

# PASSERIFORMES

(Songbirds)

# Thrushes



# Family **TURDIDAE** (Thrushes)

## **Hermit Thrush** (*Catharus guttatus*)



Henderson BVP; NV



Henderson BVP; NV



Grand Canyon NP; AZ



Grand Canyon NP; AZ

### Measurements:

Length: 6.5" Wing Span: 11" Average Weight: 1 oz

### Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

medium-small size; light to olive brown above, whitish below with dark **brown spots on breast**; rusty tail; short, straight bill, yellowish with dark tip; pinkish legs; dark eyes with **pale eyering**; no sexual dimorphism

### Notes:

common; solitary; prefers thickets and mountain woodlands throughout most of NA, wintering in s US and MEX; vagrant to w Europe and ne Asia; 9 subspecies; forages on ground, shrubs, etc., for insects, worms, etc., and berries

**Mojave presence:** migratory

### Comments:

While common throughout its range, hermit thrushes are a rather rare sight in the Mojave. Some have been spotted in such places as the Spring Mountains and Sheep Range near Las Vegas, but the only one I'd ever personally encountered as of October, 2019, was the one pictured above at the South Rim of **Grand Canyon NP**. Then, finally, I saw my first in the Mojave region at the **Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve** in December, 2022!



# Family TURDIDAE (Thrushes)

## American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)



Corn Creek; DNWR; NV



Kaibab Lake; Williams, AZ



Corn Creek; Desert National Wildlife Refuge; NV



LV Municipal GC; LV, NV



Corn Creek; DNWR; NV

### Measurements:

Length: 9" Wing Span: 15" Average Weight: 3 oz

### Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

medium size; gray-black above, darker head, orange undersides; long, dark tail; **yellow bill**; dark eyes; brown legs; **incomplete white eyering**; **(m)** bolder colors; dark gray back with darker contrasting head; bright yellow bill; **(f)** paler colors; less contrasting head; more white on undersides; duller bill; **(j)** similar to female, with dark spots on breast

### Notes:

common; social; inhabits almost any rural and urban habitat throughout NA, breeding in the north in summer, wintering south into MEX; vagrant to Europe; largest thrush, and among the most numerous birds in NA; aka **Robin**, **Robin Redbreast**; 7 subspecies; forages on the ground for worms, insects, grubs, etc., plus fruits and berries

**Mojave presence:** winter range; some year-round

### Comments:

Despite some (slight) differences, the regional variations of the subspecies still make positive gender ID by plumage difficult. Nevertheless, robins in general are amongst the most widespread and numerous--and thus recognized--birds in NA. Growing up in Maryland, I learned about robins before any other bird species, because these attractive thrushes were essentially ubiquitous year round--plus, the colors reminded me of my favorite birds (and baseball team), the **Baltimore Orioles**!



# Family TURDIDAE (Bluebirds)

## Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*)



Pine Cyn; Dolan Springs, AZ



South Rim; GCNP; AZ



Lee Canyon; Spring Mountains NRA; Nevada



South Rim; GCNP; AZ



Lee Canyon; SMNRA; NV

### Measurements:

Length: 7" Wing Span: 13" Average Weight: 1 oz

### Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small, stocky size; short, notched tail; short, black bill; black eyes, (m) blue upperparts, throat; orange shoulders, breast; gray belly; (f) dull blue-gray upperparts; gray throat; dull rusty breast; gray belly, vent; pale white eyering

### Notes:

common; social in small groups; found in high desert to coniferous forest habitats of w NA from s BC south to c MEX, and CA east to w TX; 6 subspecies; very similar to Eastern Bluebird, though ranges rarely overlap; drops from perch to ground to capture insects, worms, berries, etc., and returns to perch (technique called ground-sallying)

Mojave presence: winter range; year-round in ne region

### Comments:



Westerns flock in small groups, often with other songbirds, such as these Lesser Goldfinches (left) at Corn Creek in the Desert NWR in Nov, 2018. Juveniles, like this one (right) in Lee Canyon in the Spring Mountains NRA west of Las Vegas in August, 2021, are similar to females, but with rusty streaks on the chest and white spots on the back.





# Family TURDIDAE (Bluebirds)

## Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)



Valley of Fire SP; NV



Dolan Springs, AZ



Cerbat Range; Dolan Springs, Arizona



Valley of Fire SP; NV



Dolan Springs, AZ

### Measurements:

Length: 7" Wing Span: 14" Average Weight: 1 oz

### Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small, slender size; slightly notched tail; thin, pointed, black bill; dark eyes; black legs; (m) **turquoise-blue overall**; paler below; white vent; (f) **pale grayish brown overall with blue tint**; duller blue wings and tail; pale gray undersides, white vent; white edging on feathers

### Notes:

uncommon; social in small groups; generally found west of the Rockies (some stray much farther east) in open country (e.g. prairie, sagebrush) to high-elevation meadows from AK south through w CAN to NV/UT/CO in summer, migrating to c MEX in winter (year-round populations migrate from higher to lower elevations); perches or **hovers**, then drops to the ground (**ground sallying**) to capture insects (consumes mostly berries in winter)

**Mojave presence:** winter range (mainly eastern region)

### Comments:

These bluebirds are less common in the Mojave than their close relative, the **Western Bluebird**. Look for them in open country in the eastern Mojave in late winter. The ones pictured above and here near Dolan Springs, **Ptu5** Arizona, were enjoying a particularly nice morning in March, 2022.





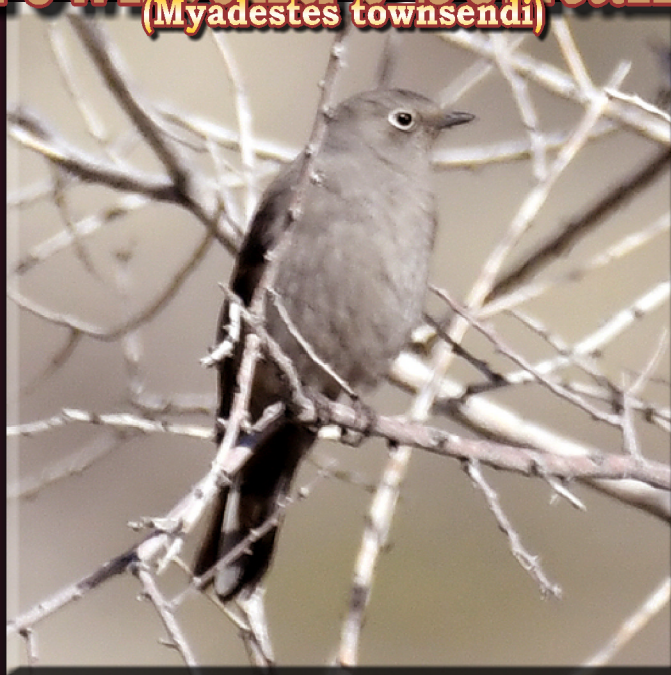
# Family **TURDIDAE** (Solitaires)

## Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)



plain gray overall

Pine Cyn; Dolan Springs, AZ



bold eyering

Pine Cyn; Dolan Springs, AZ



perched in acacia

Pine Cyn; Dolan Springs, AZ



white outer tail feathers

Pine Cyn; Dolan Springs, AZ

Pine Canyon; Mt Tipton Wilderness Area; Dolan Springs, AZ

### Measurements:

Length: 9" Wing Span: 14" Average Weight: 1 oz

### Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

medium size; brownish gray above, paler gray below; long tail with white outer feathers; **buffy patches** on wings (best seen in flight); short, stout, dark gray bill; dark eyes with **complete, bold white eyering** and faint dark eyeline; sexually monomorphic

### Notes:

uncommon; solitary; primarily inhabits mountain woodlands most of the year throughout w NA from AK south into MEX, migrating to lower latitudes/elevations (grasslands, riparian areas, deserts, etc.) in winter (rare elsewhere); the only solitaire native to NA north of MEX; diet consists mainly of insects, berries, and juniper cones (in winter)

**Mojave presence:** winter range

### Comments:

Though generally mountain birds, these solitaire's will occasionally come down into the desert during winter, like this individual in Pine Canyon in the **Mt. Tipton Wilderness Area** in February of 2023. Though at first glance they can be mistaken for the much more common **Northern Mockingbird**, note the solitaire's complete, bold white eyering, which the mimid lacks.