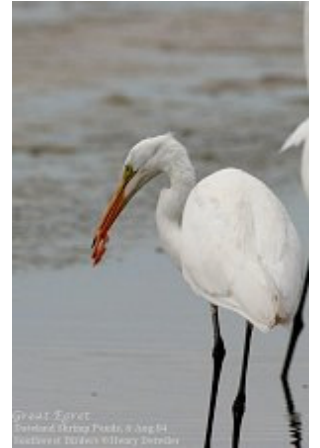
Beginning in late spring (in 2005 it was May), Tark Rush fills up and stocks these ten large, multi-acre ponds with shrimp fry. As the shrimp mature all manner of birds (see lists below) descend upon the ponds to feast, until Tark harvests the shrimp in October and the ponds dry out. (In 2004 there were still a few puddles with ducks & shorebirds on Nov 5th.) Winter is slow at the dried-out ponds, with Horned Larks and the occasional Savannah Sparrow.

Use care when driving around the ponds; the dikes are narrow and powdery dirt, and parts may be eroded. If you see the feeding hopper, give it a wide berth, and please don't block any of the dike roads. You can always park south of the drainage canal, or along Ave 64E, and walk in. If you are planning a visit, you might wish to call Tark as a courtesy to find out the status of visiting these private ponds: 928-246-1877

If you come in mid to late summer, keep in mind that you're in the heart of the desert, where afternoon temps often exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Fortunately, water, food, and gas are available at Dateland, immediately south of the I-8 exit. And in the date palm grove immediately south of Dateland, you may find a Barn Owl and an assortment of flycatchers, warblers, and sparrows at the appropriate times of year.



Western and Baird's Sandpipers



Great Egret eating a shrimp

Click on any of the thumbnail pictures to see full-sized photos.



## DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Site #16 on [Yuma Area Overview Map](#)

- From I-8, exit north on Ave 64E (Exit #67)
- Drive north approximately 5.7 miles, over the Gila River Bridge (the river is usually dry as a bone, but 2005 saw it flowing), until you see a low berm on your left (west side of the road)
- Park and walk up onto the dike--you're there!
- The ten ponds extend a mile out to the west.

- On the south side of Exit 67 is a gas station and the Dateland Store, home to date & cactus shakes, burgers, souvenirs, and rest rooms.



Black-necked Stilts  
(adults above & baby below)  
A most numerous shorebird!



(Click on map for aerial photo)

## POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS

During the late spring and summer, migrants are drawn to this oasis in the desert (and not just waders & shorebirds). A sampling of the unusual birds that have appeared over the past few years include:

- Reddish Egret
- Common Tern
- Least Tern
- Sabine's Gull (up to 4 at once in late summer 2004)
- Sanderling
- Ruff
- Red Phalarope
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Purple Martin
- Grasshopper Sparrow

### Regularly occurring migrants include:

- 4 species of grebes
- White-fronted Goose
- Bonaparte's, California, Herring, & Ring-billed Gulls
- Black, Forster's, & Caspian Terns
- just about every shorebird known to Arizona
- Peregrine Falcon
- 5 species of swallows

Many of the permanent residents in the area come to the ponds to drink & eat--some of these are:

- Greater Roadrunner
- Gambel's Quail
- White-winged Dove
- Verdin
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Abert's Towhee
- Horned Lark



Reddish Egret



Black-crowned Night Heron



Semipalmated Plover



Sabine's Gull

This is a record of species that have been seen at the ponds since the summer of 2003. If you've spotted additional birds, send me an e-mail with a sighting date, and I'll add it to the list.

#### Species

Pied-billed Grebe  
Eared Grebe  
American White Pelican  
Brown Pelican

#### Species

Franklin's Gull  
Bonaparte's Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
California Gull

Here are links to three additional web pages with shrimp pond photos.

[Dateland2003](#)

[Yuma\\_Dateland July2004](#)

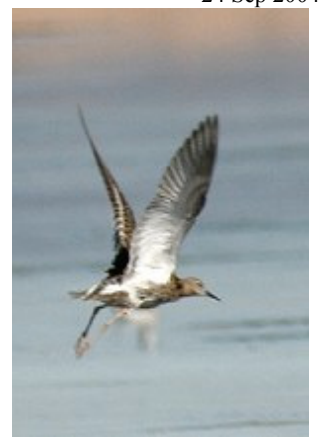
[Dateland091404](#)

Double-crested Cormorant  
 Great Blue Heron  
 Great Egret  
 Snowy Egret  
 Reddish Egret  
 Cattle Egret  
 Black-crowned Night Heron  
 White-faced Ibis  
 Greater White-fronted Goose  
 Gadwall  
 American Wigeon  
 Mallard  
 Blue-winged Teal  
 Cinnamon Teal  
 Northern Shoveler  
 Northern Pintail  
 Green-winged Teal  
 Redhead  
 Ring-necked Duck  
 Common Merganser  
 Ruddy Duck  
 Osprey  
 Northern Harrier  
~~Red-tailed Hawk~~  
 American Kestrel  
 Peregrine Falcon  
 Gambel's Quail  
 American Coot  
 Black-bellied Plover  
 Snowy Plover  
 Semipalmated Plover  
 Killdeer  
 Black-necked Stilt  
 American Avocet  
 Greater Yellowlegs  
 Lesser Yellowlegs  
 Willet  
 Spotted Sandpiper  
 Long-billed Curlew  
 Marbled Godwit  
 Sanderling  
 Semipalmated Sandpiper  
 Western Sandpiper  
 Least Sandpiper  
 Baird's Sandpiper  
 Pectoral Sandpiper  
 Dunlin  
 Ruff  
 Short-billed Dowitcher  
 Long-billed Dowitcher  
 Wilson's Snipe

Herring Gull  
 Sabine's Gull  
 Caspian Tern  
 Common Tern  
 Forster's Tern  
 Least Tern  
 Black Tern  
 Rock Pigeon  
 White-winged Dove  
 Mourning Dove  
 Greater Roadrunner  
 Lesser Nighthawk  
 Vaux's Swift  
 Black Phoebe  
 Say's Phoebe  
 Ash-throated Flycatcher  
 Western Kingbird  
 Loggerhead Shrike  
 Warbling Vireo  
 Common Raven  
 Horned Lark  
 Purple Martin  
 Tree Swallow  
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
 Barn Swallow  
 Cliff Swallow  
 Barn Swallow  
 Verdin  
 Rock Wren  
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
 Mountain Bluebird  
 Northern Mockingbird  
 Curve-billed Thrasher  
 American Pipit  
 Macgillivray's Warbler  
 Orange-crowned Warbler  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler  
 Common Yellowthroat  
 Yellow Warbler  
 Western Tanager  
 Green-tailed Towhee  
 Abert's Towhee  
 Savannah Sparrow  
 Grasshopper Sparrow  
 Song Sparrow  
 White-crowned Sparrow  
 Dark-eyed Junco  
 Blue Grosbeak  
 Red-winged Blackbird  
 Western Meadowlark  
 Yellow-headed Blackbird  
 Brewer's Blackbird



Looking for the Ruff  
24 Sep 2004



The Ruff in flight  
24 Sep 2004



American Avocets wheeling



Short-billed Dowitcher

Wilson's Phalarope  
Red-necked Phalarope  
Red Phalarope  
Turkey Vulture

Great-tailed Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Bullock's Oriole  
House Finch  
Lawrence's Goldfinch

Updated Tuesday, August 09, 2005

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