

**AZFO Field Expedition**  
**Lower Colorado River and Bill Williams River**  
**25-26 April 2009**

**By Troy Corman**

This past weekend (25-26 April), eleven birders from Flagstaff, Prescott, Heber, Tucson, and Phoenix areas, plus one visitor from Pennsylvania joined forces during the latest Arizona Field Ornithologists Expedition. Lake Havasu City was our base as teams surveyed various locations between the Parker Valley on the Colorado River Indian Tribal lands north to Havasu NWR at Pintail Slough. This region of the state is infrequently visited during peak spring migration, and our goal was to see what the many areas had to offer. As a group, we detected nearly 150 species as we explored some well-known as well as some new locations during the two days.

Here are some highlights:

We managed to find 17 species of ducks including an out-of-season adult male SURF SCOTER viewed all three days (including Friday) near the Bill Williams River NWR headquarters. At one point it was hanging out with 3 GREATER SCAUP and a pair of RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS. On Saturday morning, one team observed 8-10 COMMON LOONS north of Mesquite Bay on Lake Havasu, some in fine alternate plumage with one even yodeling a few times. We also enjoyed watching the colony of 60+ pairs of nesting WHITE-FACE IBIS, some incubating and some still nest building. There are few nesting records of this species in the state, and this is the first nesting at the same location anywhere in Arizona in two consecutive years. Some flooded fields had hundreds of ibis.



Big Williams River, 25 April 2009. Photo by Doug Jenness

We also observed 400+ pairs of CATTLE EGRET in the Parker Valley. Rounding out the aquatic birds, we observed 13 species of shorebirds including an early RED-NECKED

PHALAROPE at Beal Lake, Havasu NWR on Sunday. Although surprisingly few in number, we managed to identify five species of gull (HERRING, BONAPARTE'S, FRANKLIN'S, CALIFORNIA, and RING-BILLED) and several FORSTER'S TERNS.

Swallow migration was still in full swing with six species many in huge numbers. Among the swallows, we managed to detect a few VAUX'S SWIFTS. Groves of cottonwoods, willows, and mesquite attracted many passerine migrants as well. We managed 10 species of expected warblers, some in large numbers, along with WESTERN TANAGERS, GREEN-TAILED TOWHEES, CHIPPING and BREWER'S SPARROWS, BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAKS, LAZULI BUNTINGS, and early BLUE GROSBEAKS.

Although some sludged through calf-high mud and water at Bill Williams NWR, endured high gusty winds while "sea watching" at north Lake Havasu, and slapped many a pesky mosquito at Pintail Slough, this is what makes each expedition fun, unique, and memorable.

Thanks to the dedicated Expedition participants, which included Andrew Core, Elaine Hough, Eric Hough, Brian Ison, Morgan Jackson, Doug Jenness, Ramsay Koury, Mike Nicosia, Magill Weber, and John Yerger. We also want to especially thank DeeDee DeLorenzo who drove down Sunday morning from Bullhead City to show some of us around Havasu NWR. This included a visit to the huge observation platform overlooking Beal Lake which was a new and wonderful location for all present.