

THE SWIFT FOXES OF THE KIOWA GRASSLANDS

- *A Four Day Search for Wildlife in New Mexico*



Mills Canyon, New Mexico.

Steve Morgan

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1 Introduction

With family business in Houston to attend to, I had to visit the USA in early October. To make the most of what would inevitably be an expensive trip, I looked around for any reasonable opportunity to see wildlife in Texas or neighbouring states. Then, while browsing through Jon Hall's website, I came across a blog from a contributor regarding Swift Fox in New Mexico. Apparently he had seen this rare and elusive creature a number of times while driving late at night to and from bird surveys in the Kiowa Grasslands. I was stunned. Here was a species I desperately wanted to see only a short hop away from where I was going to be anyway. Jon kindly gave me the blogger's contact details and I got in touch to ask for advice.

The blogger turned out to be one Dylan Radin and he generously gave me detailed instructions on where best to look for the Fox. I was advised to concentrate on the area east of Springer, New Mexico and, in particular, along Highways 56 and 39 around the tiny hamlets of Abbott and Mills. Dylan also suggested that I might do best to try very late at night when the roads were completely quiet. All this turned out to be excellent advice and I am indebted to Dylan for his help.

2 The Kiowa Grasslands

The north-eastern corner of New Mexico is an area of flat, high altitude grassland. Several rivers, (for example the Cimarron and Canadian Rivers), weave their way across it and here the land is more fertile and the grass is lusher. There are even trees! Elsewhere it is somewhat bleak with endless expanses of flat, featureless short grass. On the higher ground, for example around Abbott, it is quite desolate.

Most of the area is ranched, albeit at quite a low level of intensity. Further east, as you move into Oklahoma, cattle ranching increasingly gives way to arable farming and huge cornfields are common. Several places have been designated as state parks – the Kiowa Grasslands (which seem to cover at least two distinct and separate areas) and the Rita Blanca Grasslands. However, these are ranched too and in practice it is hard to tell much difference between a state park area and any other area.

3 The Plan

I had four days and nights to find the Fox and decided to base myself in Springer for at least the first two. Thereafter I might persevere in Springer or move east to Clayton depending on results. I planned to recce the areas recommended by Dylan in daylight first before attacking them in earnest after dark.

I was hoping to find species such as Black-tailed Prairie Dog, Barbary Sheep, Colorado chipmunk and Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel during the daytime and Badger as well as Fox during the nocturnal sessions.

4 Summary of Day-by-Day Activities

Saturday 29th September

I flew into Amarillo from Houston (via Dallas), picked up the hire car and headed north. The route took me through Dumas, Dalhart and Clayton and it was just south of Dalhart that I found my first mammal of the trip – a colony of black-tailed prairie dogs. These were along Highway 78, just opposite Rita-Blancha Lake on the east side of the road. Between Dalhart and Clayton I then spotted Hen Harrier, Chihuahuan Raven and Red-tailed Hawk. Between Clayton and Springer, along Highway 56, Pronghorn were quite common in groups of up to twenty animals, often close to the road. Roadkill, (a good indicator of which species are around!), was scarce – I found only one dead Skunk and two dead Cottontails.

I arrived in Springer in the early evening as it was starting to get dark and checked into the Oasis Motel, one of the two accommodation options in the town. (The other is Brown's Hotel, which was closed). As it was too late to recce any of the likely Fox areas in daylight and as I was exhausted anyway from the long journey up from Houston I decided to skip any thoughts of spotlighting that evening and go and get something to eat. Springer itself, I discovered, has little to offer the hungry out-of-season visitor but three miles north, along I-25 at French Corner, is a very pleasant truck-stop called Russell's where there is a Subway bar and a restaurant serving wholesome food. (The shop here also sells sandwiches, soft drinks and fresh fruit, vital supplies for spotlighting sessions!).

Sunday 30th September

The morning was bright and still with air temperatures approaching twenty degrees: perfect conditions for a daytime recce.

At Russell's, where I had breakfast each morning, there were Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds as well as the now globally ubiquitous House Sparrow. Along I-25 there were groups of Pronghorn, one of which consisted of a male with enormous pronged horns and about twelve females. I was to see this particular group each morning as I drove past, always in exactly the same place, just next to the electricity sub-station on the western side of the highway.

I headed east back along Highway 56 before turning south at Abbott (twenty miles east of Springer) onto Highway 39. Traffic was virtually non-existent on 39, even in daytime, and it looked perfect for spotlighting later. I was pleased to find a fine looking Swainson's Hawk sitting on a roadside fence post. Further along there were Red-tailed Hawks and a Mourning Dove.

Fifteen miles south of Abbott lies the very tiny hamlet of Mills (maybe three houses) and here I turned west onto Mills Canyon Road, a gravel track that winds its way across the grasslands for about seven miles until it reaches the Mills Canyon. Here, the scenery undergoes a startling transformation. Suddenly you are confronted with hills and cliffs and instead of bleak, treeless prairie there is woodland. At the canyon rim there is a very pleasant campsite where a notice board tells you that you are now in Cougar and Bear country. At the entrance

to the campsite, where the track forks, I found Rock Squirrels sunning themselves and they obligingly consented to having their photographs taken.



Rock Squirrel at Mills Canyon Rim Campsite.

With plenty of time available I decided to explore the canyon itself. The road, now passable only in a 4x4 vehicle and then only with care, zig-zags its way for a further two miles to the canyon floor and a second (somewhat remote) campsite. I descended on foot, scanning the cliffs on either side as I went, hoping to see the Barbary Sheep that were supposed to be present. (They weren't). All I could find were flocks of Dark-eyed Juncos, though the habitat looked superb. The heavily wooded rocky slopes looked good for arboreal species such as Virginia Opossum and Ringtail and I promised myself I would make time on one evening at least to come back to try after dark, (Bears and Cougars notwithstanding!). By three o'clock it had become oppressively hot and I headed back to the Oasis for a siesta happy that I had found plenty of good areas for spotlighting later that evening.

After dinner, at about eight o'clock, I was on the road again. I made my way slowly along 56 (which still had a few vehicles passing) and then onto the very quiet 39. At Mills I turned once more onto the Canyon Road and found the first mammal of the evening – an Eastern Cottontail. I spotlighted my way along the Canyon Road all the way down to the Rim Campsite, finding only two Black-tailed Jackrabbits at the junction with Mesteno Road. I parked at the Rim and walked down into the Canyon (as I had planned earlier) and carefully searched the trees with the spotlight. Disappointingly, nothing was doing. It was still quite

early so I decided to try a couple of the farm roads branching off the Canyon Road, (Mesteno Road and Berger Road). However, these also produced nothing.

I suspected that results might improve after midnight when the roads had been free of traffic for a couple of hours and so I idled my way back along the Canyon Road playing for time, saving the return drive along 39 and 56 for as late an hour as possible. This tactic proved correct. At 12.30 am I had reached Milepost 92 on Highway 39, (just south of the junction with 56 at Abbott). Suddenly I picked up green eye-shine to my right. I pulled over and got out. But I wasn't quick enough; by the time I had got my spotlight in action the animal had reached the ridge of a gentle slope some two hundred yards away. Two green eyes stared briefly back at me before disappearing over the skyline. Whatever it was had covered a lot of ground very quickly and I strongly suspected it was a Swift Fox, (which apparently are notorious for their rapid exits). Frustration!

At Abbott, there was a dirt road heading north, (County Road C-48 I think), and I followed it for a mile or two across the open grassland but, finding nothing, returned to Highway 56. Heading westwards at Milepost 19 I was pleasantly surprised to find a Striped Skunk which I presumed was to be my consolation prize for the evening.

I had almost given up hope but on reaching Milepost 12 near Chico Creek I suddenly picked up faint green eye-shine in the roadside grass verge to my left, about fifty yards ahead. I pulled in and wound down the window before bringing the spotlight to bear. Success at last! A smallish fawn-grey Fox with a distinctive black-tipped tail stared back at me. Clearly a Swift Fox! It quickly began cantering off so I got out and followed it for a while. A couple of times I got reasonable views through binoculars but soon enough it had reached the crest of a small hill and I lost it. Looking at my watch, I saw that it was coming up to 01.30.

As I returned to the car I could see headlights in the distance and so I waited for this late nighter to pass before resuming my drive westwards. However, instead of passing it pulled up alongside me and I quickly realised it was a police patrol car. My heart sank. Of course I had been doing nothing wrong but, in my experience, the police don't take a very sympathetic view towards mammal-watchers late at night, assuming that they must be intent on poaching, rustling or some other illegal activity. On this occasion though I was quite wrong; the officers were genuinely interested in what I was doing and even offered advice on where to see other species such as Elk.

By 02.00 I was back at the Oasis, tired but very happy to have scored at the first attempt – even though I had left it late!

Monday 1st October

I took a very leisurely drive back along Highways 56 and 39 the next morning for another recce. In particular I was interested to look at MP 12 on 56 and MP 92 on 39 where I had seen activity the previous night.

I got out at MP 12 to examine the site. The roadside verge was pot-holed with the workings, both active and derelict, of burrowing rodents. In fact, it was the same story almost

everywhere I stopped to look. The area between the road and the fence-line would be full of holes. Beyond the fence-line, where the grass had been grazed, I could find virtually no evidence of rodent activity whatsoever. The penny dropped. Those ribbons of rough un-grazed grass along each side of the highway were effectively a completely separate micro-habitat providing a haven for rodents. The road from Springer to Abbott comprised two twenty mile by ten yard habitats where Swift Fox could hunt at night. The vast expanses of grazed grassland away from the road were, in comparison, a wildlife desert where rodent density would be very low. That was why people were seeing the Foxes so close to the road. It was also obviously the reason why raptors such as Swainson's Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk were so eager to sit on roadside fence posts!



A very interesting picture of Highway 56, (seriously!); note the difference between the rodent-dense grass verges and the bare expanses of grassland away from the road.

At MP 92 on Highway 39, where I had seen the green eye-shine the previous night, I got out to take a close look. Here, the same picture emerged – a ten yard wide ribbon of rodent-dense grass verge alongside a sea of empty and heavily grazed grassland. Furthermore, I found a number of places along the fence-line where the ground had been worn to bare earth by animals passing underneath the barbed wire. I even found Fox scats at one place: compelling evidence to support my theory!

I couldn't resist taking another daytime look at Mills Canyon. The Rock Squirrels were still in residence at the entrance to the Rim Campsite and in the canyon itself I found a Dusky

Flycatcher as well as the usual Dark-eyed Juncos. On the Canyon Road there were big flocks of Horned Lark and two American Kestrels.

That evening, things got off to a promising start with a group of four male Elk at Milepost 5 on Highway 56. And at Milepost 7 were two more, all possibly part of the forty-strong group that the police officers I had spoken to the previous evening had seen near Cimarron. On Highway 39 I twice saw small rodents scuttling across the road in front of me. They were sandy brown with tails at least as long as their bodies. I think they might have been North American Deermice but I can't be sure; certainly they looked too big to be Pocket Mice. There were also Nightjars on the road, which I later identified as Common Poorwill. On the Mills Canyon Road I found a very fresh pile of droppings. Still wet, the three inch high mound contained half-digested berries. I am sure it was the work of Back Bear though it is unclear what such a creature could have been doing so far out in the grassland. Otherwise, the Canyon Road was quiet.



Common Poorwill on Mesteno Road.

As before, I wanted to save the return drive along the known Swift Fox areas on 39 and 56 till later and so, to pad out time, I drove a few farm roads and then took 39 south for seven or eight miles to Roy, another small settlement. At 12.25am I had made my way back northwards to Milepost 91 right in the heart of Fox country and, sure enough, again I found green eye-shine in the grass verge beside the road. I stopped, leaving the car's headlights trained on the spot. And there, unmistakably, was another Swift Fox. This time, instead of

heading off away from the road, it came trotting straight towards me, passing only a few feet from the car's offside before carrying on behind me. I got out and scanned round with the spotlight. I found it forty yards away in the open grassland. For a second or two it stared back at me over its shoulder but then it was off and within moments it had cleared the distant skyline and disappeared. These Swift Foxes certainly live up to their name!

I tried hard to find another Fox on 56 but that, it seemed, had been my nightly ration. Still, two Foxes in two nights was more than acceptable!

Tuesday 2nd October

I was curious to see what lay west of Springer and so after breakfast I headed out to Springer Lake. The road is a narrow gravel track and goes past the Springer Correctional Facility (prison!) which at night is lit up like an airport. There are signs everywhere telling motorists not to pick up hitch-hikers, suggesting perhaps a lack of confidence from the authorities about keeping inmates securely locked up. There was a small wetland next to the prison on which a flock of Blue-winged Teal were resting and all around, in every direction, were groups of Pronghorn.

Springer Lake held vast numbers of Ruddy Duck and American Coot as well as a few Western Grebes, Ring-billed Gulls and a lone American White Pelican. The road rises up onto a levee alongside one end of the lake and there are good places to stop here to scan the surrounding countryside. I found only Pronghorn but from time to time I expect people see Elk and White-tailed Deer here as well.

Following the road round to the northern side of the lake I found a good colony of Black-tailed Prairie Dogs who were happy to ignore me and stand, like Meerkats, on their hind legs sunning themselves. I carried on through farmland until, as I half expected, I joined Highway 58, the main road out west to Cimarron. Having consulted the map, I thought it might make a nice morning's drive to go out to Cimarron and then head back on minor roads via Miami to Springer. I wondered if any of these roads might be good for spotlighting at some point.

Highway 58 quickly brought me to the watershed of the Cimarron River and from here westwards the grasslands became much richer and greener. There were huge Prairie Dog towns and I must have seen hundreds of these animals on both sides of the road. The lush grasslands here looked very promising for species such as Badger or Coyote though the highway itself is fairly busy and night-time spotlighting would have to be done very late when traffic had stopped. Moreover, there were few convenient places to pull over without blocking the road and one would have to be careful when stopping to scan or investigate eye-shine.

Cimarron itself is a much bigger and busier place than Springer. It is also much more prosperous. Springer has rather more than its share of closed and boarded up buildings but Cimarron seemed to be doing better. I saw quite a few good looking motels and eating places and Cimarron might be a viable alternative to Springer for future mammal watchers visiting the area.

I turned off on Highway 21 on a circuitous route back towards Miami and Springer. This is not a very busy road and might offer some good spotlighting opportunities. The last twelve miles, from Miami to Springer, looked especially good and I made a mental note to come back late that evening. On Miami Lake there were large numbers of Blue-winged Teal and American Coot and a lone Spotted Sandpiper on the shoreline.

I started the evening's spotlighting by trying the Springer Lake Road, obviously being careful not to spotlight the area immediately next to the prison. (Incidentally, it struck me as ironic to locate a prison in a town called Springer!). The road was quiet however and at the junction with Highway 58 I headed eastwards toward French Corner and made my way back onto the now very familiar hunting ground of Highway 56.

There were three male Elk, (probably the same animals I had seen the previous night), at Milepost 8 but, otherwise, everything was very quiet. The Canyon Road again produced nothing; (it really had been a big disappointment). And, a very late crawl along 39 to Roy and back up to Abbott also drew a blank. I had high hopes for the "hot area" around Milepost 91-93 but even that failed to deliver.

Then, at about 12.40am, at Milepost 15 on Highway 56 at last I found a Fox. There was green eye-shine on the right side of the road at about forty yards. I pulled up quite abruptly and just in time to see a Swift Fox hunting in the grass verge. But, just as I raised my binoculars it spooked and, though I got out the car and switched on the spotlight in double-quick time, it was up and away. I just got some eye-shine in the distance before losing the animal altogether.

My last port of call for the evening was the previously scouted Highway 21 up to Miami. This looked like another potentially very good area for Fox but I found only a single Raccoon shuffling along the fence-line. Several Pronghorn were on the road and spotlighting here requires caution. The road is very quiet indeed along here and quite narrow; it would be very easy to have a collision with a startled Pronghorn late at night.

Wednesday 3rd October

I decided that, since I had had three sightings of Swift Fox already, it was time to head east. I now planned to spend my last night at Clayton and to try some local areas there. This would also leave me a slightly shorter drive the following morning back to Amarillo, with correspondingly less chance of missing the flight back to Houston!

I wasted no time in heading back along Highway 56 to Clayton as I wanted to leave as much time as possible to recce possible spotlighting sites for my last night in the field. Daytime activity was scarce, as ever, though I did see a Greater Roadrunner at Milepost 30.

At Clayton I carried on eastwards on 56 towards Oklahoma. The road here cuts into the Rita-Blanca Grassland and I had hopes that this area might be productive. But it turned out to be poor and the further east I went the poorer it got. Beyond the Oklahoma state line lay endless expanses of cornfield and heavily grazed pasture. If this was the much-vaunted Rita-Blanca Grassland, then I wasn't impressed!

Doubling back, I tried Highway 406 northwards to Seneca. Straight away I had a much more positive impression. The road here went through some nice grassland, which hadn't been grazed into near desert. There were few houses and the area looked a lot less disturbed. And at Milepost 4 I found some roadkill. On investigation it turned out to be a dead Swift Fox – a tragic sight but confirmation, at least, that I was in the right habitat. Just after the seething metropolis of Seneca (four houses!) I found an interesting side road on the left which begged to be investigated as it cut directly across very good looking grassland. This was Campbell Road, a gravel and dirt track but well maintained and very driveable.

I found Loggerhead Shrike and Hen Harrier along here, the latter intently quartering the open grassland. Obviously it expected to find small rodents and, that being the case, I could see no reason why Swift Fox shouldn't be present after dark. There were two little farm tracks branching off to the south – Birdwell Road and Angus Road – the first providing access to a lonely farm house but the second winding off into empty countryside and looking like a good bet for spotlighting later. A mile or so after Angus Road the track veered round to the right and passed another farm house. And, after another half mile, it forked into two smaller tracks. At this junction there was a tourist area with picnic tables and a toilet and interpretation boards describing the area's history as part of the old Santa Fe Trail. I parked up and headed off on foot to see what I could see. The boards explained that visitors were welcome to pass through a gate to the right of the road to explore the Trail and so this was the route I took. Just over the brow of the hill I found a colossal Prairie Dog town (at least a hundred Dogs) and circling above me a Ferruginous Hawk. The Hawk invoked panic among the Dogs of course who vented their fear and displeasure with plaintive “wee-oooh” alarm calls. This looked like classic habitat for Badger as well as Swift Fox and, on seeing the soft sandy soil, I even wondered about Black-footed Ferret. I was sure I had read about a Ferret re-introduction programme somewhere hereabouts and, if so, this surely would be the right sort of place. In any event, it all looked so good that I had already made up my mind to come back that evening.

I found a place to stay in Clayton (the Day's Inn Hotel) and had some dinner while I waited for it to get dark. It had been quite hot that afternoon but at dusk it had mellowed into a lovely mild and still evening. Everything looked perfect and I couldn't wait to get started. I got off to a good start with two Striped Skunks at Milepost 4 and while I was watching them a car drew up alongside me to see what I was up to. It turned out to be a local resident and we got chatting about wildlife. When I explained that I was looking for Swift Fox he remarked casually that “Foxes are common around Perico”, (a small town on Highway 78 between Clayton and Dalhart on the southern edge of the Rita-Blanca Grasslands).

I dawdled my way up to Seneca not wanting to get to Campbell Road too early. Highway 406 looked good but Campbell Road looked even better and I wanted to save it for when it was really dark. Eventually I reached Campbell Road where the total absence of traffic allowed me to crawl along driving and spotlighting at the same time, (not to be recommended on main Highways!). Not finding anything immediately I decided to try Angus Road, a dirt track without even a fence-line. I crawled along here even more slowly and after about half a mile was rewarded with a large rodent scampering directly towards me. Just before it disappeared

down its roadside hole I recognised what it was – an Ord's Kangaroo Rat – a species I had seen several times before in Arizona and Idaho. Pleased with myself, I carried on to see what else Angus Road might offer. I hadn't long to wait before a big pair of very bright green eyes greeted me at about one hundred yards. I suspected it might be a cow but crawled forward to get a bit closer before trying the spotlight at full beam. At about fifty yards I stopped and gave it the beam. It was no cow – in fact it was a Swift Fox which stared back at me transfixed in the glare of the spotlight. I turned the beam off and crept forward to see if I could get a better look. At twenty yards it was still there and I had glorious views of this magnificent creature. I could see everything: the alert, foxy face with its triangular ears, its sandy-grey coat and pale underparts and its bushy tail with the characteristic black tip – as if it had just dipped it in a pot of black paint. I followed it for three or four minutes getting fantastic views at close quarters before it decided it had had enough and sprinted across the grassland toward the horizon. What a result!

I carried on for a bit before returning to Campbell Road in the hope of finding Badger but despite giving it another couple of hours found nothing except two tiny rodents which ran across the road ahead and disappeared before I could get on them. Judging by their size I guess they might have been Pocket Mice – possibly Plains Pocket Mouse or Silky Pocket Mouse given the location and habitat. Later, on re-joining Highway 406, I found two Raccoons shuffling about in the roadside verge; (the resident I had spoken to earlier had said that Raccoons were common here). At about 23.00 I called it quits and, delighted with my Fox, returned to Clayton for a well-earned rest.

Thursday 4th October

By 07.00 I was on the road and heading south to Amarillo. I didn't see any wildlife but, passing through the Perico area, had the opportunity to glance at the grasslands which I had been told were good for Fox. This southern edge of the Rita-Blanca certainly did fit the bill and looked a hundred times better than the dismal section I had explored previously on Highway 56. Future mammal watchers might do well to try this area and I noticed any number of minor roads off Highway 78 providing access to apparently good areas.

I reached Amarillo at about 11.00am local time and caught the 12.50 flight back to Houston via Dallas. I had seen four Foxes in four nights and probably narrowly missed a fifth – a return greatly exceeding my expectation. Anyone wishing to see Swift Fox would, I'm sure, also be successful if they tried the areas I have described here and gave it a serious effort over several nights.

5 List of Mammals Recorded

I saw and identified ten species. Two other species were seen but not positively identified and one was unseen but recorded from droppings.

Species	Latin Name	Notes
Swift Fox	<i>Vulpes velox</i>	Four good sightings; possible fifth.
Striped Skunk	<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	Two sightings of three animals.
Northern Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>	Two sightings of three animals.
Elk (Red Deer)	<i>Cervus elephas</i>	Three sightings of six or more animals.
Pronghorn	<i>Antilocapra americana</i>	Abundant around Springer.
Eastern Cottontail	<i>Syvilagus floridanus</i>	Common on Highway 39.
Black-tailed Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>	Common everywhere.
Ord's Kangaroo Rat	<i>Dipodomys ordii</i>	One well seen on Angus Road.
Black-tailed Prairie Dog	<i>Cynomys indovicianus</i>	Several large towns providing excellent views.
Rock Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus variegatus</i>	Quite common in Mills Canyon.
Black Bear?	<i>Ursus americanus</i>	Fresh droppings on Mills Canyon Road.
North American Deermouse?	<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>	Two seen on Highway 39.
Plains Pocket Mouse?	<i>Perognathus flavescens</i>	Two seen on Campbell Road.

6 List of Birds Recorded

I wasn't especially trying to find birds though I did make some effort to list what I saw. I don't suppose that any of the following species were particularly unusual or remarkable.

Species	Latin Name	Notes
Western Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	Several on Springer Lake.
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	One on Springer Lake.
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auratus</i>	One in Houston on park lake.
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea Herodias</i>	Several on lakes and creeks.
Canada Goose	<i>Branta Canadensis</i>	Abundant on Springer Lake.
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Several on Miami Lake.
American Wigeon	<i>Anas Americana</i>	Several on Springer Lake.
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	Miami and Springer Lakes.
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	A few circling near highways.
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Three over grasslands.
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Quite common over grasslands.
Swainson's Hwk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	One well seen on Highway 39.
Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	One well seen on Campbell Road.
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	Two on Mills Canyon Road.
American Coot	<i>Fulica Americana</i>	Abundant Miami and Springer Lakes.
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	One on Miami Lake.
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	Four on Springer Lake.
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Common around towns.
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	One on Highway 39.
Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>	One on Highway 56.
Common Poorwill	<i>Phaenoptilus nuttallii</i>	Quite common on grasslands.

Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax oberholseri</i>	One in Mills Canyon (on migration?).
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	One on Campbell Road.
Black-billed Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Several around Springer.
Chihuahuan Raven	<i>Corvus cryptoleucus</i>	Quite common along Highway 56.
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	Several on 385 south of Channing.
Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	Abundant on Mills Canyon Road.
Mountain Bluebird	<i>Sialia curoccoides</i>	Two near Clayton.
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Flocks in towns and gas stations.
Lark Bunting	<i>Calamospiza melanocorys</i>	Several near Springer.
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	Flock near Springer.
Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	Common in Mills Canyon.
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Common around gas stations.
Western Meadowlark	<i>Sturnelia neglecta</i>	Several around Springer/Mills.
Common Grackle	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>	Common around Springer.
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	Common around Springer.
Total species recorded	36	