

Update on birds in Congress, Arizona

June 19, 2017



The picture is of adult Gambel's Quail. I will try to get photos of the profusion of young but haven't yet.

The small family of quail with no parents are out in the yard. They still have no parents, but they are half grown. There are 6 of them, possibly there were more, I don't recall now.

I had to put Cautious (one of my cats) in the shop early because he came over to the north door and went "patoeey" and spat out an itty bitty quail. I had heard it calling earlier. I ran out and grabbed him and the itty bitty guy, apparently unharmed, vamoosed.

As I was watching, a pair of childless quail arrived in the yard, and the male attempted to run the parentless quail off. They just ran in circles around him, so he gave up.

I have read that orphans are seldom accepted by other birds, how dumb! Anyway, I am glad to update you all on the 6 orphan quail obviously making it on their own. I just wish the damned quail would lay off the egg laying. It causes me lots of stress with the outside cat all the time trying to make toys out of them.

June 21

If you squint, you can just see the top of a fuzzy little head in the House Finch nest. I have only seen the mother feeding the babies (there are 2) so far. But you can see how hot it is from the fact that the mother is panting

to try to stay cool, so I don't go out much to see who is feeding the babies because of the heat. Those finches sure picked a bad place to raise kids. Anywhere would be cooler than the metal struts on the south end of the carport. I wonder if heat accelerated egg



hatching! Didn't seem like the mother had to sit on the eggs much. The babies already appear to have some feathers from what I could see, but I don't like to disturb them so probably am not seeing them that well.

June 21

The heat is such a trial for wild animals. There is a lot of shade around my house, thankfully, and in this heat, the shade quite literally fills with birds and animals, the animals mainly being bunnies and squirrels.

I put water out to the north of the house, but there isn't much shade there, so recently, I put a shallow, low container out at the south of the house where the front door is and where there is a lot of shade. It took only hours for the birds to find the water since they were there already. I watched often and saw birds that I have never seen come to the water on the north side of the house, such as flycatchers and finches. I kept going back to the window much of the day to always see birds sitting on the rim of the water dish.

Later in the day, Peter and I both looked out to a confusing scene. An adult quail appeared to be wading knee deep in a moving, mottled carpet. My brain finally grasped the information at hand, and I realized I was seeing a parent quail in a sea of tiny baby quail. Now I know the information out there about quail claims that they generally poop out 12 or 13 eggs.

I have seen families of 20 babies. This moving carpet of tiny quail was overwhelmingly huge. My guess was 25 to 30 babies. Peter and I both marveled at how many tiny quail there were! They quickly vanished, though I did run for the camera only to find the area void of any birds at all when I returned. I will keep an eye out for the thousands and thousands of

quail and will hopefully see them again through the camera lens to prove just how many quail there were.