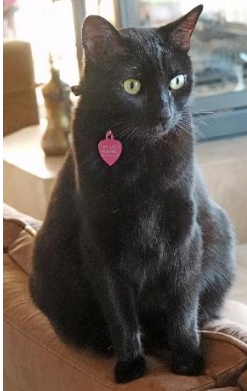


Nature at the Tinneys - Flora and Fauna

(Bob and Maxine Tinneys' Yard, The Ranch in Prescott, AZ – June-mid-August 2021)

Photos and Narrative by Bob and Maxine Tinney

Mountain Lion Visit . . .



On June 14, 2021 about 8:45 p.m., while our god-cat, Lava, is visiting for two weeks, she alerts to something in the yard. Bob had seen a Fox in the morning, so thought maybe a fox, coyote, or javelina. The animal appears to be drinking from a water pan in the darker portion of the yard. It turns a bit and a glimpse is caught of its face. It is a **Mountain Lion**! The **Cougar** then walks right by the lighted water feature across the circular pavers and exits to the east. No photos as Maxine did not get to the camera, but have attached a photo from a few years ago of a Mountain Lion getting a drink in our yard. The next morning a neighbor telephones that a Mule Deer had been killed in their yard. We tell him about the Mountain Lion visiting our yard the previous night.



Mother Skunks and Five Kits Visit . . .



In 2007 a rare **Western Spotted Skunk** (above) visits our yard and occasionally a **Striped Skunk** visits. To our surprise on July 28, a mother **Striped Skunk** and her five kits (right) appear on the yard pavers probably seeking insects and/or bird seed.



First Mule Deer Fawn Visit to Tinneys is 5 August 2021



Although fawns were sighted earlier, on 5 August a Mule Deer Doe brings her precious fawn into the Tinneys' yard.

"The love of all living creatures is the most noble attribute of man." ~Charles Darwin

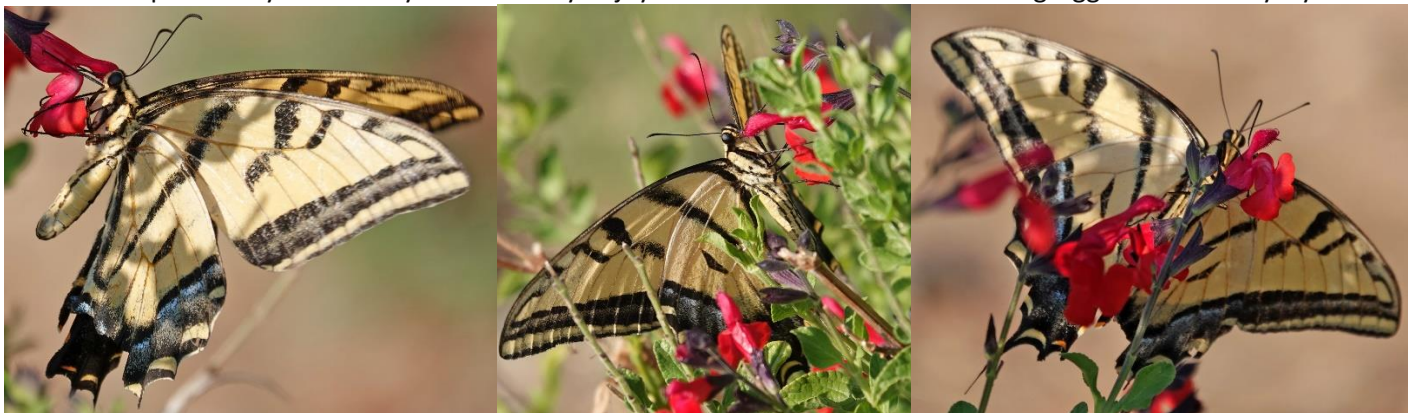
Two-tailed Swallowtail (*Papilio multicaudata*)

Arizona's state butterfly is the **Two-tailed Swallowtail** butterfly. The two-tailed swallowtail butterfly became the state butterfly in 2001. Swallowtails are the largest species of butterflies in the United States. It features a wingspan of 3 ½" to 5 ½" long. This butterfly is lovely and graceful, yet rarely enjoyed up close and personal.



Males have narrow tiger stripes on forewing (stripes wider in female).

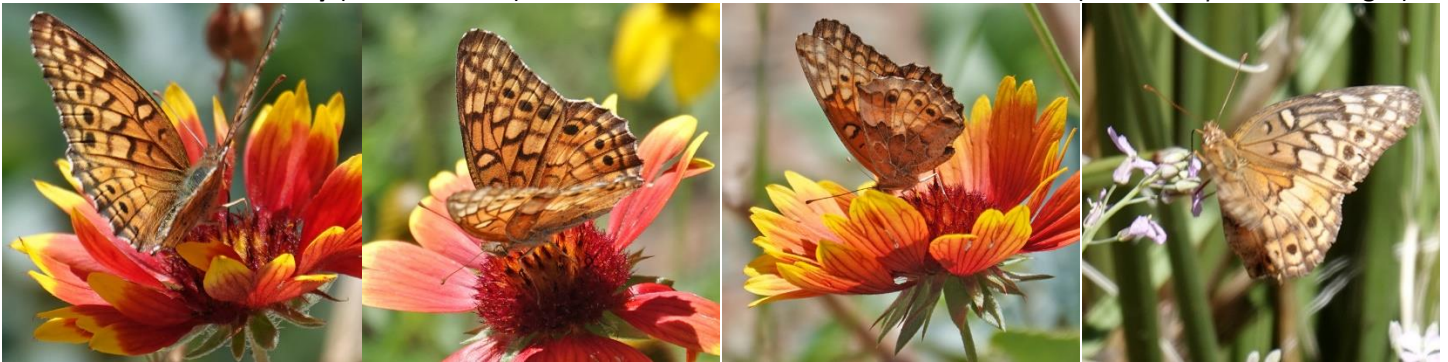
The lifespan is only 6 to 14 days and this day enjoys the flower nectar of red salvia greggii in the Tinneys' yard.



Lovely Butterflies



The **Ceraunus Blue** (*Hemiargus ceraunus* - two left photos) is a butterfly in the Lycaenidae family and enjoy the Mexican Hat flowers (*Ratibida columnifera*), as does the possible **Sooty Wing Skipper** (*Pholisora graciellae* center right photo). **Clouded Yellow Butterfly** (*Colias croceus*) secures nectar from an Indian Blanket Flower (*Gaillardia pulchellar* - right).



The **Variegated Fritillary** (*Euptoieta claudia*) brownish orange above, with a complex checkered pattern of black markings and dark dots, secures nectar from the Indian Blanket Flowers.



The Adult butterfly stage of the Variegated Fritillary is 2 to 10 weeks and the Egg stage is 10 to 15 days.



With the wings of the Variegated Fritillary folded the orange and tan underwing pattern is displayed.

Horned Toad, Tarantulas, and Tarantula Wasps



The **Horned Toad Lizard** is named for its horns, toad-like flattened, round body, and blunt snout.



The **Arizona Blond Tarantulas** (adults three photos, juvenile-below right) are nocturnal hunters, feeding primarily on insects like grasshoppers, beetles, other small spiders and arthropods, and have weak venom.



One day a smaller, juvenile tarantula (right above) is seen moving slowly on the paver walkway to the west of the house.



The **Tarantula Hawk Wasps** search out tarantulas and attempts to sting them and paralyzes the spider. The wasp will then lay eggs on it, seals it in a burrow which provides "fresh meat" for the wasp grubs to eat after hatching from eggs.

Wasps - are predators and play a vital ecological role controlling pests.



Over three dozen species of **Velvet Ant Wasps** (two black and red-orange left) inhabit Arizona. The **Black-and-Yellow Mud Daubers** (two right - far mating) hunt spiders to feed to their young.



Blue Mud Daubers or perhaps a **Steel Blue Cricket Hunter Wasps** visit the Tinneys' yard.



Golden Digger Wasp (left), and **Paper Wasps** (two center)

Thread Waist Wasp (right) with an incredible narrow waist with a bulging abdomen with red and orange near the waist is an active ambush attacker, immobilizing insect prey with a swift venomous sting.

Bees - provide essential ecosystem services in natural and agricultural landscapes as pollinators.



(Left to Right) **Carpenter Bee**, **Great Black Bee**, **Indian Diadasia Bee**, and **Blanket Bee** (with two pollen sacs)



Honey Bees among other bees love the purple spiky sage and some collect pollen on their abdomen.



Some **Honey Bees** (above) have orange pollen baskets or **corbiculae** to collect pollen.



Bees drink from the hummingbird feeders for sweet water and imbibe water from the water feature.

Other Insects and Critters – The yard, porches/patios have multiple day and night visitors including: **Ants** (six, moving food), **Aphid** (on Butterfly bush), **Beetles**, **June Bug**, **Crickets**, **Flesh** and **Scorpion Flies**, **Grasshoppers**, **Katydid**s, various **Moths**, **Gopher Snake**, **Spider** and **Webs**, and possible **Egg Casings**.





Western Fence Lizards with blue underside markings among other lizards including geckos (not shown), run along pathways or sun themselves on rocks, trees, or house walls.



The **Rock or Gray Squirrels** are nimble, bushy-tailed rodents enjoying fruits, seeds and other yard finds.



The active, little **Chipmunks** vie for the seed blocks and scamper around the yard playing chase.



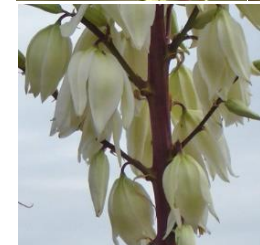
A **Cottontail Rabbit** visits the yard in the mornings. One morning Maxine sees a **Coyote** crossing the yard. She heads for the camera, but only gets a rump-shot as the **Coyote** enters the thick shrubs (right).

Yard Flowers - by producing nectar, flowers are able to provide food for the insects that help to pollinate the plants.



Favorite flowers of the Tinneys include **Indian Blankets** (*Gaillardia pulchella*), **Indian Paintbrush** (*Castilleja coccinea*), **Globe Mallow** (*Sphaeralcea munroana*), and **Mexican Hat** (*Ratibida columnifera*).

Yard Flowers - by producing nectar, flowers are able to provide food for the insects that help to pollinate the plants.



Every Flower Blooms in Its Own Time!

Yard Flowers - by producing nectar, flowers are able to provide food for the insects that help to pollinate the plants.



Every Soul is a Flower blooming in Nature!



On 7 August **2007**, Bob and Maxine Tinney were walking with a friend and her Weimaraner on Mystic Canyon in The Ranch at Prescott in Yavapai County, Prescott, AZ. The dog's acute nose smelled a mushroom and then she rubbed it with her neck, which broke the mushroom. That evening after searching the Internet, Maxine emailed four mycology individuals/sites requesting help to identify the name the mushroom. Shortly afterward an email was received from **Scott T. Bates**, School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University, writing "This is an exciting find and a new record for Arizona! This is a **stink horn** in the genus *Simblum* (most likely *S. sphaerocephalum* Schltdl.) from the order Phallales. Photos were taken, five samples were collected, dehydrated and shared with Scott and four mycology institutions.

(MYCoPortal (<http://mycoportal.org/portal/collections/individual/index.php?occid=289342>))

Each year the Tinneys would again search for the Stink Horn mushroom and found eight more specimens on 5 Sept. 2018.



On **3 August 2021** the Tinneys again looked for specimens and only found one **Stink Horn Mushroom** (above), but will continue to search. The dark area at the top of the stalk is a sticky spore mass that smells foul and attracts flies or other insects. These 'bugs' land on the mass, which sticks to them. When they fly away, they are effectively acting as a spore dispersal mechanism for the fungus. All Stink Horn samples were found on the upper end of Mystic Canyon in The Ranch.



Other Mushrooms (left) measuring 8 inches. Three Mushrooms (right) measure about 5 inches each.



Christopher May, President, Arizona Mushroom Society indicates there are approximately 300 species of mushrooms in Arizona, of which 25 are good edibles.



In 2018 the Tinneys had an approximate 250-year-old tree cut down. This year in the center of the stump, grew the above deformed mushroom with inner gills showing and arms reaching outward. Mushrooms are often critical to decomposition growing as a branching network of hyphae by releasing specialized enzymes that break down the decaying material.



The left most mushroom may be a type of **bonnet** or **parasola mushroom** with a pleated/ridged cap and the second photo of one developing. The third photo has a gill formation on the underside and is often poisonous.



Spores are most often dispersed from slits or tubes underneath the cap.

Note that the last photo has a white top with black gills.



Some mushrooms may go through their entire life cycle in as little as a day while others may survive for a week, and some even for a month. At the end of the mushroom life cycle, **fruit bodies form**, often only existing for a few days before disappearing. The mushroom channels all of its energy and nutrients towards developing fruit bodies which will then release spores.



Due to recent Monsoonal rains, mushrooms have been sprouting in the Prescott area, often arranged with some species growing together.



Although some **mushrooms** are edible, few **species** are actually consumed, as most **species** can be tough, woody, or gelatinous, give off an unpleasant smell, or taste bad. Don't eat them unless you know they are safe!



The majority of fungi in the forest take the form of underground mycelium, a vast network of single-cell strands.



Mushrooms will go away on their own once the weather dries out.



Why did the mushroom go to the party?

Because he is a fungi (fun-guy)!

Birds and Their Families (Alphabetically by Primary Name)

Bushtit

Bushtits are sprightly, social songbirds that twitter as they fly weakly between shrubs, feeders and bushes. Bushtits are tiny birds with the long tail and small beaks and almost always found in flocks. They like to eat insects and suet.



Mountain Chickadee

These tiny, large-headed but small-billed, with a long, narrow tail and full, rounded wings, active and acrobatic, birds cling to small limbs and twigs or hanging upside down. Adults and juveniles shown.



Brown-headed Cowbird

Brown-headed Cowbirds are nest parasites, meaning the females lay their eggs in the nests of smaller birds. Each cowbird chick is raised by “foster parents” of another species, but they recognize their specie by sight and sound.



Mourning Dove

Mourning Doves feed on the ground and in the open. They peck or push aside ground litter, but don't scratch at the ground. Males have favorite "cooing perches" they defend from other males.



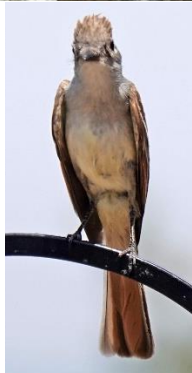
House Finch

A female **House Finch** enjoys seed while the juvenile watches, and the red-headed male nibbles a bite of purple sage.



Northern Red-Shafted Flicker

The lucky male (left) and female (right) Red-shafted Flickers are associated with friendship and happiness.



Ash-throated Flycatcher

Rarely seen at the Tinneys, the Ash-throated Flycatcher is a welcomed visitor and shows off its pale lemon belly, cinnamon tail, and a slightly raised crest. This genteel flycatcher tips its head side to side with seeming curiosity while perched on a branch further from the house, deciding if it should venture closer.

Lesser Goldfinch

The male Lesser Goldfinch bright yellow below with a glossy black cap and white patches in the wings while the Lesser Goldfinch females and immatures have olive backs, dull yellow underparts, and black wings marked by two whitish wingbars. Can you identify which are adults and which are juveniles? Not easy!



Black-Headed Grosbeak

The male Black-headed Grosbeak does not get its adult breeding plumage until it is two years old. First-year males can vary from looking like a female to looking nearly like an adult male. The oldest known Black-headed Grosbeak was a male, at least 11 years, 11 months old, when it was recaptured and rereleased during banding operations in Montana.



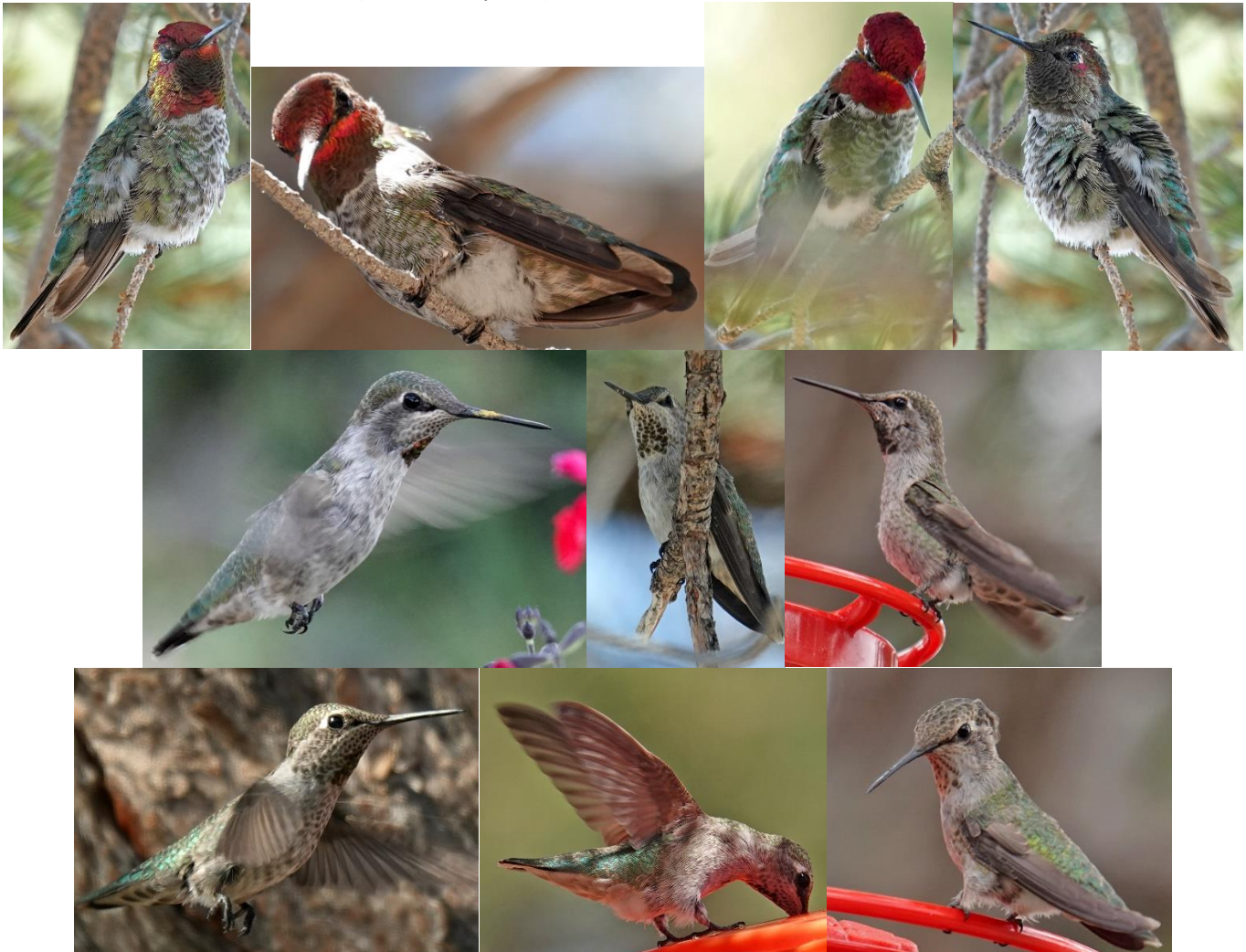
Cooper's Hawk

In pursuit of prey such as medium size birds or small mammals, Cooper's Hawk flight becomes powerful, quick, and very agile, allowing the bird to thread its way through tree branches at top speed.



Anna's Hummingbird

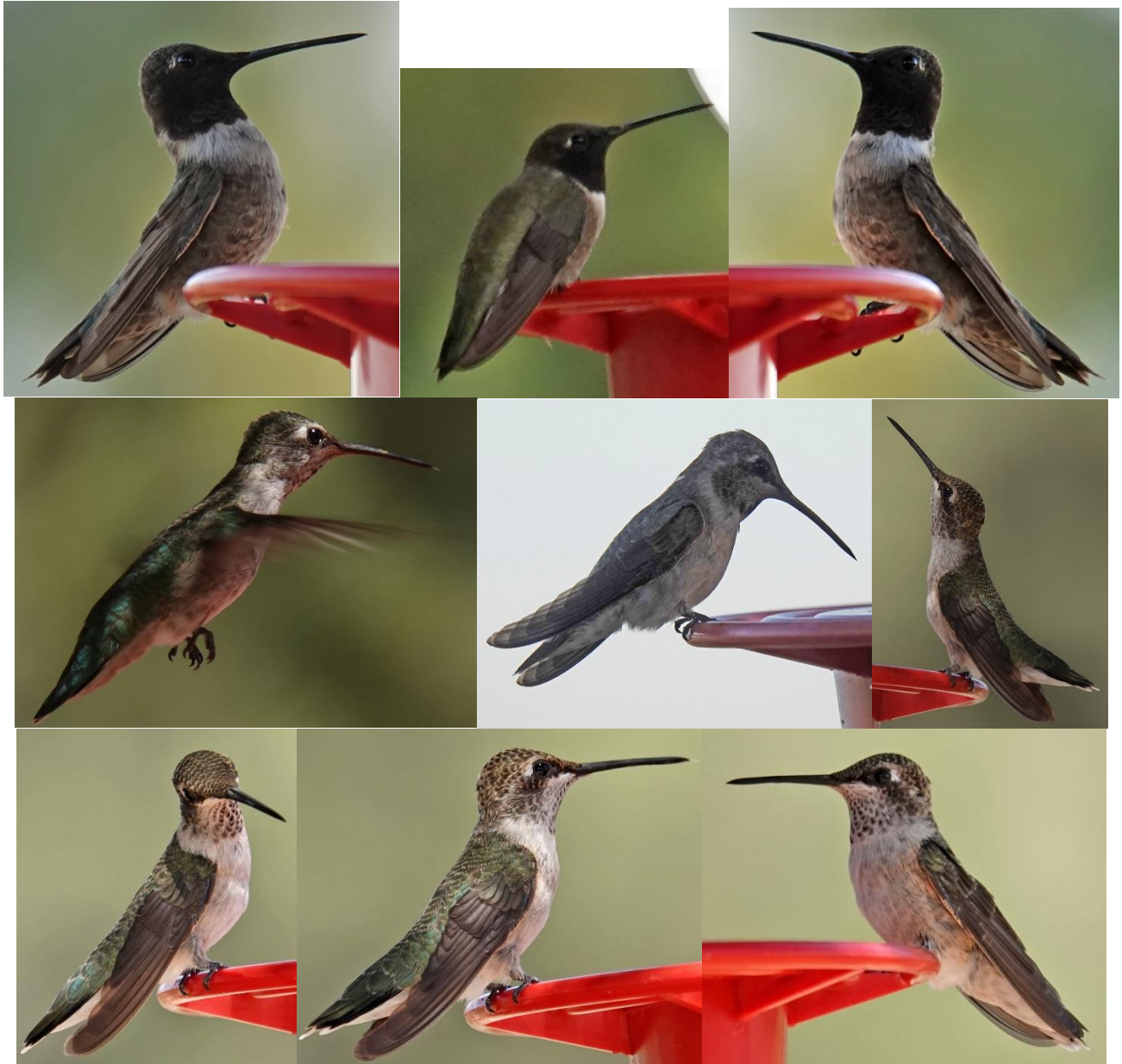
Anna's Hummingbirds are mostly green and gray, without any rufous or orange marks on the body. The male's head and throat are covered in iridescent reddish-pink feathers that can look dull brown or gray without direct sunlight (row 1). Females (red center patch), subadults, and Juveniles (row 2 and 3).



Black-chinned Hummingbird

Dull metallic green above and dull grayish-white below. Males (row 1) have a velvety black throat with a thin, iridescent purple base. Females and immatures have pale throats. In both sexes, the flanks are glossed with dull metallic green.

Row 3 identification is questionable.



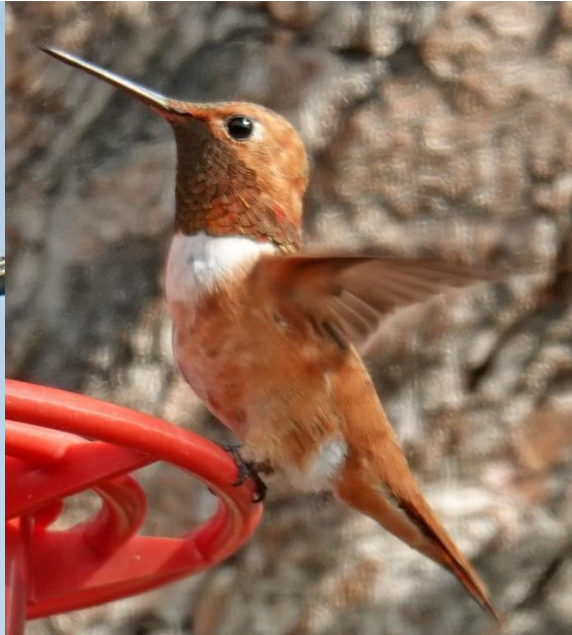
Broad-Tailed Hummingbird

The Broad-tailed Hummingbird is iridescent green above with greenish or buffy flanks and a white chest. Possible females and juveniles (no adult males shown) have green/buff spots on their throats/cheeks. Seed on two photos.



Rufous Hummingbird

In good light, male Rufous Hummingbirds Row 1) glow like coals: bright orange on the back and belly, with a vivid iridescent-red throat. Females are green above with rufous-washed flanks, rufous patches in the green tail, and often a spot of orange in the throat. Juveniles to Subadult have white throat or coloration.



Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay

The adult Woodhouse Scrub-Jay is light blue and gray above, with a whitish throat and grayish belly separated by an indistinct, partial breast band of blue (top row) and the adult introduces the juvenile to the seed block (row two). Note the juvenile is grayer than adult. Last photo an orange is in a juvenile's beak and a pinkish gape at the base of its bill.



White Breasted Nuthatch

White-breasted Nuthatches are agile birds that creep along trunks and large branches, probing into bark furrows with their straight, pointed bills.

Like other nuthatches, they often turn sideways and upside down on vertical surfaces as they forage.



Bullock's Oriole

Adult males are orange with a black back and large white wing patch. The face is orange with a black line through the eye and a black throat (row 1). Immatures are yellowish-orange on the head and tail, with grayish back and white-edged wing coverts. Females white breast and Immature males show a black throat patch (row 2).



Phainopepla

Adult males are glossy black with red eyes and large white patches in the wings (visible in flight). Adult females are mousy grayish brown with red eyes; immatures are similar but with brownish eyes. All have shaggy crests.



Band-tailed Pigeons

Adults are soft blue-gray above and purplish-gray below, with a white crescent and iridescent green on the back of the neck. The juveniles (center and two below) have no neck markings and are learning the ways of the world.



Gambel's Quail

The adult Gambel's Quail scratch around the yard and drink from the water pans. One evening they brought in at least four young, but Maxine wasn't near the camera, before they were hurried away.



Common Raven

Adults and Juvenile Ravens enjoy squawking their hoarse *kraaah* and hallow *brrrronk* (bring food)!



Black-Chinned Sparrow

Eric Moore of Jay's Bird Barn in past years was always first to find the Black-Chinned Sparrows for us.
Possible female and juvenile.



Rufous-Crowned Sparrow

Sparrows are Maxine's nemesis. Row 1 appears to be Rufous-Crowned Sparrows, but Row 2 is questionable.
Possible Chipping Sparrows, but no wing-bars.



Bridled Titmouse

The Bridled Titmouse is crested and gray with a black and white patterned face, a black bib. Its crest is bordered with black and white underparts. A scruffy Juvenile is seen with an Adult in the last two photos.



Juniper Titmouse

A basic gray adult Juniper Titmouse looks after and shares food with a new juvenile (top row) and the Juvenile learns about the environment including fruit and jumps with joy (row 2).



Canyon Towhee

The Canyon Towhees are large sparrows with chunky bodies, short rounded wings, and fairly long tails (unless a Bobcat took out your tail feathers and you are tailless – two center/right photos top row).



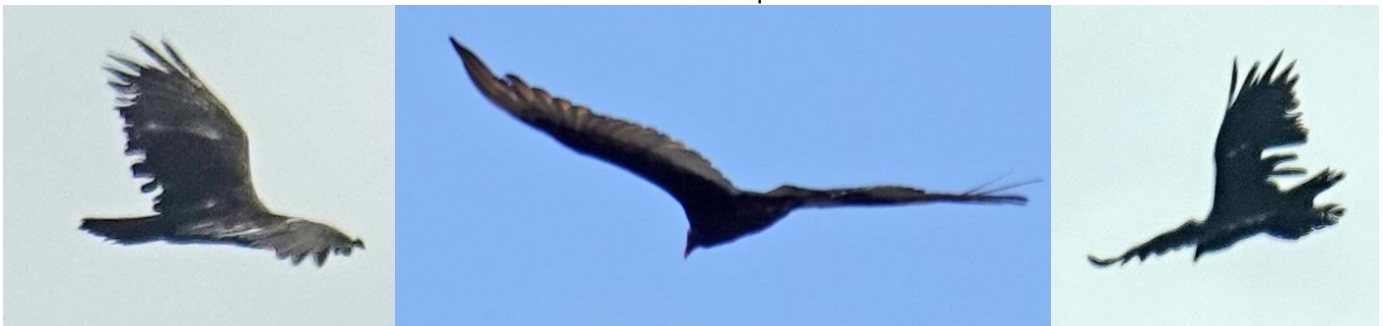
Spotted Towhee

In the breeding season, Spotted Towhees eat mainly insects including ladybugs, beetles, crickets, grasshoppers, caterpillars, moths, bees, wasps, most of the insects named above. Adult Spotted Towhees (rows 1 and 2) are very similar although the male's head is a darker black. Juveniles more brown coloration (row 3).



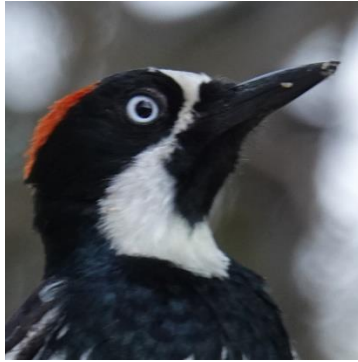
Turkey Vulture

Turkey vultures are **the only scavenger birds that can't kill their prey**. Turkey Vultures eat carrion, which they find largely by their excellent sense of smell. Mostly they eat mammals but are not above snacking on reptiles, other birds, amphibians, fish, and even invertebrates (or pizza). They prefer freshly dead animals, but often have to wait for their meal to soften in order to pierce the skin.



Acorn Woodpecker

These striking birds are mostly black above with a red cap, (female black in front of cap) creamy white face, and black patch around the bill.



Hairy Woodpecker

The male Hairy Woodpecker with red back of head and female with no red head marking (Row 1).

Female feeds Juvenile 1 (Row 2) with red marking on crown and Juvenile 2 with minor red on crown (Row 3).



Ladder-Backed Woodpecker

Ladder-backed Woodpeckers are black-and-white above, with neat stripes like ladder rungs on the back, and a more checkered pattern on the wings. Female have a black head (not shown). Males (left). Juveniles right).



June – August 2021 Mule Deer



The first year Mule Deer bucks with nubs are developing to branch into antlers.



The Mule Deer travel together and are alert to danger, but stop for the taste of a fresh orange.



The does showed signs that the fawns were born, and just a matter of time before seeing them.

"Gifts come to those who are ready to receive them." ~Walt Anderson