

## Upper Eagle Creek, Greenlee County

18-20 May 2012

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(click here for the [PDF version](#) of the report)



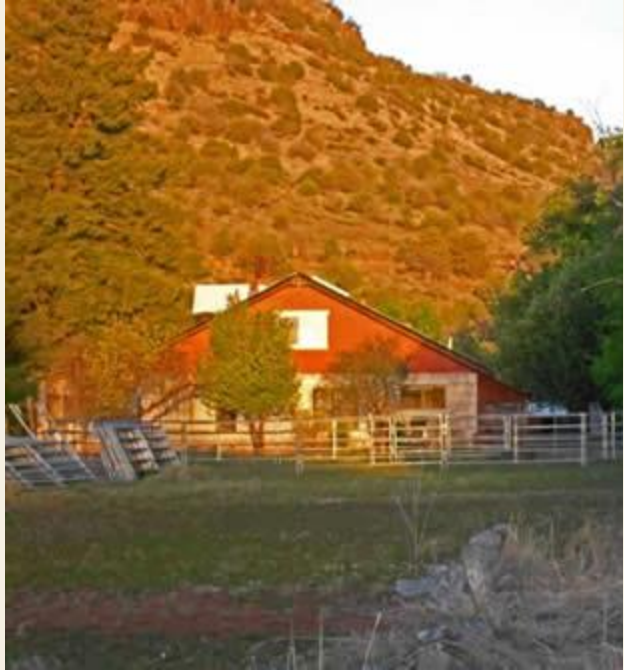
*Morenci Copper Mine, looking southeast*

This was an initial foray into Greenlee County as part of a larger effort to explore and document the avifauna of lesser known and under-birded portions of Arizona. The expedition was based at No Bar Ranch, a part of the historic Double Circle Ranch, which is a cattle operation now encompassing almost 40,000 acres of mixed conifer forest, piñon-juniper hills, extensive grasslands, and well-watered riparian habitats. We birded elevations ranging from just under 5,000 feet to a little more than 6,000 feet above sea level.

Our group of three birders arrived in the mid-afternoon after a long journey. The No Bar Ranch is about twenty miles north of the copper mining town of Morenci and is surrounded by the southernmost portion of Apache National Forest. After a mild winter and an early spring, migration has accelerated this year. As a result, relatively few migrants were encountered during our three days along Upper Eagle Creek.

Indeed, most of the breeding birds were singing on territory and either nest-building or attending nestlings.

We sampled the birdlife in four areas: the vicinity of No Bar Ranch, an upper elevation site called Smith Canyon, a mid-elevation riparian area in Juan Miller Canyon, and the broad floodplain of Upper Eagle Creek and its tributary, Bee Canyon. Noted below in Tables 1 through 4 are bird lists for these areas.



*No Bar Ranch House*



*Stream in Smith Canyon*

**Table 1**

**No Bar Ranch and Vicinity**

**Habitat: *Pinion-Juniper and Riparian***

<b>Species</b>	<b># Recorded</b>
Turkey Vulture	5
Mourning Dove	8
Black-chinned Hummingbird	1
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	1
Acorn Woodpecker	2
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	1
Western Wood Pewee	1

**Table 2**

**Smith Canyon**

**Habitat: *Mixed Conifer and Riparian***

<b>Species</b>
Turkey Vulture
Mourning Dove
Broad-tailed Hummingbird (including nesting)
Acorn Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Cordilleran Flycatcher

Say's Phoebe	2	Dusky-capped Flycatcher
Vermilion Flycatcher	1	Ash-throated Flycatcher
Ash-throated Flycatcher	1	Plumbeous Vireo
Mexican Jay	5	Warbling Vireo
Bewick's Wren	1	Steller's Jay
Rock Wren	1	Mexican Jay
American Robin	1	Violet-green Swallow
Northern Mockingbird	1	White-breasted Nuthatch
Yellow Warbler	2	Canyon Wren
Hepatic Tanager	1	Bewick's Wren
Western Tanager	1	House Wren
Spotted Towhee	1	American Robin
Canyon Towhee	2	Virginia's Warbler
Black-headed Grosbeak	2	Black-throated Gray Warbler
Blue Grosbeak	4	Townsend's Warbler
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	Grace's Warbler
Orchard Oriole (probable male)	1	Wilson's Warbler
Hooded Oriole	1	Painted Redstart
Lesser Goldfinch	2	Hepatic Tanager
		Summer Tanager
		Western Tanager
		Spotted Towhee
		Chipping Sparrow

All deciduous trees were fully leafed out and there was a scattering of wildflowers on the powdery dry ground. Temperatures ranged from highs in the mid-80s to a low of 40 degrees on Sunday morning. Winds were blustery (gusts of 25+ mph) out of the west on Friday afternoon but returned to normal light upslope breezes on Saturday. There was little to no cloud cover during our stay, but residual smoke from forest fires lingered most of the weekend.



*Riparian Vegetation at No Bar Ranch*

This area of Arizona is remote, but it is deserving of considerable additional study, at other seasons and with many additional skilled observers. There was considerable evidence of a rich wildlife environment in the vicinity of Upper Eagle Creek, including elk and pronghorn.



*Upper Eagle Creek Uplands and Pronghorn*

**Table 3**

**Juan Miller Canyon**

**Habitat: *Sparse Ponderosa Pine, Pinion-Juniper and Riparian***

<b>Species</b>	<b># Recorded</b>
Turkey Vulture	1
Acorn Woodpecker	1
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	1
Brown-crested Flycatcher	1
Plumbeous Vireo	1
Warbling Vireo	1
Hutton's Vireo	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	1
Canyon Wren	1
Bewick's Wren	1
Painted Redstart	3
Hepatic Tanager	1
Black-headed Grosbeak	3

We would like to acknowledge the gracious hospitality of the owners of Double Circle Ranch, Wilma and Doug Hughes, as well as their nephew Derek. They worked hard to give us opportunities to find the birds and cheerfully provided early breakfasts and superb cowboy cuisine for our stay.





*Bee Canyon*

**Table 4**

**Upper Eagle Creek and Bee Canyon**

**Habitat: Riparian and associated Scrub-Shrub Grassland**

<b>Species</b>	<b># Recorded</b>
Mallard	1
Green Heron	1
Turkey Vulture	12
Gambel's Quail	2
Common Black-Hawk (nesting)	2
Zone-tailed Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	3
Peregrine Falcon	1
Mourning Dove	65

Black-chinned Hummingbird	5
Gila Woodpecker	5
Northern Flicker	1
Western Wood-Pewee	10
Black Phoebe	1
Say's Phoebe	3
Vermilion Flycatcher	4
Ash-throated Flycatcher	1
Brown-crested Flycatcher	1
Cassin's Kingbird	9
Western Kingbird	3
Plumbeous Vireo	13
Warbling Vireo	2
Mexican Jay	16
Common Raven	2
Violet-green Swallow	29
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	1
Bewick's Wren	1
House Wren	2
Western Bluebird	3
American Robin	1
Northern Mockingbird	1
European Starling	3

Lucy's Warbler	2
Yellow Warbler	19
MacGillivray's Warbler	1
Common Yellowthroat	1
Wilson's Warbler	4
Yellow-breasted Chat	8
Summer Tanager	2
Hepatic Tanager	1
White-crowned Sparrow	2
Lesser Goldfinch	10
Black-headed Grosbeak	3
Brown-headed Cowbird	18
Hooded Oriole	3
Bullock's Oriole (nesting)	6
House Finch	12
House Sparrow	2