

GLOBAL BIG DAY in ARIZONA Annual Reports 2016-2024

2024

In Arizona hundreds of volunteers, many of them coordinated in teams on a countywide basis by AZFO, tallied 289 species during the Global Big Day spring migration count on 11 May 2024. This was the lowest total in the state for the annual count since 2012. However, a notable bright spot was that Coconino County reported a 21-year high number of species (192). Moreover, it found White-rumped Sandpiper, only the second time it has been recorded on the migration count, and a Chestnut-sided Warbler, only the third year for the count. Cochise County, which tallied the most species of any county, registered one of its highest totals (225).



White-rumped Sandpiper. Photo: Arthur Gonzalez.

Three new species were added to the 21-year cumulative state list for the North American Migration Count/Global Big Day in Arizona. They were Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (Pima), Eastern Kingbird (Cochise), and Red-eyed Vireo (Cochise). The effort in La Paz County was weak and we only got five species there, and we lacked county coordinators for Greenlee and Yavapai counties. One of the results was that we only had three species found in all 15 counties (European Starling, House Sparrow, and Great-tailed Grackle), which was well below our average. Only 12 species were reported from 14 counties, a smaller number than usual. However, Cassin's Vireo (10) and Gray Vireo (7) were reported in the most counties in the past 21 years. Only four counties reported Loggerhead Shrike, a 21-year low. Thirty-six species were reported from only one county. The number by county was Cochise (10), Coconino (6), Maricopa (4), Pima (4), Santa Cruz (4), Apache (2), Navajo (2), Yuma (2), Gila (1), and Yavapai (1). In previous years, Arizona has had the third highest number of species in the United States. This year it was fourth after Texas (408), California (372), and Oregon (295).

The movement of passerine migrants, like last year, was not exceptional. Figures were tallied for four wood-warblers that migrate through but are not known to nest in Arizona. They were about average and better than last year for Nashville Warbler (5), Hermit Warbler (11), and Townsend's Warbler (89). Wilson's Warbler (285) was well below last year as well as below average.

The accompanying Excel spreadsheet has a page comparing the 2024 county totals for each species and compares the number of counties each species has been reported by year since 2006.

Many volunteers were in teams coordinated on a countywide basis by the AZFO. We'll be looking forward to your participation in the Global Big Day in Arizona 2025 on Saturday, 10 May.

2023

On the 2023 Global Big Day spring migration count (13 May), we tallied 302 species, making it the eighth year in the past decade that we've surpassed 300. Santa Cruz County scored 190, its highest total in 20 years. We were able to field six volunteers in Greenlee County and though not registering a 20-year high, they reached 94 species, the highest total in a long time. Moreover, they discovered two new species for Greenlee County's checklist—Arizona Woodpecker and Buff-breasted Flycatcher.

Three new species were added to the 20-year cumulative state list for the migration count: Ferruginous Hawk (Mohave), Fan-tailed Warbler (Pima), and Dickcissel (Navajo). Eighteen species were reported from all 15 counties. Forty-one species were reported from only one county. The numbers by county were Cochise (8), Santa Cruz (7), Apache (4), Coconino (4), Graham (4), Mohave (3), Pima (3), Navajo (3), Pinal (2), Yuma (2), and Maricopa (1). As usual, Arizona had the third highest number of species in the United States after Texas (390) and California (350).

The movement of passerine migrants, as in 2022, was not exceptional. Figures tallied for four wood-warblers that migrate through the state but are not known to nest in Arizona were all well below average: Nashville Warbler (3), Hermit Warbler (6), Townsend's Warbler (61), and Wilson's Warbler (340).

Many volunteers were in teams coordinated on a countywide basis by AZFO. We'll be looking forward to your participation in the Global Big Day in Arizona 2024 on Saturday, 11 May.

2022

On this year's Global Big Day spring migration count (14 May), 301 species of birds were tallied, making it the seventh year in the past decade that we've surpassed 300. In other respects, the results for this year's count were average. No counties registered their highest totals. Several counties reported much lower-than-average totals. The number of participants was our highest, though the figure is approximate as a few people birded in more than one county.

Four new species were added to the 19-year cumulative list: Trumpeter Swan (Navajo), Nutting's Flycatcher (Pima), Pine Flycatcher (Pima), and Sagebrush Sparrow (Coconino). Orchard Oriole (Pinal) had only been reported twice before, and Snowy Plover (Cochise) hadn't been reported since 2010 and Ruddy Ground Dove (Santa Cruz) since 2015.

The movement of passerine migrants was not exceptional. Figures tallied for four wood-warblers that migrate through but are not known to nest in Arizona were mixed. The number of Nashville Warblers (10) was a 19-year high, but the number of Hermit Warblers (2) was the lowest since 2005, a sharp shift from last year's high of 47. The numbers for both Townsend's Warbler (62) and Wilson's Warbler (331) were well below average.

Notably, no Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported, the first time since 2004. Only 10 species were reported from all 15 counties, a much smaller number than usual. As usual, Arizona reported the third highest number of species in the United States after Texas (378) and California (364).

We'll be looking forward to your participation in the Global Big Day in Arizona next year.

2021

The results for this year's Global Big Day spring migration count on 8 May 2021 were outstanding! We tallied our second highest number of species (308) in the past 18 years and had over 700 participants. Five counties registered 18-year highs: Cochise (227), Pima (220), Pinal (184), Santa Cruz (184), and Navajo (165). The highest any county had previously tallied was Maricopa with 216 in 2018. Yavapai (199), Coconino (178), and Graham (158) recorded their second highest totals. Two new species were added to the 18-year cumulative list: Ovenbird (Cochise) and Northern Jacana (Pima). Eastern Phoebe (Pinal) had only been reported once before. The number of participants is approximate as a few people birded in more than one county.

There was an exceptional movement of passerine migrants, notably illustrated by the numbers tallied for four wood-warblers that migrate through but are not known to nest in Arizona. We had the greatest number of Townsend's Warblers (227) and Hermit Warblers (47) in 18 years and our second highest number of Wilson's Warblers (956). Four Nashville Warblers were above average. For the first time, Wilson's Warbler was recorded in all 15 counties. The total number of these four warblers was 1,234, our second highest.

Notably, no Botteri's Sparrows were reported, the first time since 2004; and no Cassin's Sparrows were reported, the first time since 2014. Only 15 species were reported from all 15 counties, a smaller number than usual. Thirty-nine species were reported from only 1 county. The number by county was Cochise (11), Pima (6), Coconino (4), Maricopa (4), Santa Cruz (3), Yavapai (3), Yuma (3), Pinal (1), Apache (1), and Mohave (1). Arizona had the 3rd highest total in the U.S. after Texas (406) and California (361).

Many of the volunteers were in teams coordinated on a countywide basis by the Arizona Field Ornithologists. For the sixth year, the AZFO merged more than a dozen years of experience coordinating volunteers for the North American Migration Count into eBird's GBD. Arizona may be the only state where a statewide effort by county is organized to recruit participation in the annual GBD spring migration count.

We'll be looking forward to your participation in the Global Big Day in Arizona next year.

2020

The excellent results for this year's spring migration count on 9 May 2020 were made despite Covid-19. Even though many important locations were closed, and a few regular volunteers opted out for safety reasons, we registered our second highest number of species (305) in the past 17 years and had over 700 participants. Our total was the third highest in the country; only Texas and California were higher. Two new species were added to the 17-year cumulative list: Black Scoter (Mohave) and Crescent-chested Warbler (Cochise). Five species were reported only for

the second time: Dusky Grouse (Apache), Hooded Merganser (Yavapai), Common Crane (Coconino), Berylline Hummingbird (Santa Cruz), and Chestnut-sided Warbler (Navajo). Of the species reported, 42 were observed in only one county. Eleven of the 15 counties reported at least one of these 42: Cochise (9), Coconino (6), Santa Cruz (6), Yavapai (4), Maricopa (4), Mohave (3), Pima (3), Navajo (2), Gila (2), Apache (2), and Yuma (1). Twenty-two species were reported in all 15 counties compared to 13 in 2019, 18 in 2018, 17 in 2017, and 6 in 2016. They were Eurasian Collared-Dove, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Say's Phoebe, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Common Raven, European Starling, House Sparrow, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, Bullock's Oriole, Brown-headed Cowbird, Great-tailed Grackle, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, and Western Tanager. Pima (192), Coconino (190), and Yavapai (183) tallied their second highest totals. Some counties added new species to their 17-year lists: Pinal (Spotted Owl and Thick-billed Kingbird), Mohave (Black Scoter), Yavapai (Hooded Merganser), Berylline Hummingbird (Santa Cruz), Yuma (Black Vulture), and Cochise (Crescent-chested Warbler).

Many of the volunteers were in teams coordinated on a countywide basis by the Arizona Field Ornithologists. For the fifth year, the AZFO merged more than a dozen years of experience coordinating volunteers for the North American Migration Count into eBird's GBD. As far as we have been able to determine, Arizona is the only state where a statewide effort by county is organized to recruit participation in the annual GBD spring migration count.

We'll be looking forward to your participation in the Global Big Day in Arizona next year.

2019

More than 600 birders counted a total of 294 species on 4 May 2019 for the annual Global Big Day, well above our 16-year average of 285. This was the third highest state total in the country; only Texas (405) and California (365) were higher. Two new species were added to the 16-year cumulative list: Yellow-throated Vireo (Pinal) and Tennessee Warbler (Cochise). Of the species reported, 44 were observed in only one county. Eleven of the 15 counties reported at least one of these 44: Cochise (12), Coconino (8), Santa Cruz (8), Maricopa (6), Pima (3), Pinal (2), Yuma (2), Apache (1), Navajo (1), and Gila (1). Thirteen species were reported in all 15 counties compared to 18 in 2018, 17 in 2017, and 6 in 2016. They were: Eurasian Collared-Dove, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, House Sparrow, House Finch, Great-tailed Grackle, and Bullock's Oriole. Remarkably we reported 24 Barn Owls in three counties—the previous high was 14 in 2009. Pinal County (178) reached its highest 16-year total, Cochise (212) and Graham (157) tallied their second highest totals, and Pima (184) registered its third highest tally. Some counties added new species to their 16-year lists: Maricopa (Stilt Sandpiper), Pinal (Yellow-throated Vireo), Cochise (Tennessee Warbler), and Gila (Spotted Owl).

Many of the volunteers were in teams coordinated on a countywide basis by the Arizona Field Ornithologists; only Santa Cruz and Greenlee counties did not have county coordinators. For the fourth year, the AZFO merged more than a dozen years of experience coordinating volunteers for the North American Migration Count into eBird's GBD. As far as we have been able to

determine, Arizona is the only state where there is an organized statewide effort by county to recruit participation in the annual GBD spring migration count.

We'll be looking forward to your participation in the Global Big Day in Arizona next year on 2 May 2020.

2018

More than 570 birders counted a record **312** species on 5 May 2018 for the annual Global Big Day! This surpassed the previous high of 303 species reached in 2013 and 2014. Seven counties went over their previous highs—Cochise, Coconino, Graham, Maricopa, Pinal, Santa Cruz, and Yavapai; La Paz County tied its previous high; and five counties scored their second highest totals—Apache, Gila, Mohave, Navajo, and Pima. Maricopa (218) tallied the highest total of any county in the previous 15 years. Species totals for other counties were Cochise (210), Yavapai (199), Coconino (190), Pima (188), Santa Cruz (183), Pinal (177), Gila (175), Graham (163), Mohave (160) Navajo (156), La Paz (145), Apache (124), Yuma (104), and Greenlee (31). Many of the volunteers were in teams coordinated on a countywide basis by AZFO; only Santa Cruz and Greenlee counties did not have county coordinators. For the third year, the AZFO merged more than a dozen years of experience coordinating volunteers for the North American Migration Count into eBird's GBD.

Two new species were added to the 15-year cumulative list: Lapland Longspur (Santa Cruz) and Gray Jay (Apache). The former was a pair of stake-out birds discovered earlier in the spring, but nonetheless amazing as it may be the first May record for this species in the state. Gray Jay is a very local resident that we should have had before. However, the fact that we got it underlines an important element of our success this year, which is that county coordinators and teams targeted localized species such as Gray Jay, Three-toed Woodpecker, Black Rail, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Buff-collared Nightjar, etc. so that we detected more of them than usual, as well as targeting stake-out birds such as Lapland Longspur and Rufous-backed Robin. It was only the second year that we had reports of Surf Scoter (La Paz and Mohave), Chukar (Navajo), and Rose-throated Becard (Santa Cruz).

Of the species reported, 40 were observed in only one county. Ten counties reported at least one of these 39, with Cochise and Santa Cruz having the most (8 each) and Coconino a close second (7). Eighteen species were reported in all 15 counties compared to 17 in 2017 and 6 in 2016. This is particularly noteworthy considering the very limited participation this year from Greenlee County. The species were Eurasian Collared-Dove, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Turkey Vulture, Western Kingbird, Northern Mockingbird, House Sparrow, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, Great-tailed Grackle, MacGillivray's Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Western Tanager. This was the first time that MacGillivray's Warbler was on this list; the previous highest number of counties for this species was 11 in 2011. Possibly this was due to the earlier date for this year's count. In all but one year since 2006 Crested Caracara has been reported; this year 5 were reported from 3 counties--Cochise, Pima, and Pinal--the highest number of counties. It was a first for the count for Cochise County.

Several other counties added new species to their cumulative lists: La Paz (10), Yavapai (4), Pinal (3), Mohave (2), Apache (1), Graham (1), and Santa Cruz (1). Quite a few new high counts were also set. Pinal County, for example, had an unprecedented 15-year high for 36 species, and La Paz tallied highs for 22 species. The count was a week earlier this year, so better timed for some of these earlier migrants and wintering visitors.

We'll be looking forward to your participation in the Global Big Day in Arizona next year on 4 May 2019.

2017

Nearly 600 birders were in the field throughout the state on 13 May for the annual Global Big Day. Many of these were volunteers in teams coordinated on a countywide basis by the Arizona Field Ornithologists. For the second year, the AZFO merged more than a dozen years of experience coordinating volunteers for the North American Migration Count into eBird's GBD.

The 291 species reported was 10 short of last year's total. The 14-year high for the count is 303 reached in 2013 and 2014. Of this year's total, Common Crane (Coconino County) was the only new species for the spring migration count. Orchard Oriole (Apache County) was only the second reported for the state count. Seventeen species were reported in all 15 counties compared to six in 2016. They were Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, American Kestrel, Western Wood-Pewee, Western Kingbird, Common Raven, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Red-winged Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Bullock's Oriole. Of the species reported, 50 were observed in only one county. Eleven counties reported at least one of these 50, with Cochise having the most (10) and Yavapai a close second (8).

Species totals for counties were Cochise (196), Maricopa (179), Yavapai (176), Pima (175), Pinal (167), Santa Cruz (161), Gila (150), Coconino (136), Graham (121), Greenlee (113), Mohave (99), Yuma (96), Apache (84), Navajo (68), and La Paz (67). Several counties added new species to their cumulative lists: Yavapai added Northern Harrier, Downy Woodpecker, and Hooded Warbler; Greenlee added Elf Owl, Hammond's Flycatcher, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Pinal added Calliope Hummingbird, Northern Pygmy-Owl, and Broad-winged Hawk; Gila added Short-tailed Hawk and Long-billed Curlew; La Paz added Swainson's Hawk; Apache added Orchard Oriole, and Coconino added Common Crane. La Paz County reported its highest number of Cattle Egrets, an astounding 2,450! Pinal County registered its highest 14-year totals for 19 species. Gila County covered more of the Sierra Ancha Mountains than they had done in previous counts. Notable state misses were Dusky Grouse, White-tailed Kite, Clark's Nutcracker, and Gray Jay, which, with a small organizational effort, could have been found.

Many volunteers reported that the number of birds moving through their areas seemed lower than usual and that numbers may have been higher if the push of birds a few days earlier had continued.

The spring migration count helps provide a "snapshot" of the progress and character of spring migration and is also a lot of fun for birders to find as many migrants as they can. Making this survey part of the Global Big Day has offered an opportunity to build on what we had

accomplished and make our statewide count part of a broader national, even international, effort. We'll be looking forward to your participation in the Global Big Day in Arizona next year on 12 May. Let's see if we can break our previous high of 303 species!

2016

For the past 12 years, the Arizona Field Ornithologists has been coordinating the North American Migration Count in Arizona. With the help of county coordinators, we attempted to get as many volunteers into the field on the second Saturday of May to get a "snapshot" of the progress and character of spring migration and to have fun finding as many migrants as we could. However, it became increasingly apparent that only a few states were participating in the NAMC and there was no national coordination. This year, AZFO decided to merge its experience and veteran volunteers into eBird's Global Big Day. This offered a new opportunity to build on what we had accomplished and make our statewide count part of a broader national, even international, effort. Although we don't have the final information, every indication is that this year's count on 14 May was very successful. Coordinators in 12 of the 15 counties helped organize teams with scores of volunteers to cover as many areas of their counties as possible. In addition, there were many other birders in the field who submitted reports to eBird. After accounting for folks who reported from more than one county, there were well over 450 birders in the field throughout the state on that day.

Of the 295 species reported, five are new to our spring migration count: White-rumped Sandpiper (Pinal), Laughing Gull (Pima), Red-headed Woodpecker (Santa Cruz), Slate-throated Redstart (Cochise), and Purple Finch (Cochise). Six species were seen in all 15 counties: Turkey Vulture, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Common Raven, Western Tanager, and House Finch. Of the species reported, 45 were observed in only one county. There were 11 counties reporting one of these 45, with Cochise having the most (11). Tentative species totals for counties are Cochise (197), Maricopa (190), Yavapai (177), Pinal (175), Pima (171), Santa Cruz (164), Coconino (161), Gila (161), Graham (156), Mohave (142), Navajo (87), Yuma (87), La Paz (66), Apache (54), and Greenlee (42). In Pinal County, the tally of 175 surpassed the previous high of 167! We also added six new species to the 13-year cumulative list--Greater White-fronted Goose, Canada Goose, Brown Pelican, Long-billed Curlew, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Whiskered Screech-Owl. All the checklists of 36 volunteers and 10 other birders in the county are on eBird.

This year's success helps give us the basis for continuing along the same course-- merging our annual spring migration count into eBird's Global Big Day. Hope to see you in the field for next year's count on 13 May.