North from Flagstaff

Highway US 180 winds northward from Flagstaff cutting a swath between the imposing San Francisco Peaks and the Peaks' older brother, Kendrick Mountain. The suggested destinations are representative of habitats common to the Flagstaff area: ponderosa forest and mixed-conifer forest, pinyon-juniper woodland, and open grassland. The stark remains of three large forest fires, all occurring since 1995, are also visible from the highway.

In addition to the destinations described in this chapter we suggest a visit to The Nature Conservancy’s Hart Prairie Preserve on the west flanks of the Peaks about 14 miles north of Flagstaff. Hart Prairie is a high mountain meadow fringed with aspen groves. It’s wet, even soggy by Flagstaff standards, and boasts a rare Bebb willow community which the Conservancy is working to preserve and restore. The mix of willow, aspen and moist grassland attracts a variety of birds including sapsuckers, Dusky Flycatcher, Green-tailed Towhee, and MacGillivray’s Warbler. If you want to visit, from June through October you can join a twice-weekly walk or stay overnight (fee) in the Homestead cabins. For the schedule and directions, call the Conservancy’s Flagstaff office at 928-774-8892.

Museum of Northern Arizona

The Museum of Northern Arizona displays art and artifacts which interpret the natural and cultural history of the Colorado Plateau and “Canyon Country.” Displays will explain what the Colorado Plateau is and what makes it special. You can also see examples of birds portrayed in Native American art and craft.

You would hardly think to visit a museum for birdwatching, but this museum is different! You can walk the nature trail down into the canyon of the Rio de Flag, or on a blustery day watch the chickadees, nuthatches and
other feathered visitors to the courtyard feeding station. In winter this is the most likely place in town to see irruptive species like Evening Grosbeak and Cassin’s Finch. A birding visit to the museum can be an entertaining outing for families with young school-age children.

The museum houses excellent displays about the archeology, ethnology, anthropology, geology and fine arts of northern Arizona. The museum has conducted significant biological research dating back to 1932. The research collections include some 40,000 specimens of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects and other invertebrates representing most area species. Visitors have a chance to tour these collections during the museum’s annual open house held in early October. Ask at the entrance desk for the date of the next open house.

Directions: The museum is 2.7 miles north of old downtown Flagstaff. From Flagstaff City Hall go north on Humphreys Street/US 180. The museum is marked by a conspicuous rustic sign on your left. Call the museum, 928-774-5211, for hours and admission fee.

A flagstone patio near the entrance provides a vista of the Rio de Flag channel downcut through basalt. In summer you can sometimes see Broad-tailed Hummingbirds in great aerial displays over the gorge. Look left beyond the flagpole to see the start of the museum’s Nature Trail. If you wish to borrow a trail guide to learn the names and practical uses of many of the plants, first nipped inside to the entrance desk. The well-marked trail follows the edge of the canyon and descends the rock face on stone steps. Then it traces one side of the river for a few yards, crosses on a narrow footbridge, and returns on the other.

River, what river? You may see hardly any water at all. The upper Rio de Flag is fed by perennial springs. But the river sinks beneath the surface, running (or dribbling depending on the time of year and the climate cycle) through a layer of volcanic gravel and cinders. The perennial water and willows you see here are rare in the Flagstaff area; the wealth of food, water and shelter draws an abundance of birds and other wildlife.
Lazuli Bunting sing in the Rio every summer. Also look for Black-headed Grosbeak and Violet-green Swallow, Cordilleran Flycatcher and Black Phoebe. Several warblers are probable depending on the time of year: MacGillivrays’s and Red-faced (not numerous) in summer, migrant Virginia’s in spring, and Orange-crowned and Wilson’s in fall.

We suggest you end your walk halfway at stop number 26, crossing the stream to the left to return the way you came. If you ignore our advice and scramble up the steps to the right you visit a side drainage paved with wildflowers in summer, but the second half of the trail is steeper and slipperier than the first.

Upon entering the museum look through the large windows straight ahead to the museum’s landscaped inner courtyard. The museum feeds birds all year and the courtyard is open to visitors in fair weather.

You will want to spend some time visiting all the exhibits, but first consider these few highlights. Take the left door of the entry hall and visit the Geology Gallery. This room interprets the geology of the Colorado Plateau, a 130,000 square mile uplift, home to Flagstaff and some of the most spectacular geologic features found anywhere in the world. At the very least be sure to see the story of the San Francisco Peaks, Flagstaff’s dominant feature. The display drawers hold hidden treasures. Museum exhibits staff member Jodi Griffith suggests that you find the Quaternary display and pull out the drawer with humeri from teratorn (a prehistoric vulture), condor and eagle displayed side by side for comparison.

You can see the gift shop beyond; mark this spot to visit after you have toured the collections. The shop sells handmade jewelry, pottery, rugs and other crafts from northern Arizona tribes. The sales staff will be happy to point out pieces with bird motifs. Notable examples include Zuni inlay jewelry — some depicting birds in cut stones and silver — and Hopi overlay silverwork portraying symbols of birds and other natural wonders.

Return to the Geology Gallery then walk through the bookstore to the Bab- bitt Gallery, home to a wonderful display of Katsina dolls. But also examine the pottery on the ledge towards the right side of the room. One piece is a quail effigy pot hundreds of years old, a sight alone well worth your visit. OK, you’re on your own now to visit the museum at your leisure!

**Schultz Pass Road**

Schultz Pass is a favorite destination for Flagstaff cyclists and hikers. The winding gravel road traces the course of Schultz Creek and provides access to hiking trails on the flanks of the San Francisco Peaks to the north and the
Dry Lake Hills and Mount Elden to the south. The creek banks sport abundant lush growth; protection from direct sun and wind creates a moister microclimate favorable to wildflowers, butterflies, birds, deer and other wild critters.

**Directions:** Follow directions as shown for the Museum of Northern Arizona then set your trip meter to 0. At mile 0.2 take a right on Schultz Pass Road. Follow the road around a sharp right curve then a left curve. At mile 0.9 the pavement ends where a Forest Service gate closes off Schultz Pass Road during most winters. Round trip from here is about 11 miles plus two or three miles hiking if you choose.

Soon after you pass through the gate listen for warblers like Red-faced and Grace’s mid-May through July. Pull over to the right at mile 2.7, a good place to watch passerines moving around in the undergrowth near the stream and upslope in the weedy grasses. As you resume driving be sure to check the snags and mature ponderosa pines for woodpeckers and raptors, especially at about mile 3.3. This is the best place we know locally for Olive-sided Flycatcher which, if present in breeding season, will be calling from a tall snag. Also look for Olive Warbler.

Mile 4.3 brings you to an aspen grove which also deserves a stop. Look for Red-naped and possibly Williamson’s Sapsuckers and Warbling Vireo. House Wren is a solid bet. The willows also start here. At mile 5 a side drainage joins Schultz Creek and Dry Lake Hills Trail takes off to the right. There’s room on the right for two or three cars to park near a red and white-striped cautionary road sign. Cross the creek here and walk a short distance down Schultz Creek Trail paralleling the creek. MacGillivray’s Warblers are seen here. But Northern Arizona Audubon Society member Jodi Griffith, who contributed generously to this chapter, advises that mountain bikers move at a fast clip here, and there are blind corners and crests in the trail. “When you put your binocs up to your eyes, step well off the trail or you’ll be pounded like a flank steak.”

Drive past the Sunset Trailhead and soon after pull into Schultz Tank parking area on the right at mile 5.8. If the sign is down it’s the parking area with a toilet (closed after fall leaf season). First go south through a break in the rail fence to see Schultz Tank and the animals drawn to it. An early morning or evening visit may reward you with deer, possibly elk and many birds. Station yourself near the dam, be still and wait for
the parade. Western Tanager, Western Wood-Pewee, Bluebirds, any of the nuthatches, Grace's and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Band-tailed Pigeon and Northern Flicker are likely, and possibly ducks, waders or raptors.

After your visit to Schultz Tank walk out the right (east) entrance of the parking lot, cross Schultz Pass Road and walk maybe 20 yards farther to the right (east) to the Weatherford Trail trailhead. This trail leads you to a favorite birdy area. The slopes are pretty open at first so look for bluebirds, especially Mountain Bluebirds. At about 0.8 mile, marked by a Weatherford Trail signpost, take the trail that branches off to the right into a wilderness area. Within only a hundred feet or so an old jeep trail branches off to the right again. This area in Weatherford Canyon was burned some decades ago and has some grassy open areas as well as young aspen and older pines and firs. Among the interconnecting jeep trails Jodi has seen and heard Warbling Vireo, Virginia's, Orange-crowned and Red-faced Warblers, Olive-sided Flycatcher and Black-headed Grosbeak in past breeding seasons.

Retrace your route to US 180 and drive south to return to Flagstaff. Alternatively you can continue east for another 5 miles to exit onto US 89.

Lamar Haines Memorial Wildlife Area

To visit Lamar Haines we climb to 8600 feet where we find cooler temperatures, greater precipitation, and higher humidity. Together with slope and aspect these factors explain vegetation resembling that found in southern Canada. The trees include not only ponderosa pine, but also limber pine, Douglas fir, a large number of quaking aspen, white fir, and the occasional corkbark fir, the edge of mixed-conifer forest habitat. Open areas are filled with lush green growth.

The best time for birders to visit is mid-May through July. Here you may see Wild Turkey, Band-tailed Pigeon, Plumbeous Vireo, Clark's Nutcracker and Brown Creeper. Because of abundant snags this is a productive place to look for forest cavity nesters. Look for all three kinds of nuthatch, Pygmy, White-breasted and Red-breasted. And listen for the Three-toed Woodpecker and Northern Saw-whel and Flammulated Owls. Olive Warbler is possible. The sweet song of the Warbling Vireo or the Hermit Thrush may accompany you on your walk.

Directions: From Flagstaff City Hall go north on Humphreys Street/US180. The turnoff to Snowbowl
Road is just 4.3 miles north of the Museum of Northern Arizona at milepost 223. Turn right at this intersection and drive to the parking lot just past the 4.5 milepost near the Lamar Haines Memorial Wildlife Area sign.

Walk through the gate closing it behind you. The old road you are going to follow to Veit Springs — the homestead of German immigrant Ludwig Veit — rises on your right. Avoid the temptation to cut sharply uphill worsening the erosion: go straight for 20 yards then take the hairpin right turn. Follow the road as it curves around and through the forest stands avoiding less distinct roadbeds and trails which intersect. In about three-quarters of a mile you'll come upon a low log cabin, the lowest logs removed due to decay.

The first known name for the San Francisco Peaks was Sierra Sin Agua, or mountains without water, because no permanent flowing streams originate here. The highly porous volcanic soils swallow the runoff. But there are a number of small fracture springs and seeps, some perennial. One of these springs has been dammed here to form a pond. During good years the flow through the wellhouse at the base of the basalt cliffs is greater than 30 gallons per hour. But even in drought years such as we have experienced in recent years, the flow continues if at a much slower rate.

Archaeological investigation shows that Veit Springs was used by a local people now called the Sinagua from about 500 to 1300 AD. In earlier days pots herds and arrowheads littered the ground. You can examine the boulders surrounding the springs for pictographs and search the ground for obsidian chips. Return anything you pick up exactly where you found it: it's the law!

Thanks to Arizona Game and Fish Department for the use of a professional paper written by Sally Davidson, A Synthesis of Ecological, Cultural, and Geographical Information for the Lamar Haines Memorial Wildlife Area, 1990.

Before you return to U.S. 180 you may want to detour to the Snowbowl Ski Area, only a short distance farther uphill. This is especially recommended if your target bird is Clark's Nutcracker. They are often seen at the lodge elevation or higher. The lodge is open for lunch much of the year. The ski lift is open daily in summer and on weekends in fall (fee, telephone 928-779-1951.)

Kendrick Park Watchable Wildlife Trail

This interpretive trail bridges grassland with ponderosa pine and aspen forest. You may see Western Bluebird, Steller's Jay, Northern Flicker, Pygmy Nuthatch, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-tailed Hawk, mule deer, porcupine, prong-
horn, elk, Abert's squirrel and coyote — and other birds and wildlife. The trail interprets three catastrophic fires all occurring between 1996 and 2000. This walk is suitable for all interest levels and for wide variations in physical ability. The trail is especially dazzling during fall foliage season but may be impassable during snow season.

Northern Arizona Audubon Society was a cooperator in creating this trail; members selected the trail route and drafted the text for interpretive signs along with U.S. Forest Service wildlife biologist Tammy Randall-Parker. The shorter inner loop is paved for wheelchair accessibility. The longer loop offers a side trip into a ponderosa pine management area.

**Directions:** From downtown Flagstaff go north on Humphreys Street/US 180. The trail is approximately 18 miles north of Flagstaff at the south edge of Kendrick Park, a large grassy plain 7900 feet in elevation. At 0.5 mile past milepost 235, turn left into the paved parking lot. The trailhead is just past the restrooms. Call the Peaks Ranger District, 928-526-0866, for more information or a trail brochure.

First look at the display near the trailhead for a map and an indication of what you may see. We suggest the longer 1.5 mile loop; this trail includes a section through a quaking aspen grove with an interpretation of aspen’s significance to cavity-nesting birds. You can also see at close range a management tool called an aspen “exclosure,” a tall wire fence intended to protect young growth from browsing by elk and cattle. Notice the lack of saplings outside the fence, a marked contrast.

If time allows take the quarter-mile side trip to see a treatment made by the Forest Service in an attempt to return choked ponderosa forest to its original “park-like” condition. Variations of such treatments, promoted by Northern Arizona University Professor Wallace Covington and several area conservation organizations, may gradually change the look of the forest in the West and, we hope, help to reduce the number of runaway fires seen so frequently in recent years.

For a side trip into a burned area retrace your route south 0.4 mile towards Flagstaff. Take a left on a dirt road, the north end of FR 151. You will pass through a checkerboard of burned and unburned areas, part of the Hochderffer Fire of 1996. It is the nature of a swiftly moving forest fire to jump around and leave unburned pockets. One mile from US 180 — 20 yards past milepost 9 — pull over into the intersection with an unused side road, a good parking place.
Be very alert and use caution when walking among the standing dead trees: many have fallen or will fall soon! Examine the effects of the fire. The fire burned moderately here: the Horseshoe Fire north of Kendrick Park burned much hotter, baking soils and killing most of the trees, leading to massive erosion. The grasses have regenerated beautifully, stimulated by additional sunlight and nutrients.

Since the first year after the burn Three-toed Woodpecker has been regularly observed here. To look for this specialty walk into the forest on the left (north) side of FR 151 about 50 or 100 yards, listen for pecking or drilling sounds, and with luck you may find your quarry.

### Changing Attitudes Towards Fire

European settlement burgeoned in the Flagstaff area in the early 1880’s. With the railroad came commercial opportunities to ship meat and lumber to larger eastern and western markets. Lumbering operations quickly harvested merchantable trees in the easily accessible areas. Grassland and forest were soon overstocked with cattle or sheep, and during the drought years of the 1890’s the rich grasses and forbs were substantially degraded.

The U.S. Forest Service, created in 1905, did its best to protect fledging settlements and industries, both here and across the country, by fighting fires. For many years everyone, professionals and citizens both, thought the only good fire was a dead fire.

Overzealous fire suppression led to forest degradation, and overgrazing only made matters worse. While vigorous grasses can outcompete tiny pine seedlings, thin overgrazed grassland permits seedling invasion leading to weedy thickets of unhealthy trees. These thickets — along with accumulated duff and undergrowth — fuel catastrophic fires.

In time forest scientists recognized that fire suppression was doing more harm than good. In healthy ponderosa stands fire periodically thins out saplings, duff, and undergrowth causing little destruction and leaving the mature thick-barked trees unharmed. In the absence of “fuel ladders” fires soon burn themselves out. The resulting open setting favors healthy and widely spaced trees.

Current forest practice employs the thinning of dense thickets leaving clumps of healthy trees interspersed with grassy openings. Prescribed fire if used carefully can reduce choking undergrowth and fuel-buildup. Not everyone agrees on the same prescriptions but in the West we now enjoy a healthy debate about measures needed to bring back our healthy forest, a diverse wildlife and enhanced potential for human profit and enjoyment.
Red Mountain Geologic Area

Red Mountain is a geologic oddity, described in an old Arizona Highways magazine article as "...a strange world of hardened cinders and lava and fantastic weather-sculptured formations that makes any of its infrequent visitors feel like an 'Alice' in a volcanic wonderland." On an easy walk of only a couple of miles you will pass through high desert scrub, pinyon-juniper woodland and ponderosa forest habitats. This is one of the easiest places to see Juniper Titmouse and several raptors are possible during breeding season. The best time for birds is early morning or evening May through July.

Directions: Go north on US 180 about 25 miles from the Museum of Northern Arizona. At about milepost 244 the road curves and descends in elevation; soon ponderosa gives way to pinyon-juniper. The Red Mountain Geologic Area sign on the left side of the road appears opposite milepost 247. Turn left, drive 0.3 mile on the dirt road and park. From here you're on foot.

When you first walk through the gate you are surrounded by juniper and pinyon pine. Listen for the insect-like sound of Bushtit and Juniper Titmouse. Chipping Sparrow and Gray Flycatcher may also be seen. Farther up the vegetation opens out into an area populated by scrub, narrow leaf yucca, prickly pear, blue gramma grass and sparse juniper. Birds are not thick in this habitat. Later the juniper and pinyon again become more dense.

At about halfway the trail curves to the left. Soon you cross Hull Wash; although this appears dry on the surface, moisture is more concentrated here than in the surrounding areas. Handsome green shrubs appear including ribes species (the family of the wax currant and the wild gooseberry), taperleaf and mountain mahogany. These plants thrive in moister areas in pinyon-juniper habitat, opportunistically seeking out concentrations of moisture along washes and fissures in rock formations. They provide good forage for birds, so look for Spotted Towhee and Gray Vireo.

By this time you can see the open face of Red Mountain in the distance. Red Mountain is one of the most distinctive expressions of volcanic activity in the San Francisco Volcanic Field. The mountain is composed of volcanic material, mostly welded tuff with small lava bombs, cinders and other lava fragments. Many local people say that the cone blew out on the north side. But geologist and Northern Arizona Audubon Society member Bill Breed, who first nominated Red Mountain for special protection as a geologic treasure, disagreed. He observed in 1973 in a letter to the U.S. Forest Service, "If the hole on the north side of Red Mountain had been caused by an
explosion, there would have been a disruption of the strata.” Instead the cone’s cross section is superbly exposed by erosion.

As you advance towards the cone you will see another oddity. Here in the midst of pinyon-juniper territory is an isolated group of handsome yellow pine. This “stringer” as it is called, reaches from the nearby ponderosa habitat succored by the underground moisture collected in the wash and sheltered by a northern slope orientation. So look for ponderosa forest birds too. Townsend’s Solitaire can be abundant at times.

If you decide to go past the silted-up dam there is usually a log leaning on the dam face to help you scramble to the top. Prairie Falcon and other raptors are sometimes seen soaring above the mountain. White-throated Swifts swoop among the eroded spires and hoodoos. Here you can experience a volcanic cone from the inside out.

**Grand Canyon South Rim**

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado River is one of the world’s outstanding natural wonders and the reason many visitors, both from this country and abroad, come to Northern Arizona. The colorful exposed rock strata reveal 2 billion years of geologic history. The South Rim has more visitors than the North Rim because it’s easier to get to and has more facilities.

The South Rim has a glorious mix of habitats. The forest is protected from lumbering and has extensive stands of mature pines mixed in many areas with Gambel oak. Mixed-conifer forest, commonly found at higher elevations, thrives just below the rim sheltered from sun and wind by north-facing cliffs. Below 7000 feet are relatively undisturbed stands of pinyon-juniper. These diverse habitats shelter many characteristic bird species.

The best time to see birds is May through July. Fall migration is also super, mid-September through October. But birding can be good in the winter too, especially on snow-quiet trails in the Grand Canyon Village area.

**Directions:** The most direct and scenic route is up US 180: follow signs north from Flagstaff City Hall. Alternatively you can go north from Williams on AZ 64, or north on US 89 to Cameron and west on AZ 64 to the East Entrance. Your round trip will be about 200 miles. An overnight stay is recommended so you can see the canyon at sunset or sunrise and get a head start on the birds. For fees and other park information call 928-638-7888.

You will be given maps of the South Rim and Grand Canyon Village at the
entrance station. Use these current maps to plan your route. We haven't tried to include a detailed map of the South Rim in this printing because the park is in transition. As we write, a new Visitor Center has just opened. This center will later serve as the hub of a transit system. Eventually visitors are to leave their cars in peripheral lots and ride buses and/or light-rail systems about the park. For anyone who has experienced Rim rush hour traffic or observed a dispute over parking space, this will be a welcome improvement.

So, you expect us to send you first to some remote area of the park to watch birds in a setting untouched by human hands? Wrong. One of the best places in the park for birds is along the canyon rim in Grand Canyon Village. Your park handout, The Guide, will have a centerfold map of the Village; maps are also posted along the Rim Walk. First position yourself in front of El Tovar Hotel, a historic landmark, and walk east for a half-mile to a mile. This section is little traveled — odd, considering how close it is to “downtown” Grand Canyon. You can expect to see Rock and Canyon Wrens, Juniper Titmouse, Pinyon Jay (nasal whoi-whoi-whoi), Pygmy and White-breasted Nuthatches and Western Bluebird any time of year. Peregrine Falcons, which nest in inaccessible niches in the canyon walls and prey on the numerous White-throated Swifts and Violet-green Swallows, can sometimes be seen from the Rim Walk. Migrants such as Nashville and Orange-crowned Warblers, Western Scrub-Jay, and Spotted Towhee are best seen in May and September. Clark's Nutcracker, an irruptive species, shows up any time it wants to.

Northern Arizona Audubon Society member John Grahame, who contributed to this chapter, especially recommends the forest trail connecting this part of the Rim Walk — from 0.7 mile east of El Tovar Hotel — to the community auditorium called Shrine of the Ages. Because the birds are accustomed to people you can get quite close to the chickadees, nuthatches, juncos and woodpeckers. You might even see a flock of Red Crossbills moving through.

In late evening or early morning take the Rim Walk going the other direction, west from El Tovar Hotel to the Bright Angel Trailhead. Find Lookout Studio, go through it and down the stairs to the lowest observation platform. Face back towards El Tovar. If you look carefully you will see a water pipe partly hidden behind a bare limestone fin; it carries water from Roaring Springs, below the North Rim, to Grand Canyon Village. This pipe is a magnet to birds because it leaks a little, and has for many years. It draws diverse birds from Black-chinned Hummingbird on up. One early fall morning here we saw not only two California Condors, but way down below, a flock of over a hundred Band-tailed Pigeons.
You will also want to visit the rim west of Grand Canyon Village. In summer a shuttle bus lets you off at any of the scenic overlooks; in winter drive your private vehicle. The overlooks and Hermit's Rest at the far end are connected by a paved trail, so you can choose a long walk or a short one. This area is good for Turkey Vulture riding thermal updrafts.

When you've thoroughly checked out the Canyon Village area, drive east from the village and turn left onto Desert View Drive/AZ 64 going east. Your first stop can be Grandview Point, 0.4 mile past milepost 250. Try walking a short distance down the Grandview Trail. The upper reaches of this trail are more vegetated than other canyon trails and tend to be especially birdy. Even a short walk gives you a different perspective on the canyon; you are now a member of the canyon ecosystem. But know your limits and read the park Guide for hiking precautions.

Your next stop, Hearst Tanks, is only a little over a mile up the road, 0.5 mile past milepost 251. Park in the left pull-out marked by light-colored limestone blocks. The elevation here is about 7500 feet. This stop quickly became one of author Frank's favorite birding spots. It might be because he saw both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Clark's Nutcracker, Lewis's and Hairy Woodpeckers, and Cassin's Finch as well as ten Wild Turkeys on his first visit to this peaceful spot. The tanks are simply earth dams in a ravine in prime pine-oak habitat. To find the tanks walk northeastward from your car towards the Gambel oak. You will descend into a shallow drainage and follow it down to the tanks. The whole distance from your car is about 200 yards. Pause quietly for a while and the birds will come to you. As you return to your car examine the many snags for cavity nesters in breeding season. Acorn Woodpeckers drill storage holes for acorns in many of these "granary" snags.

Next you can visit the Arizona Trail. Drive east another mile, 0.5 mile past milepost 252, turn right (marked with a sign) and drive 1.3 miles. If you walk south a short distance you will be on Forest Service land with, again, mature ponderosa pine, a favorite for several species of birds. This is a good place to listen for Northern Pygmy Owl during breeding season. Also look for Lewis's Woodpecker.

There is no sight more breathtaking than a raptor at close range riding a thermal updraft. You can see concentrations of western raptors lift up out of the canyon at Lipan Point during fall migration. Birds are funneled to this flyway by geographic features north of the canyon.

Hawkwatch International organizes an annual migration research project at Lipan Point (and also Yaki Point) to identify and count individual birds as they reach the South Rim. The count runs September 1 to November 5
every year. The observers include professionals and expert amateurs, both paid and volunteer. A staff educator can help visitors identify hawks, provide interpretation and answer questions. For a program schedule see your Guide.

It's only 2 miles farther to Desert View. Apart from viewing the overlooks one last time and visiting the famous Watchtower, take this opportunity to search the “pygmy forest” — primarily stunted pinyon-juniper — for the Black-throated Gray Warbler, which breeds here.

When you visit the South Rim ask to see the bird sightings log at the Visitor Center. Also talk with the Park Rangers because a number of them are keenly interested in birds and can give you additional tips. For a detailed species list see Grand Canyon Birds by Bryan Brown, Steven Carothers and Roy Johnson or the park’s bird checklist. An Introduction to Grand Canyon Ecology by Rose Houk is a superbly written, concise explanation of the Grand Canyon’s rich diversity. These sources are available at the Visitor Center bookstore.

To return to Flagstaff either continue east on AZ 64 then south on US 89. Or retrace your route west until US 180 south takes you back the way you came.