

**ORNITHOLIDAYS TOUR TO USA - UTAH & ARIZONA**  
*Scenic Splendour*

**16 – 31 May 2011**



**Leader: Richard Coomber**

## ORNITHOLIDAYS TOUR TO USA - UTAH & ARIZONA

*Scenic Splendour*  
16 – 31 May 2011

### A Personal Diary

#### Monday 16 May

Unusually this year's Ornitholidays' tour to Utah and Arizona came in from several starting points today. Jean, Shelagh and I came in from Philadelphia via Dallas Fort Worth having just enjoyed the inaugural Cape May tour. Jane, Marge and Sandra came in from London Heathrow, via Chicago, whilst Mary arrived later in the day having come in from Birmingham via Amsterdam and Newark.

In Salt Lake City the clouds were low over the Wasatch Mountains with an afternoon temperature of 50°F

#### Tuesday 17 May

Heavy overnight rain eased during morning and weather started to brighten by midday to give sunny afternoon. Overcast again in evening. 39°F rising to 53°F.

There is now a Subway close to the Comfort Inn, so that was our first stop after leaving the hotel to bird around the Great Salt Lake, whose waters have risen since I was there on last autumn's Yellowstone tour. We began birding along the Antelope Island Causeway soon after the passing the fee booth. Smart Black-bellied Plovers were scattered all over the muddy margins of the lake along with numbers of White-faced Ibis on the grassier areas where Sandra spotted the first, and only, Sandhill Crane of the tour. Northern Harriers were also hunting the marshy areas in the distance.

Normally at this time of the year the shores of the causeway are alive with brine flies. Today there were none, perhaps because of the cold and inclement weather, which may have also grounded the usual flocks of migrating shorebirds elsewhere. Sanderlings, peeps and Red-necked Phalaropes were notable by their absence. Nevertheless, there were plenty of birds to see. Along the causeway swallows – Barn, Bank, Cliff, Tree and Northern Rough-winged – were grounded and in one place they were actually feeding on the ground amongst the grass at the roadside – they must have been desperate for food. Good numbers of Western Kingbirds were also sitting around on bushes and twigs waiting for the weather to improve. On the lake itself, we only saw a handful of Eared Grebes, a pair of Redheads, several small parties of Lesser Scaup as well as the more familiar Mallard and Gadwall.

By the time we reached the island the rain had ceased, clouds had risen, and the sun was trying to break through. Soon we found a Chukar perched on the rocks below the visitor centre and nearby was a Loggerhead Shrike, but it flew just as we were getting the scopes onto it. A few yards away sat a male Lazuli Bunting, but that flew as well alas. Not so a male Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler. Our drive around to the visitor centre was constantly interrupted. A Black-tailed Jackrabbit ran across the road, and then we found the first of two hunting Short-eared Owls, hunting Northern Harriers, a smart male Horned Lark, the first of many today. When we stopped to view a distant bull Bison, we realised that there was a male and five female Pronghorn Antelopes on the sage covered slopes of the hillside just below us – more great views of another interesting species. As we tried to find a track that led closer to the Bison, a female Cooper's Hawk came up out of the sage and dropped in again further on, where she was mobbed by Black-billed Magpies. We also had good views of a fly-over Long-billed Curlew.



Horned Lark

When eventually we reached the visitor centre Barn Swallows were displaying, mating and nest-building around the entrances to the rest rooms. Great views for the photographers. Lunch called, so we drove down to the picnic area, but the breeze coming off the snowy mountains had an edge to it, so we ate in the minibus. Outside a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher showed in the sagebrush, but not as well as the White-crowned Sparrows that posed nearby. As we returned to the causeway, a spiral of nine American White Pelicans circled against the bluest of blue skies with a Peregrine circling beneath them.

Crossing back to the mainland, we settled down for the drive north up the interstate to Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, which had been disappointedly dry when Nigel and I were there on the Yellowstone tour last September. Today the ditches and drainage channels were full and had spilled over to flood the surrounding marshes and fields in many places. We were only able to stay a couple of hours, but that ran into three at least as there was so much to see. We began with stunning views of a singing male Marsh Wren, but were unable to find the Sora calling in the background. American Avocets were in stunning breeding plumage and were everywhere feeding in the shallows, or perhaps displaying. Some were already on clutches of four eggs,



but we couldn't help wondering how they could survive if the waters continue to rise. Out in the fields Long-billed Curlews were more plentiful than I recall from previous visits at this time of the year.

Killdeers were doubtless breeding, or planning to breed along the gravel verges of the recently tarmaced road. On reaching open drier areas there were more Horned Larks and we came across a Snowy Plover, which was a good sighting, for although the Great Salt Lake holds a large breeding population we don't often see them in the areas we visit on the Ornitholidays' tours. A circling immature Golden Eagle disturbed feeding

White-faced Ibis and gulls before it headed away to the north. Most of the gulls we had seen today had been Californian and Franklin's, but here we came across a few Ring-billed. As we were about to turn around a Caspian Tern flew by carrying a fish.

I'd planned only to stop if there was anything good on the way back to the main road, but it turned out to be start, stop, start, stop just as it had been on the outward leg! Closer views of a pair of Northern Shoveler and Cinnamon Teal were appreciated and we had a Northern Pintail in flight. A Killdeer and two Spotted Sandpipers in breeding plumage with spots showed very well in the late afternoon sunshine. Back where we had found the Marsh Wren, the Sora was still calling and eventually we had good views, although it was rather furtive, unlike the Virginia Rail across the road, which gave us wonderful views along the edge of the ditch, twixt road and marsh. A great bird to end our first day!

We returned to the hotel later than I had anticipated, for who would have imagined that this morning's rain would have given way to such a splendid afternoon!

### **Wednesday 18 May**

Rain, sleet, snow, but no hail. Some sunshine late afternoon. Cold 39°-44°F

It started to rain as we left the hotel after breakfast and made our way through the Salt Lake City conurbation to join I-15, which for miles and miles was just continuous road works. Low clouds on the mountains prevented us from seeing if there had been fresh snowfalls on the mountains overnight.

On reaching Chicken Creek Reservoir we were ready for some birding, but the water levels were very high and out on the water were American Coot and Eared Grebes in some numbers, and the only ducks were a few Mallard and Cinnamon Teal. On a side pond, we had a brief, but brilliant, view of a drake Ring-necked Duck before it flew off. There were few passerines – just a male Audubon's and Yellow Warblers and a male

Bullock's Oriole, that really brightened up a dull scene. The weather had grounded some migrating raptors for we saw a few Swainson's and Red-tailed Hawks as we headed down the interstate.

We had a coffee stop at Nephi, where the ladies heard of snow causing problems further south, so a few miles further on we stopped at Scipio to find out the latest news – jack-knifed trucks on I-15 northbound didn't sound good, so we took the quieter and more scenic route to the 89 via Salina. Certainly there was fresh snow on the surrounding mountains and on the conifers that clad their slopes. On Scipio Lake there were masses of Eared Grebes and we found our first Western Grebes and American Wigeon. Our first Mountain Bluebirds were seen a bit further on as we crossed range country. Rivers were in full spate and in places there was quite extensive flooding of lowland areas. With the weather appearing to be closing in we pressed on seeing a few passerines during a lull in the rain and sleet that included Lark Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, more Mountain Bluebirds and more grounded Western Kingbirds. As we crossed the vast areas of sage near Piute State Park we had excellent views of a Sage Thrasher and had the weather been better we might have explored the area further. As it was, we drove through heavy snow in Red Canyon as we neared Bryce Canyon, our base for the next two nights.

The rain and snow had eased by the time we checked-in at Ruby's Inn, so on the basis that tomorrow might be worse, we went to look for some scenery. Who would have believed that as we reached the canyon's rim, after a short walk through conifer woodland, the sun would have come out! The first look down into Bryce is always a moment to treasure and to have sunshine on a day like this was fantastic. It might have been chilly, but that didn't matter. An American couple offered to take a group photo for us. Seven cameras later we thanked them and said farewell! The views from the rim of all those pinnacles were simply amazing - the air was so clear and crisp. Away to the east, snow on the Pink Cliffs made them look like layers of candy! There was just a Raven flying around the canyon, but as we drove out from the car park, we enjoyed stunning views of a male Western Bluebird.

On returning to Ruby's Inn, we were told to come to dinner sooner rather than later as there would be a long queue for tables. As it was there were some 20 people waiting, so we quickly dropped, not literally, cameras and binocs off at the rooms and returned to the queue. Queue? What queue? We were immediately shown to a table unable to believe our good fortune of the last two hours!

### **Thursday 19 May**

Rain, sleet and heavy snow throughout the day depending on elevation! 32° - 38°F

A snowy landscape greeted us this morning when we first looked out! On the lake by the car park we found Bufflehead and Pied-billed Grebe that hadn't been seen previously and as we watched a Say's Phoebe landed on a large boulder nearby. After the hustle and bustle of Ruby's Inn dining room last night we decided to try for a breakfast table at the lodge within Bryce Canyon National Park. Outside the dining area we found two more new birds – Dark-eyed Junco and Steller's Jay. A good start to the day – five new ones before breakfast. Our luck held as in the dining room we were shown straight to a table.

We walked out to the Sunset Point area afterwards to enjoy views of the canyon after the overnight snow fall – wonderful even in the dull conditions and from the look of it there was more on the way. As the group walked on to the next view point whilst I drove the minibus around they saw another Western Bluebird and a male Yellow-rumped Warbler and added Pygmy Nuthatch and Mountain Chickadee. That was the best birding of the morning for as we explored some of the viewpoints further along the canyon rim sleet started to fall, turning to snow at times. It all made for some wonderful landscape viewing and photographic opportunities, but was not much good for the wildlife reduced to Common Raven, Uinta Chipmunk and later as we returned to the Ruby's Inn area, some Mule Deer. Before lunch, a stop at the Visitor Centre



Uinta Chipmunk

was worthwhile enabling us to find out more about the canyon and to engage in some retail therapy! Something warm for lunch was a good idea and soup and a roll at the American-style diner by Ruby's Inn was a popular choice. There was a queue, but there were enough of us to 'bag' tables whilst some queued. The gentleman in front of us had the most amazing twirly moustache and I hope he wasn't allergic to cats, for nine out of ten cats prefer whiskas!

Mary did something different during the afternoon; she joined a horseback trail ride down into the canyon from the Bryce Canyon Lodge, except that her steed was a mule and not a horse! It was obviously a worthwhile exercise for it gave a completely different perspective of landscapes we had admired from the rim. After I dropped her off the rest of us took a 90 minute break to download pictures, write tour reports or postcards. Outside it was raining or sleeted steadily, but when we checked the warblers feeding at the lake shore there was an eastern male "Myrtle" feeding with the western "Audubon's". Will they ever get round to splitting Yellow-rumped Warbler back to these two original species?

After collecting a rather wet Mary and returning her to the hotel for a reviving bath the rest of us headed towards the southern end of the park, stopping at the more distant viewpoints such as Natural Bridge and Rainbow Point. We had climbed steadily to 9,115 feet above sea level. From about 8,500 feet we were driving through heavy snow and into a winter wonderland. It was fantastic, but thankfully the white stuff wasn't settling on the highway. Initially the visibility was pretty poor, but it improved as we returned to



collect Mary for dinner. Of course we had to stop for second looks at some things like the Natural Bridge. Wildlife was still thin on the ground – Common Raven and a Golden-mantled Squirrel were noted.

We returned to Bryce Canyon Lodge for an excellent dinner and on the way back to Ruby's Inn afterwards detoured to enjoy good views of a herd of Mule Deer beside the road, which led us on to Rolls-Royce views of a pair of Townsend's Solitaire.

Not quite the day we usually have at Bryce Canyon, but different, so very different – what an amazing place!

### **Friday 20 May**

Passing wintry showers with sunny periods gave way to a fine afternoon. Clear, starry sky after dark. 35°F - 50°F

It was freezing hard when I went to bed last night, so it was a relief to find it a little warmer at daybreak today! On the lake the Pied-billed Grebe showed well as we were loading the minibus before heading up to Bryce Canyon Lodge for breakfast at 7.30 a.m., where we discovered a pair of Pygmy Nuthatches.

After the meal we went to Sunset Point, passing a singing male Townsend's Solitaire on the way. Whilst Shelagh, Marge and Sandra walked part of the Navajo Trail below the rim of the canyon, the rest of us birded in the surrounding coniferous woodland. We had stunning views of a White-breasted Nuthatch at point blank range and also good views of Yellow-rumped Warbler. The only woodpecker was a Hairy one and we also saw Dark-eyed Junco. After the lousy weather for wildlife yesterday it was perhaps surprising there wasn't more about. Golden-mantled Squirrels popped up in several places and we watched a Uinta Chipmunk on the shingle roof tiles of one of the accommodation buildings.

The walkers experienced the same impression that Mary had had yesterday, albeit a drier one, of Bryce Canyon from within. Looking up at the towering hoodoos and rock fins is so different. Unfortunately heavier than usual winter rains had meant that the return trail had been closed so they had to return the same way.

Once back together again we set-off to revisit the southern end of the park that had been so snowy yesterday afternoon. There was still snow on the trees at higher elevations, but most of the lying snow had melted. The scenery was still spectacular as we enjoyed Natural Bridge, Rainbow Point outwards and Black Birch Canyon, Ponderosa Point and Swamp Canyon Overlook on the way back. Birding highlights including



**Mountain Bluebird**

superb views of a male Mountain Bluebird. The mammal highlight had to have been watching several endangered Utah Prairie-dogs in the afternoon sunshine beside the road.

By the time we left the park it was well past lunchtime, so freshly made rolls from Subways were the order of the day. We'd planned to go straight to Red Canyon for our picnic, but as we passed through the sage country soon after leaving Subways, a male Pronghorn had other ideas – he was within 30 yards of the road in sunshine, so what else could we do but stop!

Down at Red Canyon we had the heaviest of the day's wintry showers, but afterwards it brightened and out came the cameras to record more splendid scenery, before we began the journey to Zion National Park in earnest. We had a couple of distractions. The three lakes on the side road to Alton produced several Ruddy Ducks and a pair of Green-winged Teal as additions to the birdlist as well as good views of a small group of

Eared Grebes. Also seen was a small flock of White-faced Ibis, several pairs of Cinnamon Teal and a pair of Gadwall as well as a lone male Wilson's Phalarope. The only other birds of note was the male Black-chinned Hummingbird on wires as we passed through a small town and the Western Scrub-Jays that flew across the road soon after we turned off towards Zion National Park at Mt. Carmel Junction.

Zion National Park is awesome – the towering rock features, quite unlike those in Bryce, are huge. We were running late so there wasn't time to stop, but with two and a bit days it wasn't the end of the world. The only hiccup was being stopped by a patrol car as we neared Zion Lodge for the officer couldn't see my registered guest parking permit. Once satisfied he then followed through with an i.d. check on myself and the minibus's retail agreement – all a bit time consuming, but he was doing his job.

There were a few birds to see while I did the check-in and this evening we had dinner later than usual as there wasn't a table available before 8.15 p.m.

### **Saturday 21 May**

Fine, warm and sunny with increasing thin cloud during the afternoon. 65°F

Unfortunately, the lawns in front of Zion Lodge are being restored so the usual collection of birds one used to see on the way to breakfast are having to feed elsewhere.

The main walk of the morning was across from the lodge on the Emerald Pools Trail. One of the first birds to be seen was a male Spotted Towhee as we walked across to the river. As we crossed the bridge over the turbulent and muddy waters of the Virgin River an American Dipper flew upstream and was seen by some of the party when it perched on a rocky point. Perched on a dead tree in the sunshine was Violet-green Swallow and others were hawking insects along a low cliff, where shortly after a hunting Sharp-shinned Hawk sped by. We had good views of Yellow Warbler eventually and excellent ones of a pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers that were nest-building in a bush overhanging the path. Western Tanagers were heard more frequently than seen, but we did get a good view of a male feeding in a Utah Juniper. There were good views of a Northern Flicker, whilst a male Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting and a Bell's Vireo were also seen. High overhead wheeled White-throated Swifts and at one point Mary spotted a soaring raptor – the tour's second Golden Eagle. We came across several obliging Rock Squirrels and saw more butterflies than on previous days which is not surprising – identified were Two-tailed Swallowtail, Juba Skipper, Persius Duskywing and Northern White-skipper.

There was more water than I have ever seen coming over the cliff and into the Lower Emerald Pool. In the sunshine the backlit water was like a million diamonds falling, only to shatter into spray on the rocks below.



Zion Shooting Star

The wet cliff provided ideal growing conditions for the endemic Zion Shooting Star, but with the late spring Golden Columbines were yet to come into flower here.

After lunch in the sunshine back at the lodge we caught the shuttle-bus up the canyon, alighting first at Weeping Rock, a similar feature to the cliffs by the Emerald Pool. Birdwise we had good views of Black-throated Gray Warbler and superb ones of a pair of Black-headed Grosbeaks. House Wren and a male Lesser Goldfinch were also seen. As well as Zion Shooting Stars we found Scarlet Monkeyflower and the beautiful Golden Columbine on our walk up to the rock. Western Tiger Swallowtails flitted through the woodland, but never stopped.

On catching another shuttle bus the recorded commentary mentioned California Condor as being a bird one might see over the canyon's towering cliffs at the Big Bend bus-stop, so off we got. Above us circled a Turkey Vulture, but Sandra's "*There's something else over here*", was indeed a California Condor and an orange-headed adult sporting wingtags, which unfortunately we were unable to read even when it landed on the crags above us. Brilliant!

Another shuttle took us to the last stop. We were at the Temple of Sinawava. A trail led up to The Narrows which was closed due to the high water-level of the river. Rock Squirrels lined our route, for although it is illegal to feed the wildlife in the park, I bet these little guys wouldn't say no! A pathside Mule Deer was a delight. Yellow Warbler was the commonest species in the trees along the riverside trail. Black Phoebe, Song Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak, American Dipper and Common Merganser were also recorded. With our dining table booked for 6.45 p.m. this evening we made our way back to the lodge, Shelagh seeing a male Wild Turkey on the way down the canyon.

### Sunday 22 May

Hot and sunny at times, overcast around lunchtime and after dark, when there was a rain and a thunderstorm around. 70°F

After breakfast this morning we stopped off at the visitor centre on the edge of Springdale, where in the car park we enjoyed good views of Western Tanager, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Pine Siskin and Lesser Goldfinch, before having a look around inside.

Then, after stopping for sandwiches at the small fruit farm on the other side of town, we drove on to Rockville and took the road to Grafton, a ghost town last occupied in 1945.

Along the track to Grafton we began with a Western Wood-pewee on the roadside fence, before having really good views of Black-chinned Hummingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Rock Wren and a male Black-throated Sparrow. A soaring Red-tailed Hawk proved to be the only raptor of the day, apart from Turkey Vultures, which are considered to be storks nowadays. Grafton had been a setting used in the movie "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid". Now a number of buildings have been restored and 'Private – no trespassing' signs have proliferated, so a heritage site might be a better description. In green pastures, healthy cattle grazed and on a day like today it was difficult to imagine the hardships that forced the early settlers to abandon the community for the first time over 100 years ago when floods and attacks by Indians took their toll. Before lunch we wandered around outside the old church and a well-restored house, where a Desert Spiny Lizard was photographed. By then the sky was overcast, but would it rain? Birdwise it was productive with more sightings of Western Tanagers and Bullock's Orioles and our first of the punk-crested Phainopepla and Gray Flycatcher. A colourful male Lazuli Bunting sang well from the sagebrush and surrounding bushes. Shelagh was delighted to see a male Vermilion Flycatcher, but disappointed at the same time as none of the rest of us had. Mary rather saved the day by finding a female that we could see well through the scope.

Later, as we headed back to Rockville we came across a magnificent yellow and black snake lying in the road, which allowed us to photograph it before it slithered back to the verge. It must have been a good three feet long, and at the time of writing we think it was a Gopher Snake. Further on we all had the most amazing views of a territorial male Vermilion Flycatcher as he perched on the roadside and on plants nearby – great stuff for the cameras and video!



Vermilion Flycatcher

By then it was mid-afternoon, so with time in hand we drove west before taking the twisting mountain road that led towards Kolob Reservoir in the high country in the north-west of Zion National Park. We didn't get very far, stopping for some landscape photos as the scenery became more dramatic on reaching juniper forest. Before long we were watching Juniper Titmouse and Western Scrub Jay. There were some beautiful pink *Opuntia* cactus plants in flower as well as a number of shrubs characteristic of the habitat including the creamy flowered Cliff-Rose. Thunderstorms were a possibility this afternoon and as we started to drive down to the main road again towering clouds were building in the distance. One last stop was for a Western Poplar Sphinx resting on dead grasses

by the road in the sunshine. More clicking took place!

On reaching the lodge we had just over an hour before dinner and as we returned to our rooms afterwards the first drops of rain fell and the first thunderclap rumbled on as we started the checklist. And so ended another splendid day in southern Utah.

### **Monday 23 May**

Fine and sunny 60°F. Heavy rain at some time after dark.

The grounds around the lodge in Zion Canyon were white with the accumulation of cottonwood down this morning when Sandra filmed a Wild Turkey crossing the road before breakfast. After the meal we loaded the minibus and were on to a new adventure.

After the long tunnel we were very lucky to be able to park to enjoy the walk out to Canyon Overlook. Evening Primroses, scarlet Indian Paintbrushes and a variety of Penstemons and daisies lined the route. The



**Indian Paintbrush**

scenery became better with every turn in the narrow path until we reached the end and had Pine Creek and Zion Canyons with their towering cliffs spread out before us. White-throated Swifts wheeled overhead. Along the track were Black-throated Gray Warblers, Western Tanagers and a very confiding House Wren singing away. No sign of the Desert Bighorns this year, but several Uinta Chipmunks and a variety of lizards were seen. On such a perfect morning with so much to see the walk took a little longer than usual.

Afterwards we made photo stops at several places, seeing Hairy Woodpecker, Lazuli Bunting and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher as well. Unfortunately, Frog Canyon's stream was flowing, so we were unable to hike up to try and see the Canyon Tree Frogs at their usual site. I couldn't see them from the road, so perhaps with the abundance of water this year they had spread out. The final stops before leaving the park were around the aptly named Checkerboard Mesa where a Grace's Warbler was gathering nesting material. On the way to Mt. Carmel Junction we added Northern Mockingbird to the list and while most of the party were having a soup and salad lunch Mary discovered a female Black-chinned Hummingbird on her nest attached to an electric cable beneath a covered walkway nearby.

On the road again and heading south. Just beyond the small town of Fredonia we stopped to bird at an area of extensive sagebrush. Soon we had a response from a furtive Sage Sparrow, which was the target species there, and also saw Black-throated and Brewer's Sparrows nearby. The flowers were splendid after the rains with the orange Globe Mallows standing out in particular. Other species that caught the camera's eye

included Cushion Buckwheat and Rusby's Milkwort. We carried on towards the Grand Canyon, stopping at Jacob Lake for an ice cream. From there to the Canyon we stopped a few times to see Mule Deer and the various duck on the ponds in the meadows. A Swainson's Hawk was the best raptor, watched as it perched in a roadside tree.

On reaching the North Rim of the Grand Canyon check-in went smoothly at the lodge and luckily we had cabins very close to the main building. Before dinner Mary photographed along the Bright Angel Trail.

### **Tuesday 24 May**

Mainly sunny with a cold wind. 45°F rising to 60°F out of the wind.

An early morning walk was offered along to Bright Angel Point, seeing few birds, but lots of truly awesome scenery. Words cannot really describe the spectacle, but the excitement of people seeing it for the first time still gives one a tremendous buzz. The birding highlights were a stunning male Western Tanager in the early sunshine and three Clark's Nutcrackers, the first most of us had seen.

After breakfast at the lodge we set off to explore the Widforss Trail, although the walk through the pines produced fewer birds than I had hoped. Perhaps the cold weather and snow of last week had pushed some birds down to lower elevations. Neither Grace's Warbler nor Hermit Thrush were found at what have been reliable sites on the past, nor could we find them anywhere else along the trail for that matter. Flowers were not as abundant as they should have been, but that might reflect the lateness of spring this year. Butterflies were limited to Two-tailed Swallowtail and Variegated Fritillary, which was only identified from a photo later. Until Mary introduced us to the technique, I'm sure none of us had appreciated the subtle fragrance of Ponderosa Pines. No doubt they were as upset as we were to see the skeletal remains of their neighbours standing bare, burnt and stark after the devastating fire of four or five years ago. The highlight of the walk was unusual for I spotted some quite recent scratches on the bark of a large aspen by the trail about five feet off the ground. We took photos and when I showed them later to the naturalist/ranger at the visitor centre he confirmed my suspicions – Mountain Lion! He was almost as excited as I was!

During the afternoon we went out to the scenic view points on the rim, stopping first at Point Imperial, which



Point Imperial, Grand Canyon

has a view up to the Vermilion Cliffs and Marble Canyon as well as the beginning of the Grand Canyon proper. Greenland Lake was our next stop, but it was somewhat disappointing birdwise. Still no Hermit

Thrushes, but we did find Warbling Vireo where it should have been. The reflections of the white barked aspens in the still waters were another excuse for more photos.

Eventually we reached Cape Royal, where already the shadows were lengthening, but we could at last see the mighty Colorado River that was responsible for the grandeur spread out before us. Shelagh fell into conversation with some film makers, who were making a TV programme for Disney that would be going out on ABC network later in the year. I wonder if we'll ever get to see it?

Dinner was later than usual today for when we arrived, 8.30 p.m. was the earliest I could get a table.

### Wednesday 25 May

Hot and sunny with no wind. 70°F

We made an early start from the Grand Canyon for Jacob Lake where we had breakfast before a short birding session around the back of the lodge. Plumbeous Vireo was the only addition and another Grace's Warbler was seen, but on the whole it was relatively quiet. Overhead the ladies spotted an adult California Condor drifting over the conifers. Would we see more?

Yes was the answer to that one for on leaving Jacob Lake we drove descended some 4,000' to the Vermilion Cliffs. A view point car park gave a great overlook of the area and as we drove further on towards Horse Back Valley Road a rocking Turkey Vulture didn't seem quite right because it was in fact a mimic – a Zone-tailed Hawk probably on the northern limit of its range looked very like a Turkey Vulture and could be easily overlooked. We saw it quite well and noted the bands across the tail before it drifted too far away.



California Condors were in view as we arrived below the release site on the Vermilion Cliffs. Over the next hour or more, as we had our picnic, we were treated to numerous sightings of perhaps six or seven birds wheeling over the cliffs, sometimes dropping below the skyline to land on excrement covered rocks or even to land on the framework of the huge aviary, where

young birds intended for release this coming September are being held. The reintroduction programme is going well with some 71 birds now living wild in the area of northern Arizona. Some 13 chicks have been hatched by pairs in the wild.

Eventually we left, stopping at Navajo Bridge in the hope of seeing one or two more condors that had been beneath the bridge earlier in the day. We were now in Navajo country and as the Navajos of Arizona keep time with their brothers in Utah we lost an hour on the clock. With a refuelling stop in Page we carried on to our hotel at Kayenta, our base for the next two nights.

## Thursday 26 May

Overcast, but with a great rise. Skies clearing as wind freshened and carrying dust. 72°F

We had an early start today, reaching Monument Valley just as the sun, still beyond the horizon began to colour the clouds that spread almost from one horizon to the other. There was just enough clear sky to make this morning's sunrise one of the most spectacular I have seen there. Yellow, oranges and reds bring a glorious glow to the scene of iconic buttes and mesas laid out before us. By the time the sun broke the horizon the best of the colours were over. We had timed it just right – a sunrise that would live long in our memories.



Breakfast today was at Goulding's, a lodge nearer Monument Valley than our hotel, and afterwards we looked around small museum dedicated to the characters and filmmakers of the area, before returning to Monument Valley and a tour with a Navajo guide into the back country.

The reality was not what I expected. The tour company we always use didn't arrive at 8.30 a.m., which was disappointing, so I had to choose another guide from another firm. There were several to choose from – one guy in a pink shirt was brash and touting for trade and another was quiet and unassuming. He was the one I chose – Dean – a guide of some years experience. He took us to many of the best places, but not in the usual order. Beginning at the North Window with its view to the Mittens, we carried on to the Totem Pole that featured in Clint Eastwood's film *Eiger Sanction*. Then came Big Hogan, Moccasin Arch, Ear of the Wind, Echo Cave Ruins, Sun's Eye, some old engravings of Big Horn sheep and finally the Three Sisters and John Ford's Point, where the renowned film-maker made some of his iconic scenes in his westerns. Birds seen during the morning included Rock Wren and hummingbirds.

We returned to Kayenta for lunch. Jane had the afternoon off to keep a chiropractic appointment having hurt her back a day or so ago. While I was ferrying her around we found an Olive-sided Flycatcher in the hotel car park hanging on to the fence, for by now the wind was quite strong and carrying dust across the town. It flew off and by the time the rest of the party assembled after a short siesta we were able to track it down again.



Anazasi ruins at Betatakin

Several miles to the west of Kayenta is the Navajo National Monument where one can view the Anazasi ruins at Betatakin. After the visitor centre, we took the path that meandered through piñon/juniper. Beneath the trees and bushes, cacti and other wild flowers sought shelter. From the rim of Betatakin Canyon we looked across to the ruins set beneath a huge alcove on the opposite side. There was timelessness to the place. The White-throated Swifts belted across the cliffs as they did some 750 years ago, when a thriving community lived in the square adobe buildings and tended fields that once grew crops in the

valley below. It must have always been a precarious existence, for with climatic changes agriculture became no longer viable, the Anazasi moved on and within 50 years of its establishment, Betatakin was abandoned to the elements. Only those buildings in the sheltered location beneath the cliffs survived until the present day. We returned to the hotel, where Shelagh had a swim before dinner.

### **Friday 27 May**

Fine and sunny. 76°F

On leaving Kayenta we passed around Monument Valley, stopping to take photos of the buttes and mesas at the point on the road where Forrest Gump stopped running in the movie of the same name.

A few miles further on the well-named rock formation of Mexican Hat was worth a detour. It is a huge slab of rock perched on a tapering pinnacle, but eventually the elements will triumph and Mexican Hat will tumble. We continued on to Blanding, but none of the anticipated raptors were on show today. Just before town Gunnison's Prairie Dogs were showing well and at the local water treatment works Redheads, Ruddy Ducks, Mallard, Gadwall and Cinnamon Teal were seen as well as a drake Ring-necked Duck and a pair or two of Eared Grebes that were tucked in against the reeds with a few American Coot. A Vesper Sparrow responded to play-back and gave good views.

At Blanding a Subway very quickly and efficiently prepared us a batch of excellent sandwiches to order, which we ate at the nearby Edge of the Cedars State Park. It was a rather special day – Jean's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday! From the back of the minibus came a bottle of champagne in an ice bucket and a somewhat gaudy iced birthday cake inscribed *Happy Birthday Jean* in red and green writing against a bright yellow background.

Someway beyond Blanding we found more Gunnison's Prairie Dogs near Church Rock, a monolith near the turning to Newspaper Rock. The road took us across miles of rolling sagebrush, degraded in places by grazing cattle, where Brewer's Sparrows and a male Sage Sparrow were found. Beyond in a canyon a flash flood several years ago had forced the authorities to close what had been our usual picnic site. However, nearby Newspaper Rock was still there telling tales of Indian hunting parties and the wildlife they sought. In the streamside woodland we had good views of a pair of Plumbeous Vireos, before we returned to the minibus and continued on to our hotel in Moab. The town was very busy for the holiday weekend, so we were lucky to book an early table at Eddie McStiff's, an excellent local hostelry, that boasted a stock of 12 local micro beers. We had a good meal with Nigel standing the round of drinks and the waiting staff coming round at the end to sing "*Happy Birthday*" to Jean!

The day ended with a short drive into Arches National Park and a walk down through Park Avenue to the car park at the bottom for some. Canyon Wren was heard, but not seen and the bats flew around as the sun set. Once again we had enjoyed a great day in this land of scenery.

## Saturday, 28 May

Very hot. Overcast in morning becoming sunny midday onwards 80+°F

It was overcast as we drove to nearby Arches National Park after breakfast. Park Avenue was our first stop, but a brief one this morning. We soon realised that as this was the Memorial Day weekend the park was going to be very busy and parking might be a problem, especially at the more popular areas, such as the Devil's Garden, where we were heading. Luckily we parked near the beginning of a trail that wound through the rocks,



Park Avenue, Arches National Park

beneath buttes and amongst junipers and pines. It led to the beautifully elegant Landscape Arch, which with a span of 306 feet is one of the world's widest freestanding natural arches. The views were terrific even though the path beneath the slender arch has been closed as it is no longer considered safe. Cracks extend some way across its span foretelling its eventual demise, but until that time White-throated Swifts use them as nesting sites. There were great opportunities for the photographers with arches, rocks, flowers and twisted tree trunks. Birds were rather thin on the ground, but we had good views of Black-throated Sparrow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher as well as seeing Say's Phoebe, Mountain Bluebirds and Violet-green Swallows.

Skyline Arch was our next stop, but the walk was notable for lizards as well as the splendid arch in the rock wall that lined the horizon. We were watching a Western Whiptail when it arched its back and defecated a dropping that looked like a straight bird's dropping. Never seen that before and within five minutes we saw a smaller Plateau Lizard doing the same thing.

It was lunchtime by the time we reached the Fiery Furnace and in addition to our Subway's sandwiches, we helped finish Jean's birthday cake. Afterwards we drove along one of the side roads to view Delicate Arch, although from a distance. The trailhead car park was overfull, so one couldn't have parked there anyway. Our trail led up to a viewpoint, but some were distracted by more lizards. This time the brilliantly coloured Collared Lizard – an ochre headed and turquoise bodied male and not far away was a yellower female. Great photo opportunities and also of a Leopard Lizard that turned up in the same area. We left them to it, but when the hikers came back the Collared Lizards were mating. Sandra was able to film them and perhaps will cut and paste a bit of David Attenborough to complete the story line!

Our final session took us to the Windows area, where the complex Double Arch and then the North and South Windows, together with Turret Arch were visited and photographed. At the latter a bride and groom were having their photos taken as well. On the way back to the hotel we stopped at the visitor centre. Dinner was another good one at Eddie McStiff's

## Sunday 29 May

Very windy during morning and early afternoon carrying dust that marred the views. Overcast in afternoon turning to rain in Salt Lake City area where fresh snow covered the mountains. 70°F dropping to 40s°F by the time we reached Salt Lake City.

We left Moab behind and headed into the canyon country along a road to Dead Horse Point State Park. In bygone days wild horses would have been driven out to the point where they would be corralled. The name suggests the Indians were not always successful! On the way we saw several Horned Larks. Dead Horse Point was another *Wow!* place with yet more staggering views as the Colorado meandered 2,000' below us, as awesome and as photogenic as ever in spite of the dusty conditions.



We pressed on to Green River for a picnic in the state park and the tour's last birding. The swollen river only had another couple of feet to rise before the prepared sandbags would be needed. Following lunch (more excellent fodder from Subways), we wandered around, but birds were few and far between in such windy conditions. The highlight was a pair of Great Horned Owls in a cottonwood overlooking their two downy offspring that were huddled on a nesting platform barely eight feet off the ground. Wonderful views! We also had good views of a Northern Flicker at its nest hole. The ladies missed an addition to the trip list for when I wandered over to photograph the swollen river a flock of a dozen Cedar Waxwings flew over, so sadly they didn't *see da* waxwings. As we drove out of the state park the last species was added to the list – a Great-tailed Grackle that was feeding on the edge of some flood water.



The final leg of the journey was north-westwards climbing into the mountains through a canyon shared with a stream and a two-line railway. Unfortunately, we didn't witness the raw power of a northbound coal train climbing the grades this year. Just south of Provo we rejoined I-15, our grand circle joined, we continued north towards Salt Lake City. On reaching the hotel we checked-in for our last night on American soil.

### **Monday 30 May**

The fresh snow that fell overnight brought the snow line down to the houses on the mountain slopes at the back of Salt Lake City, whilst those mountains to the south-west were now whiter than white. We said our fond farewells to Mary, whose flight to Birmingham via Paris didn't leave until this afternoon. We were on the 8 a.m. hotel shuttle bus for our 11.15 flight to Chicago O'Hare prior to our onward connection to London. Needless to say it was a bit of a shock to discover that the first leg had been cancelled and we were on a flight that was scheduled to board in a few minutes – no time for the anticipated breakfast before the flight today! In just over an hour after leaving the hotel we were airborne!

The flight across to Chicago, Illinois took about three hours and although our BA flight to London left the gate on time it wasn't until 5.30p.m. that we finally took off homeward bound.

### **Tuesday 31 May**

We landed at Heathrow on a fine morning a few minutes ahead of schedule. Our bags were amongst the first through on the carousel, so with farewells we set-off on the last legs of our journeys home.

### **Acknowledgements**

The thought of driving six ladies around some of the remote corners of Utah and Arizona might sound like fun - and believe me it was! Thank you for coming ladies and being such good company and good sports. Yes, we had fun for there was never a dull moment, well not within the minibus anyway. The weather could have been much kinder and warmer, but seeing such wonderful scenery as Bryce Canyon for instance in a blizzard was just something else. It was the seventh time I have done the circuit of the parks and probably the best. Everything went like clockwork and even when our guide in Monument Valley failed to arrive, Dean, who ended up taking us around did such a fantastic job, that I hope we have him again in 2013. Thanks Dean and thanks to everyone for their help, navigation, company, care for the leader etc etc! Special thank you to Shelagh (loadmaster) and Mary (assistant baggage handler and photos for the report) for your help with the bags. Thanks to Jean for letting us join her birthday celebrations. Also thanks to Marge and Sandra for the lift home, which just leaves Jane. Jane would brighten up anyone's day – so thank you too! It was all a pleasure and I hope it won't be too long before we travel again on another Ornitholidays' tour. Nigel has now finished the 2012 brochure and there's more in it than in the Olympics!

Richard Coomber  
Ornitholidays  
29 Straight Mile  
Romsey  
Hampshire  
SO51 9BB  
01794 519445  
email: info@ornitholidays.co.uk

August 2011

### **Itinerary and Weather**

**16 May** British Airways/American Airlines flight from London Heathrow to Salt Lake City via Chicago, or from Philadelphia via Dallas/Fort Worth or even from Birmingham via Amsterdam and Newark.

**17 May** Morning birding along causeway to and on Antelope Island. Afternoon north to Bear River Refuge. Heavy overnight rain eased during morning and weather started to brighten by midday to give sunny afternoon. Overcast again in evening. 39°F rising to 53°F.

- 18 May** Transfer to Bryce Canyon via Scipio. Late afternoon visit to canyon rim. Heavy rain, sleet and snow. Some sunshine late afternoon. Cold 39°- 44°F
- 19 May** Exploration of Bryce Canyon view points in morning and afternoon. Rain, sleet and heavy snow throughout the day depending on elevation! 32° - 38°F
- 20 May** Further exploration of Bryce Canyon in the morning. Picnic at Red Canyon during transfer to Zion National Park. Passing wintry showers with sunny periods gave way to a fine afternoon. Clear, starry sky after dark. 35°F - 50°F
- 21 May** Morning walk on Emerald Pools Trail. After lunch took shuttle bus further up canyon making various stops. Fine, warm and sunny with increasing thin cloud during the afternoon. 65°F
- 22 May** Exploration of Grafton area after a stop at visitor centre. After lunch birded along Kolob Reservoir Road. Hot and sunny at times, overcast around lunchtime and after dark, when there was rain and a thunderstorm around. 70°F
- 23 May** Morning hike to Canyon Overlook. Afternoon transfer to Grand Canyon North Rim birding en route. Fine and sunny 60°F. Heavy rain at some time after dark.
- 24 May** Pre-breakfast walk on canyon rim. Walk along Widforss Trail. Afternoon to Point Imperial, Greenland Lake and Cape Royal. Mainly sunny with a cold wind. 45°F rising to 60°F out of the wind.
- 25 May** Early morning departure from Grand Canyon to Jacob Lake for breakfast, before a local walk. Condor viewing at Vermilion Cliffs and picnic lunch. Afternoon visit to Navajo Bridge and Marble Canyon before drive to Kayenta. Hot and sunny with no wind. 70°F
- 26 May** Early start to see sunrise at Monument Valley. Breakfast nearby and morning exploration of the back country with Navajo guide. Return to Kayenta for lunch. Afternoon visit to Navajo National Monument, Betatakin. Overcast, but with a great rise. Skies clearing as wind freshened and carrying dust. 72°F
- 27 May** Transfer to Moab stopping at Mexican Hat, Blanding and Newspaper Rock and other birding stops en route. After dinner we paid a brief visit to Arches National Park. Fine and sunny. 76°F
- 28 May** Whole day in Arches N. P. visiting various sites including Landscape Arch, Skyline Arch, Fiery Furnace and the Double Arch area. Very hot. Overcast in morning becoming sunny. 80+°F
- 29 May** Transfer to Salt Lake City with stops at Dead Horse Point State Park and Green River State Park (lunch and birding) en route. Very windy during morning and early afternoon carrying dust that marred the views. Overcast in afternoon turning to rain in Salt Lake City area where fresh snow cover the mountains. 70°F dropping to 40s°F by the time we reached Salt Lake City.
- 30 May** All left SLC in morning to London via Chicago. Mary visited Salt Lake City before afternoon flight to Birmingham via Paris.
- 31 May** All back in UK

**CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR**

<b>No of days recorded</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Abundance Scale</b> (max. seen on 1 day)
1 2h means seen on 1 day and heard on 2 other days	GSL = Great Salt Lake – includes Salt Lake City area, Antelope Is. and Bear River Refuge (Utah) B = Bryce Canyon N.P. (Utah) Z = Zion N.P. (Utah) GC = Grand Canyon N.P. (North Rim) and Kaibab National Forest (Arizona) M = Monument Valley Tribal Park and Betatakin (Arizo) A = Arches N.P. and Moab area	1 = 1 – 4 2 = 5 – 9 3 = 10 – 99 4 = 100 - 999 5 = 1,000+

<b>Species</b>	<b>No of Days Recorded</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Abundance Scale</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>
Pied-billed Grebe	2	B	1	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
Eared Grebe	4	S >B >Z	>A 4	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
Western Grebe	1	>B	1	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>
Clark's Grebe	1	S	1	<i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>
American White Pelican	1	S	2	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>
Double-crested Cormorant	2	S	3	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>
Great Blue Heron	3	S Z	2	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Snowy Egret	2	S >B	2	<i>Egretta thula</i>
Cattle Egret	1	S	1	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
White-faced Ibis	3	S >Z	4	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>
Canada Goose	4	S B	3	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Green-winged Teal	3	>Z >G	>A 2	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Mallard	10	S B Z G	>A 3	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Northern Pintail	1	S	1	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Cinnamon Teal	5	S B >Z	>A 3	<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>
Northern Shoveler	1	S	1	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Gadwall	3	S >B >Z	3	<i>Anas strepera</i>
American Wigeon	1	>B	1	<i>Anas americana</i>
Redhead	2	S	>A 3	<i>Aythya americana</i>
Ring-necked Duck	2	B	>A 1	<i>Aythya collaris</i>
Lesser Scaup	1	S	3	<i>Aythya affinis</i>
Bufflehead	2	B	1	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>
Common Merganser	1	Z	1	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
Ruddy Duck	2	>Z	>A 3	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>
Turkey Vulture	11	S B Z G M	A 3	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
California Condor	2	Z VC	2	<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>
Northern Harrier	1	S	3	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Z	1	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
Cooper's Hawk	1	S	1	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>
Swainson's Hawk	3	>B G	1	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	7	B Z G	A 2	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Ferruginous Hawk	1	>M	1	<i>Buteo regalis</i>
Golden Eagle	3	S Z	A> 1	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
American Kestrel	5	S >B >Z	>A> 3	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Peregrine Falcon	1	S	1	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	S	1	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Chukar	1	S	1	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>
Wild Turkey	3	Z G	1	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>
Gambel's Quail	1	Z	1	<i>Callipepla gambelii</i>
Virginia Rail	1	S	1	<i>Rallus limicola</i>
Sora	1	S	1	<i>Porzana carolina</i>
American Coot	8	S B >Z	>A> 4	<i>Fulica americana</i>

Sandhill Crane	1	S							1	<i>Grus canadensis</i>
Black-bellied Plover	1	S							4	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Snowy Plover	1	S							1	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
Killdeer	3	S	>B		G				3	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
Black-necked Stilt	1	S							1	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
American Avocet	1	S							4	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>
Willet	1	S							2	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>
Spotted Sandpiper	3	S	B	Z					2	<i>Actitis macularia</i>
Long-billed Curlew	1	S							3	<i>Numenius americanus</i>
Wilson's Phalarope	3	S		>Z	G				3	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>
Franklin's Gull	1	S							4	<i>Larus pipixcan</i>
Ring-billed Gull	1	S							3	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>
California Gull	4	S	>B	>Z					4	<i>Larus californicus</i>
Caspian Tern	1	S							1	<i>Sterna caspia</i>
Forster's Tern	1	S							3	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>
Rock Dove (feral) <i>introduced</i>	3	S							3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Mourning Dove	8		>B	Z		M	A		2	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	9	S	>B	Z	>G	M	A		2	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Short-eared Owl	1	S							1	<i>Asio flammeus</i>
Great Horned Owl	1						A>		1	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>
White-throated Swift	8			Z	G	M	A		3	<i>Aeronautes saxatilis</i>
Black-chinned Hummingbird	3			Z					1	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>
Hairy Woodpecker	3			Z	G				1	<i>Picoides villosus</i>
Northern Flicker	5			Z	G				1	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>
Olive-sided Flycatcher	2					M	A>		1	<i>Contopus borealis</i>
Western Wood-Pewee	2			Z			A>		1	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>
Gray Flycatcher	3		B	Z		M			1	<i>Empidonax wrightii</i>
Black Phoebe	1			Z					2	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
Say's Phoebe	8		B	Z		M	A		2	<i>Sayornis saya</i>
Vermilion Flycatcher	1			Z					1	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>
Ash-throated Flycatcher	1			Z					2	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>
Western Kingbird	8	S	>B	Z		M	>A		3	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>
Horned Lark	4	S	>B			>M	>A		3	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
Tree Swallow	2	S		>Z					2	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
Violet-green Swallow	9			Z	G	M	A		3	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	3	S		Z					3	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>
Bank Swallow	3	S		Z					3	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Cliff Swallow	2	S	>B						4	<i>Hirundo pyrrhonota</i>
Barn Swallow	7	S	>B	Z			>A>		3	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Steller's Jay	3		B		G				1	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>
Western Scrub-Jay	4			Z		M			1	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>
Clark's Nutcracker	1	1h	B		G				1	<i>Nucifraga columbiana</i>
Black-billed Magpie	6	S	>B	Z			>A>		3	<i>Pica hudsonia</i>
American Crow	6		>B	Z			A		2	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
Common Raven	13	S	B	Z	G	M	A		3	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Mountain Chickadee	3		B		G				1	<i>Parus gambeli</i>
Juniper Titmouse	2			Z		M			1	<i>Baeolophus griseus</i>
White-breasted Nuthatch	2		B		G				1	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>
Pygmy Nuthatch	2		B						1	<i>Sitta pygmaea</i>
Rock Wren	3	1h		Z			A		1	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>
Canyon Wren	-	2h		Z			A		1	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>
House Wren	4			Z	G				1	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Marsh Wren	1	S							1	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>
American Dipper	1			Z					1	<i>Cinclus mexicanus</i>
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4	S		Z			A		1	<i>Poliptila caerulea</i>
Western Bluebird	6		B	Z	>G				1	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>
Mountain Bluebird	8		B	>Z	G		A		3	<i>Sialia currucoides</i>
Townsend's Solitaire	3		B		G				1	<i>Myadestes townsendi</i>

American Robin	11	S	B	Z	G		A	3	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
Northern Mockingbird	3			Z>	>G	>M	>A	1	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
Sage Thrasher	3		>B		>G		>A	1	<i>Oreoscoptes montanus</i>
Phainopepla	1			Z				1	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>
Loggerhead Shrike	2	S	>B					1	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
European Starling	8	S	>B	Z	>G	M	A	3	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Bell's Vireo	1			Z				1	<i>Vireo bellii</i>
Plumbeous Vireo	2				G		>A	1	<i>Vireo plumbeus</i>
Warbling Vireo	1				G			1	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>
Yellow Warbler	4		>B	Z				3	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)	6	S	B	Z	G			3	<i>Dendroica coronata auduboni</i>
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle)	1		B					1	<i>Dendroica coronata coronata</i>
Black-throated Gray Warbler	4			Z	G			1	<i>Dendroica nigrescens</i>
Grace's Warbler	2			Z	G			1	<i>Dendroica graciae</i>
Western Tanager	6			Z	G			3	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>
Black-headed Grosbeak	2			Z				2	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>
Blue Grosbeak	1		>B					1	<i>Guiraca caerulea</i>
Lazuli Bunting	5	S		Z			A>	1	<i>Passerina amoena</i>
Spotted Towhee	2			Z	G			1	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>
Chipping Sparrow	6	S	B	Z	G			2	<i>Spizella passerina</i>
Brewer's Sparrow	2				>G		>A	1	<i>Spizella breweri</i>
Vesper Sparrow	1						>A	1	<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>
Lark Sparrow	4		>B	>Z	>G		>A	3	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>
Black-throated Sparrow	4			Z		M	A	2	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>
Sage Sparrow	2				>G		>A	1	<i>Amphispiza belli</i>
Song Sparrow	1			Z				1	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
White-crowned Sparrow	1	S						1	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
Dark-eyed Junco	3		B		G			1	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
Red-winged Blackbird	5	S	B	Z		>M	>A	3	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Western Meadowlark	2 1h	S	>B				>A	2	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>
Yellow-headed Blackbird	5	S	B				>A	3	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>
Brewer's Blackbird	12	S	B	Z	>G	M	A	3	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>
Great-tailed Grackle	1						A>	1	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
Brown-headed Cowbird	6	S	B	Z		>M		3	<i>Molothrus ater</i>
Bullock's Oriole	2		>B	Z				1	<i>Icterus galbula</i>
Cassin's Finch	1				>G			1	<i>Carpodacus cassinii</i>
House Finch	6			Z		M	A	2	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
Pine Siskin	2			Z				1	<i>Carduelis pinus</i>
Lesser Goldfinch	3			Z			>A	3	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>
House Sparrow (introduced)	9	S	>B	Z	>G	M	A	2	<i>Passer domesticus</i>

#### MAMMALS

Western Pipistrelle	1						A	2	<i>Pipistrellus Hesperus</i>
Gunnison's Prairie Dog	1						>A	3	<i>Cynomys gunnisoni</i>
Utah Prairie Dog	1		B					3	<i>Cynomys parvidens</i>
Rock Squirrel	4			Z	G			3	<i>Citellus variegatus</i>
Golden-mantled Squirrel	5		B		G			1	<i>Citellus lateralis</i>
White-tailed Antelope Squirrel	3					M	A	1	<i>Ammospermophilus leucurus</i>
Uinta Chipmunk	5		B		G			2	<i>Eutamias umbrinus</i>
American Red Squirrel	1				G			1	<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>
Kaibab Squirrel	1				G			1	<i>Sciurus kaibabensis</i>
Muskrat	1	S						1	<i>Ondatra zibethica</i>
Black-tailed Jack Rabbit	3	S				M		1	<i>Lepus californicus</i>
Mule Deer	6		B	Z	G			3	<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>
Pronghorn	3	S	B					2	<i>Antilocapra americana</i>
Bison	1	S						1	<i>Bison bison</i>

**REPTILES**

Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard	<i>Gambelia sila</i>	Lesser Earless Lizard	<i>Holbrookia maculata</i>
Collared Lizard	<i>Crotaphytus collaris</i>	Gopher Snake	<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>
Plateau (Eastern Fence) Lizard	<i>Sceloporus undulatus</i>		

**BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS**

Two-tailed Swallowtail	<i>Papilio multicaudata</i>	Variiegated Fritillary	<i>Eupotietia Claudia</i>
Western Tiger Swallowtail	<i>Papilio rutulus</i>	Persius Duskywing	<i>Erynnis persicus</i>
Western White	<i>Pontia occidentalis</i>	Northern White-skipper	<i>Heliopetes ericetorum</i>
Large Marble	<i>Euchloe ausonides</i>	Juba Skipper	<i>Hesperia juba</i>
Mourning Cloak	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	Western Poplar Sphinx	<i>Pachysphinx occidentalis</i>

This list represents those birds and other animals seen by party members of this tour.

Front cover: Bryce Canyon

All photographs © Richard Coomber and Mary Macmillan