

Nature at the Tinneys – Feb 11 – May 5, 2020

(Photos and Story by Bob and Maxine Tinney, The Ranch in Prescott, AZ)



Collared Peccaries move about in small family groups, eating roots, fruits, insects, worms, and reptiles, and the **Javelina** arrive during the day and nighttime in hopes of finding bird seeds to eat in the Tinneys' yard.



Desert USA states: "Breeding occurs year-round and birthing mothers retreat from the herd to prevent the newborn from being eaten by other group members. They rejoin the herd a day after giving birth."

During February snows one mother has two babies or **reds**, and one mother has one baby. The snow is on the ground and the young are very vulnerable. After their visit, one little baby (right) is found deceased in the yard, and Bob moved it down the hill.



The **Gray Foxes** (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), or **Grey Foxes**, are omnivorous mammals of the family Canidae and easily climb the trees to access the bird feeders, seed trays and blocks, and fruit sticks.

The **Coyote** (*Canis latrans*, a species of canine), are often seen crossing the yard (sorry, no recent photos).



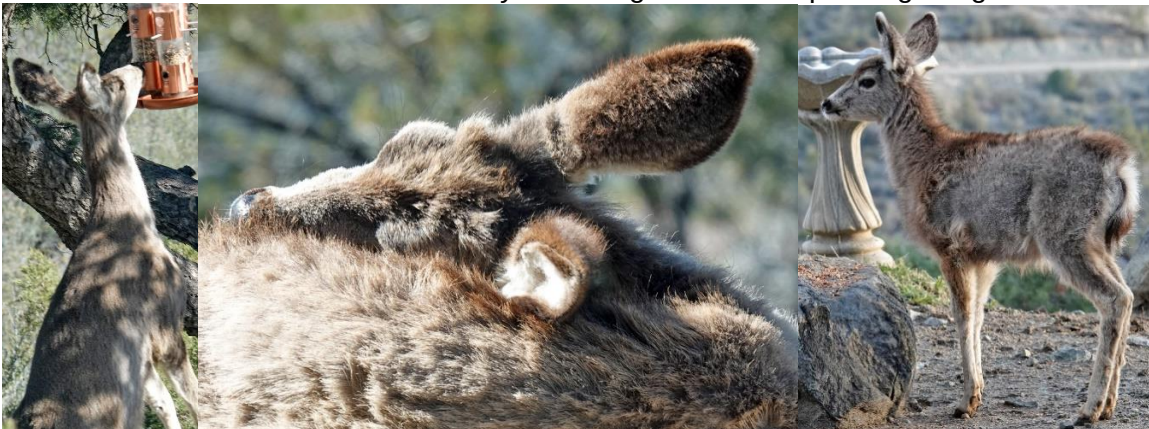
The **Hooded Skunk** is a species of mammal in the family Mephitida and can climb the water feature rocks for any residue bird seeds, but cannot climb the trees.



After the rut, during February/March decreasing testosterone levels cause an "abscission layer" to form between the Mule Deer antlers and their pedicels. As the connective tissue dissolves, the buck's **antlers** become loose and fall off, and may leave a red or scabbed area (right) where the antler had been.



The Mule Deer herd are always listening and alert to pending dangers.



One of the female deer, whom we call Flop Ear, sneaks seed from the feeder by balancing on her rear legs (left). **Insects** such as mosquitoes, ticks, flies, fleas or mites serve as vectors of irritants to the mule deer (center). The 1st year fawns are losing their winter coats (right above), and are so photogenic (below).





The **Rock Squirrel** (*Otospermophilus variegatus*) is a species of rodent family Sciuridae and loves bird seed.



Equally, the **Chipmunks** raid the seed feeding areas.



The **Common Raven** (*Corvus corax*) is a large all-black passerine bird which loves Suet.





A possible **Bald Eagle** (left), **Northern Goshawk** (right), and **Red-tailed Hawk** (no photo) are seen from our windows.



The **Cooper's Hawks** are seen looking for birds (left), preening (center), and scratching (right). **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper's Hawk** visit the yard, scaring the birds, causing the birds to fly into the windows.



As Bob and Maxine were at the computer about noon in late April, they hear a loud *bonk*, Maxine grabs the camera. They proceed to the living room to see a **Cooper's Hawk** on our patio table, assuming it had hit the window . . . and upon seeing us, it flies to a nearby tree. (above center/right).



The Tinneys then note that a **Mourning Dove** (left) is laying on its back under the patio table and is not moving. Within some seconds the **Cooper's Hawk** swoops under the table (center), snatches the dove with its claws (right) and carries the dove down the hill for its lunch.



The **Mourning Doves** (*Zenaida macroura*) drink from the water feature and represent forgiveness, release, peace, and 'moving on', and share their lamenting coos.



While most mourning doves mate for life, there are some that pair up just for the mating season.



The **Band-tailed Pigeons** are soft blue-gray above and purplish-gray below, with a white crescent on the back of the neck. The upper half of the tail is gray, fading to a pale gray band at the tip.



They spend much of their time traveling in groups to search for nuts, fruits, and seeds on the ground and seeds from the Tinneys' feeders.



On a February snowy day, the **Crissal Thrasher** makes an appearance and is dark grayish with distinctive rufous undertail coverts with a long and strongly curved bill, and is a secretive bird.



As winter departs, the **Oregon** and **Gray-headed Dark-eyed Juncos** travel northward.



The **Canyon Towhees** are big, warm-brown sparrows, commonly on the ground and underneath shrubs in a variety of scrubby habitats, and drinks at the water pans.



The **Spotted Towhee** is gleaming black above (females are grayish brown), spotted and striped with brilliant white, warm rufous flanks, and red eyes.



The **Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays** are assertive, vocal with scratchy nasal calls, and very inquisitive. Both members of a breeding pair staunchly defend their territory year-round, keeping other scrub-jays away by flying at them, calling, and occasionally pecking or grappling.



The Tinneys are blessed to have **Stellar's Jays** visit a couple of times a year. They have a white-marked black head and a long, black crest. The upper back is partially gray with beautiful blue-checked secondaries and tail. (above and below)



A generalist forager, Stellar's Jays eat insects, seeds, berries, nuts, small animals, eggs, and nestlings.



The **Bridled Titmouse** and **Juniper Titmouse** with pointed crests are small songbirds in the tit family Paridae.



The tiny **Bushtits** are long-tailed, fluffy gray balls that are constantly in motion with an active, twittering flock.



Jabbering groups of yellow, green, and black **Lesser Goldfinches** have chiming and twittering call notes.



Adaptable, colorful, and cheery-voiced **House** and **Cassin Finches** visit the yard.



The **Pine Siskins** are songbirds with slender, pointed bills, adults with yellow wing bars, and enjoy the water.



White-breasted Nuthatches and the **Yellow-rumped Warblers** (left/center) visit regularly, while the **Virginia's Warbler** (right) visits during the Migration. Lucy's Warbler and Ash-throated Flycatcher (no photos).



Gambel's quail (*Callipepla gambelii*) is a ground-dwelling bird with coveys visiting the yard.



The **Red-shafted Northern Flickers** have gray heads, throats/napes, and their foreheads are brown. Male Red-shafted Flickers have red moustaches (above) and the auriculars of females are pale brown (below).



The flight feathers of Red-shafted Northern Flickers have reddish-orange shafts, and tails are reddish-orange.

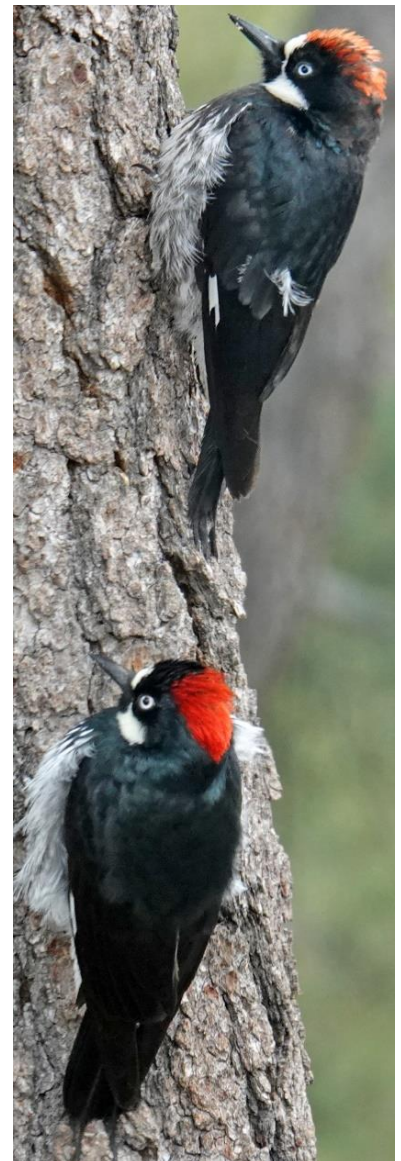


Hairy Woodpeckers are contrastingly black and white. The black wings are checkered with white; the head has two white stripes with males having a flash of red on the crown.

Acorn Woodpeckers live in large groups, hoard **acorns**, and breed cooperatively. Male's crown is white/red, while the female's crown is white/black/red.



The two photos above of Acorn Woodpeckers show red feathers on their throat. For those of you with birding knowledge, is this a normal occurrence?





Hummingbirds Arrive Mid-March

Our first beautifully adorned male Hummingbird arrives on March 15, 2020, but unfortunately hits a window and passes immediately.
(photos left and right)



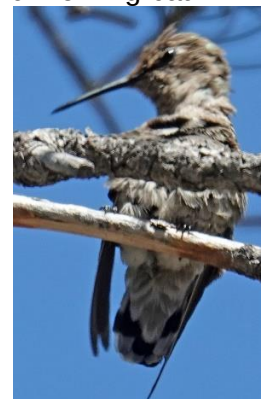
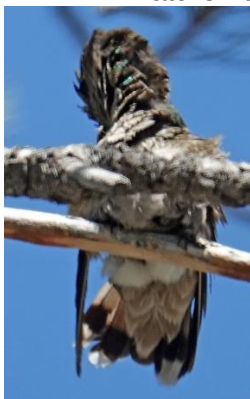
The male **Anna's Hummingbirds'** head and throat are covered in iridescent reddish-pink feathers.



The female Anna's Hummingbirds are metallic green above with bits of reddish spotting on the throat.



An immature hummingbird comes to the water feature for a dip and morning bath.



After a bath, it is time to fluff and preen, even one's toes (third photo).



A long black bill usually is an indicator of a female **Black-chinned Hummingbird** (above).



Male **Rufous Hummingbirds** have rufous-orange feathers on back and belly and iridescent red head (2 left), while the female Rufous Hummingbirds are green above with rusty flanks and orange spot on throat. (2 right).



The male and female **Brown-headed Cowbirds** are a small obligate brood parasitic icterids.



The male gemstone lapis **Lazuli Bunting** with rusty breast and gray brown-female with tan breast.



The rich, melodious whistles of the **Scott's Orioles** carry well across the slopes of the western foothills.



The **male Scott's Orioles** have black backs, heads, and breasts and are lemon yellow below with white-bars plus yellow shoulder bordered in white. Fresh fruit (photo 2) and grape jelly (photo 3) are favorite treats. Numerous male Scott's Orioles were seen from April 20 thru April 28.



Yellowish-olive **female Scott's Orioles** have variable black spotting on heads and throats and slightly curved bills. The variable black spotted throats may be seen on the first two females. The mottled yellow patterns may be seen on the third female's shoulder. Female Scott's Orioles were seen from April 14 - May 1.



Juvenile, immature, and 1st year Scott's Orioles have dusky streaking on the back, two white wing bars and are yellowish-olive in color. Numerous 1st year Scott's Orioles were seen from April 21 thru May 2.

Bullock's Orioles feed in the slender branches of trees and shrubs, catching caterpillars and also feeding on nectar/fruit/jelly and visit from April 29 thru May 5.



The adult **male Bullock's Orioles** are bright orange with black backs (right), large white wing patch, black eyelines and with a varying pattern to the black throats of the three orioles (above).



The **female Bullock's Orioles** have a yellowish heads and tails with grayish backs and whiteish bellies and white wing bars.



The **immature, Juvenile, and 1st year male Bullock's Orioles** are like the female's coloration, except they each have a differing patterns of black on their throats, the last having just a dot.



The **male Western Tanagers** are bright yellow with black backs, black wings and red-orange heads.



The **male Black-headed Grosbeaks** are rich orange-cinnamon with black heads and black/white wings.



The **female and immature Black-headed Grosbeaks** (above and below) often have warm orange or buff on the breasts with streaking on the sides, light eyebrows, and sometimes a bi-colored bills.



*Black-headed Grosbeaks
(photo left)
Wooing or Grappling?*

*Hope that you enjoyed the
Nature in Tinneys' Yard!*