

## Black Canyon City (Yavapai County)

11 April 2015

By Troy Corman

### Introduction

On 11 April I coordinated an AZFO Expedition team to a rarely birded area of the state...and it is only a 30 min. drive north of Phoenix immediately off Interstate 17! The Agua Fria River passes through the community of Black Canyon City just north of the Maricopa/Yavapai County line. There appears to be an isolated, northern population of Broad-billed Hummingbirds in this area and one of the goals was to assess how widespread and abundant this species is here.

We broke up into teams and during the first half of the morning surveyed about a mile and half section of the surprising lush, Agua Fria River bottom on the west side of town. The river was flowing above ground this entire section, but I understand it is intermittent during the summer here. The area was dominated by tall willows and cottonwoods with some mesquite and tamarisk understory. We managed to identify approx. 55 species here in two hours with highlight being four species of hummingbirds including at least four male Broad-billed Hummingbirds and eight warbler species including first-of-spring MacGillivray's Warbler and a nice male Black-and-White Warbler. Other recent arrivals and spring migrants included Cassin's and Warbling Vireos, Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers, Summer Tanagers, Hooded Orioles, and Lazuli Buntings.

Local resident, Greg Watts, generously invited us to his backyard which is on a ridge overlooking this beautiful riparian area. His two hummingbird feeders were alive with activity of likely 20+ individuals of four species. This included at least one female and three male Broad-billed Hummingbirds. Greg also took us to some desert uplands on the northwestern edge of town where in about 45 minutes our teams added additional species including Scott's Oriole, Gilded Flicker, Lark Bunting, and a Peregrine Falcon.



Figure 1. a) Broad-billed Hummingbird (© Gordon Karre) and



b) Anna's Hummingbird nest (© Gordon Karre).

After lunch we visited the Black Canyon City Heritage Park in the center of town. This includes a pond and short trails through planted riparian habitat. This area was very active even in the middle of the afternoon. Highlights here included soaring Harris's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Green Heron, several Lesser Goldfinch nests with young, a family group of Say's Phoebes with one parent lining a nest for the second brood, and a Killdeer on a nest with eggs.

A few teams birded on their own for another hour along the Agua Fria River, where we added a Zone-tailed Hawk, our seventh raptor of the day. We managed to detect about 80 species which is not bad for a location that is very seldom birded.



*Figure 2. a) Phainopepla (© Gordon Karre) and*

*b) Northern Cardinal (© Gordon Karre)*

*and c) Hooded Oriole (© Gordon Karre).*

I want to thank the fun and energetic team which consisted of Rich Armstrong, Jennifer Haaland, Veronica Heron, Brian Ison, Gordon Karre, Jason Morgan, Duane Morse, Vic Nelson, Walter Thurber, Nick Vandehei, and Greg Watts.

Hope to see you in the field...

## APPENDIX

Table 1. Total species numbers from Black Canyon City expedition on April 11, 2015.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Total #</u>
Mallard	6
Gambel's Quail	16
Great Blue Heron	1
Green Heron	1
Turkey Vulture	9
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Harris's Hawk	1
Zone-tailed Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	1
American Coot	1
Killdeer	2
Eurasian Collared-Dove	20
Inca Dove	6
White-winged Dove	6
Mourning Dove	37
Greater Roadrunner	1
Black-chinned Hummingbird	5
Anna's Hummingbird	27
Costa's Hummingbird	5
Broad-billed Hummingbird	7
Gila Woodpecker	10
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	10
Gilded Flicker	2
American Kestrel	2
Peregrine Falcon	1
Hammond's Flycatcher	2
Dusky Flycatcher	1
[Hammond's/Dusky Flycatcher]	1
Black Phoebe	4
Say's Phoebe	5
Vermilion Flycatcher	1
Ash-throated Flycatcher	2
Western Kingbird	6
Bell's Vireo	7
Cassin's Vireo	2
[Plumbeous/Cassin's Vireo]	1
Warbling Vireo	1
Common Raven	2
Cliff Swallow	2
swallow sp.	3
Verdin	19
Rock Wren	1
Canyon Wren	4
House Wren	6
Marsh Wren	2
Cactus Wren	12
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3
Hermit Thrush	1
Curve-billed Thrasher	4
European Starling	12
Phainopepla	16
Black-and-White Warbler	1
Orange-crowned Warbler	2
Lucy's Warbler	25
MacGillivray's Warbler	1
Common Yellowthroat	4
Yellow Warbler	19
Yellow-rumped Warbler	9
Black-throated Gray Warbler	1
Wilson's Warbler	1
Spotted Towhee	1
Canyon Towhee	1
Abert's Towhee	12
Brewer's Sparrow	3
Lark Sparrow	5
Black-throated Sparrow	9
Lark Bunting	5
Song Sparrow	4
Lincoln's Sparrow	4
White-crowned Sparrow	10
Dark-eyed Junco	2
Summer Tanager	3
Northern Cardinal	20
Lazuli Bunting	5
Red-winged Blackbird	10
Great-tailed Grackle	16
Brown-headed Cowbird	11
Hooded Oriole	3
Scott's Oriole	1
House Finch	24
Lesser Goldfinch	23
House Sparrow	28

