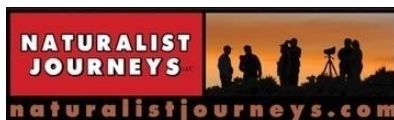


# Birding Canyon Country Species List | May 18 – 26, 2024 with Naturalist Journeys



**Compiled by guide Dave Mehlman with guide Steve Grace. Our clients included Carol, Charlotte, Gary, Howard, Lynne, and Rachel.**

Tour Summary: This 10-day/9-night tour (everyone came in a day early allowing for an extra day to the tour!) of southwest Utah and northern Arizona explored some of the best known and most scenic landscapes of the American Southwest, focusing on the Grand Staircase of the Colorado Plateau. Our primary area of focus were 4 national parks: Zion, Grand Canyon (North Rim), Bryce Canyon, and Capitol Reef. We spent a full day in each park, immersing ourselves in the incredible geology and diverse wildlife that occur in each one. Our extra day allowed us to work in some additional birds and diversity from the lowlands of the Mojave Desert, which reach their northern extent near St. George, Utah, the start and end of our tour. In addition to fabulous landscapes and wonderful birds, we enjoyed comfortable lodging and great meals, many of which were outdoors in the middle of these wonderful places.

The eBird link details the birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list by each species to expand the report and reveal where and when each bird was seen and how many.

[Birding Canyon Country | May 18-26, 2024 | eBird Trip Report](#)

(H) = Heard only

(G) = Found by guide only

(I) = Introduced

## **BIRDS (116 species recorded, of which 3 were heard only and 1 were seen by the guides only):**

### **DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (8)**

**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*—Found on 4 days of the tour at places with suitable, larger water bodies: the golf course by Tonaquint, Jackson Flat Reservoir, and the pond at Ruby's Inn

**Cinnamon Teal** *Spatula cyanoptera*—Several of this lovely duck species were found on the same day at the pond at Ruby's Inn and at the Boulder Inn pond

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera*—Only seen at Jackson Flat Reservoir

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*—Commonly encountered at sites with appropriate habitat: bodies of water

**Redhead** *Aythya americana*—Found at Jackson Flat Reservoir

**Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris*—Found at Jackson Flat Reservoir

**Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser*—One fly-by female type over the Virgin River at Zion was the only sighting

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*—Seen at Jackson Flat Reservoir and on both visits to the pond at Ruby's Inn

### **NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae (1)**

**Gambel's Quail** *Callipepla gambelii*—Found at Grafton and behind the Capitol Reef Resort

### **PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS AND ALLIES: Phasianidae (1)**

**Wild Turkey** *Meleagris gallopavo*—Seen on 2 days in Zion, most notably when a male "strutted his stuff" on the lawn in front of the Zion Lodge dining area for two females (both of which appeared to be ignoring him!)

### **GREBES: Podicipedidae (3)**

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*—Quite a few in Jackson Flat Reservoir

**Eared Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*—One seen with the scope at Jackson Flat Reservoir

**Western Grebe** *Aechmophorus occidentalis*—One seen with the scope at Jackson Flat Reservoir

### **PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (2)**

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*—(1) Seen on four days in various towns visited

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*—Recorded on 4 days, either flying or heard

### **CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae (1)**

**Greater Roadrunner** *Geococcyx californianus*—A nicely seen bird at Grafton was the only one of this classic southwestern species that we observed

### **SWIFTS: Apodidae (1)**

**White-throated Swift** *Aeronautes saxatalis*—Found on 7 days of the tour at all of the parks, which provide great habitat for this species; most notable was an apparent nesting colony of many swifts in a crack in the wall high above the Petroglyphs pull-out at Capitol Reef

### **HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (3)**

**Black-chinned Hummingbird** *Archilochus alexandri*—The most numerous and frequently encountered hummingbird of the tour, though almost always at lower elevations, we found these at Tonaquint, Calf Creek Campground, and Capitol Reef, though an out-of-elevation individual was at Cape Royal in the Grand Canyon

**Anna's Hummingbird** *Calypte anna*—A male was found very nicely perched in the top of a tree at Tonaquint, albeit very backlit

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird** *Selasphorus platycercus*—Found on 3 days at Zion East Entrance road, the Jacob Lake Inn fountain, and on the Bristlecone Trail at Bryce

### **RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (1)**

**American Coot** *Fulica americana*—By far the most abundant waterbird of the tour, these “duck-like” birds were quite common on the larger water bodies visited; seen at Jackson Flat Reservoir, the pond behind Ruby's Inn, and Boulder pond

### **SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (2)**

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*—Good, but distant, views of one in breeding plumage in the pond behind Ruby's Inn on the first visit

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*—Several seen by the group at Jackson Flat Reservoir and by Dave at the pond behind Ruby's Inn

### **GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (2)**

**Bonaparte's Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*—One, unexpectedly, flew into the pond behind Ruby's Inn and bathed on the first visit to the pond behind Ruby's Inn

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*—Several out floating in Jackson Flat Reservoir

### **CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (1)**

**Neotropic Cormorant** *Nannopterum brasilianum*—Three, at least one in breeding plumage, in a tree at Jackson Flat Reservoir

### **HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (1)**

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*—One flew by as we were birding at Tonaquint Park

## **NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (2)**

**California Condor** *Gymnogyps californianus*—Easily one of the best sightings of the tour, the group found six of these incredible birds soaring over Navajo Bridge and sitting on the bridges. Through diligent work by Dave (with bins) and Charlotte (with camera), we were able to read the following wing tags (info from [www.condorspotter.com](http://www.condorspotter.com)):

- V3: male; age 7 years, 0 months; hatched May 10, 2017 at Oregon Zoo
- 33: male, age 2 years, 1 month; hatched April 11, 2022 at World Center for Birds of Prey
- X2: female, age 8 years, 0 months; hatched May 7, 2018 in the wild
- P8: female, age 10 years, 1 month; hatched April 2, 2014 at Oregon Zoo
- L4: female, age 13 years, 0 months; hatched May 27, 2011 in the wild; this bird was also seen on the September 2023 tour
- K6: male, age 14 years, 0 months; hatched May 24, 2010 at World Center for Birds of Prey

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*—About as close to a guaranteed species you can get on this tour, we saw these on 7 days pretty much at all sites visited and while driving

## **OSPREY: Pandionidae (1)**

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*—Found at Grafton and Jackson Flat Reservoir

## **HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (3)**

**Cooper's Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii*—One soared over while at Tonaquint Park

**Swainson's Hawk** *Buteo swainsoni*—One seen by Dave's car near Richfield on the way back to St. George from Torrey

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*—As expected, the most commonly encountered raptor of the tour; found on 5 days at several sites

## **WOODPECKERS: Picidae (6)**

**Lewis's Woodpecker** *Melanerpes lewis*—A fun highlight of this tour, one individual was observed well in the dead Ponderosa on Boulder Mountain and in an adjacent Gambel's Oak

**Acorn Woodpecker** *Melanerpes formicivorus*—(G) A brief glimpse of one by Dave that flew into the dead Ponderosa on Boulder Mountain as we arrived at the site

**Downy Woodpecker** *Dryobates pubescens*—Only found at Grafton

**Ladder-backed Woodpecker** *Dryobates scalaris*—Nice views of a male in the mulberry tree at Tonaquint

**Hairy Woodpecker** *Dryobates villosus*—Only seen once at one of the stops on the Zion East Entrance Road

**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*—(H) Heard calling at North Rim

## **FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (2)**

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*—Seen on 2 days while driving

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*—A fly-by of one during our morning birding at Capitol Reef Resort was the only one of the tour

## **TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (8)**

**Western Wood Pewee** *Contopus sordidulus*—Surprisingly hard to find on the tour this year, we only found these on our day at Capitol Reef, where quite a few were seen on the various walks along the Fremont River near the campground

**Olive-sided Flycatcher** *Contopus cooperi*—Wonderful views of this large pewee (sorry about the oxymoron, but I have nothing to do with the names!) were had along the Fremont River at Capitol Reef, including when it caught and ate a huge dragonfly

**Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans*—Only found by the small pond at Tonaquint, where they were nesting under the platform

**Say's Phoebe** *Sayornis saya*—This elegant, western phoebe was found at Tonaquint and Grafton on the first day and again on both visits to the pond behind Ruby's Inn and at the Boulder pond

**Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus*—Found at Grafton on the first day

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** *Myiarchus cinerascens*—Only encountered at Capitol Reef on the Fremont River trail

**Western Kingbird** *Tyrannus verticalis*—Found at the start of the tour at Tonaquint and Grafton and again at the end of the tour at Capitol Reef Resort

**Cassin's Kingbird** *Tyrannus vociferans*—One seen at a distance on the first visit to the pond behind Ruby's Inn

### **VIREOS: Vireonidae (3)**

**Cassin's Vireo** *Vireo cassinii*—Only seen on the Grotto Trail hike at Zion

**Plumbeous Vireo** *Vireo plumbeus*—Recorded on 4 days at Zion, Calf Creek Campground, and Capitol Reef

**Warbling Vireo** *Vireo gilvus*—Only encountered 3 times in Zion, Calf Creek Campground, and Capitol Reef

### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (6)**

**Pinyon Jay** *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*—The lone sighting (in fact, lone bird!) of the tour was one very well seen at La Fevre Overlook on highway 89A

**Steller's Jay** *Cyanocitta stelleri*—Generally the common jay of mountain forests in the west, we found these on all days at Grand Canyon, North Rim, and Bryce Canyon

**Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay** *Aphelocoma woodhouseii*—Recorded on 4 days in Zion, North Rim, Calf Creek Campground, and at the woodpecker tree

**Black-billed Magpie** *Pica hudsonia*—Generally seen a few times while driving during the latter part of the tour; ironically, most were seen on the drive back to St. George from Torrey!

**Clark's Nutcracker** *Nucifraga columbiana*—A classic mountain bird of the western high forests, we found this species at Point Imperial, North Rim; Fairyland Point, Bryce Canyon; and at the woodpecker tree outside Boulder

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*—One of the most regularly encountered species; seen on 8 days throughout the tour

### **TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (2)**

**Mountain Chickadee** *Poecile gambeli*—Seen at North Rim Grand Canyon, La Fevre Overlook, and on the Bristlecone Trail at Bryce

**Juniper Titmouse** *Baeolophus ridgwayi*—Found on the Grotto Trail hike, Zion, and at La Fevre Overlook

### **PENDULINE TITS: Remizidae (1)**

**Verdin** *Auriparus flaviceps*—A classic low desert species, we found these at Tonaquint

### **SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (4)**

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*—Recorded in Zion, at Jackson Flat Reservoir, and at the Boulder pond

**Violet-green Swallow** *Tachycineta thalassina*—A very widespread and frequently encountered species, we found these at every site in the mountains; recorded on 6 days of the tour

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*—Oddly, only found on the 2 visits to the pond behind Ruby's Inn

**Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*—A large colony on the road bridge by Tonaquint that was sending out numerous foraging birds represented the only sighting of the tour

### **LONG-TAILED TITS: Aegithalidae (1)**

**Bushtit** *Psaltriparus minimus*—A pair seen at Cape Royal, North Rim

### **SILKY-FLYCATCHERS: Ptilionotidae (1)**

**Phainopepla** *Phainopepla nitens*—At least 3 of these remarkable, frugivorous birds seen at Grafton

### **NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (3)**

**White-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta carolinensis*—Found near the fountain at Jacob Lake Inn

**Pygmy Nuthatch** *Sitta pygmaea*—Seen at North Rim (where we found a nest in an oak tree) and Bryce Canyon

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta canadensis*—Seen at North Rim and Bryce Canyon

**GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae (1)**

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea*—Seen on two days, first along the east entrance road to Zion after exiting the tunnel and again at Capitol Reef along the Fremont River

**WRENS: Troglodytidae (4)**

**Rock Wren** *Salpinctes obsoletus*—Seen by a few at Navajo Bridge and by Rachel and Steve on the Fremont Overlook Trail in Capitol Reef

**Canyon Wren** *Catherpes mexicanus*—(H) One was heard singing during our walk on the Riverside Trail in Zion; an appropriate place if there ever was one!

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*—Seen or heard on 2 days at Zion and again on the Bristlecone Trail at Bryce

**Bewick's Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii*—(H) Heard at Grafton

**DIPPERS: Cinclidae (1)**

**American Dipper** *Cinclus mexicanus*—An avian highlight of the tour, we found 3 of these aquatic denizens along the Virgin River in Zion

**STARLINGS: Sturnidae (1)**

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*—(I) Recorded on 8 days of the tour, mostly at low elevation sites at the beginning and end

**MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (2)**

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*—One was singing from a telephone pole at the Cliffside Restaurant on the first day of the tour

**Gray Catbird** *Dumetella carolinensis*—A first for Dave on this tour, we found a pair at Calf Creek Campground and had incredible views of a singing bird along the Fremont River in Capitol Reef

**THRUSHES: Turdidae (4)**

**Western Bluebird** *Sialia mexicana*—Seen at Grafton and Jacob Lake

**Mountain Bluebird** *Sialia currucoides*—Several of these, including a beautiful male, were seen on the Bristlecone Pine Trail at Bryce Canyon

**Townsend's Solitaire** *Myadestes townsendi*—Finally found on the day we left Bryce Canyon; there were at least two hanging out on the Tropic Ditch on the Mossy Cave trail

**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*—Found on every day of the tour at almost all sites visited

**OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*—(I) Recorded on 7 days of the tour, generally in inhabited areas

**FINCHES: Fringillidae (6)**

**Evening Grosbeak** *Coccothraustes vespertinus*—A female eating seeds put on a great show for us at the Boulder Mountain Lodge

**House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Despite its general commonness, only found on 3 days of the tour

**Cassin's Finch** *Haemorhous cassinii*—Found on 3 days in Zion on the east entrance road, Jacob Lake Inn, and in or near Bryce Canyon

**Red Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*—We had great luck with this species on the tour, finding them in great numbers at close range at Jacob Lake Inn and the Ruby's Inn pond

**Pine Siskin** *Spinus pinus*—Very numerous and frequently encountered during the tour at many sites visited with the odd exception of Zion

**Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria*—Seen on 3 days of the tour at Tonaquint, Calf Creek, Boulder pond, and Capitol Reef

### **NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (8)**

**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*—Seen on 4 days at Grafton, North Rim, Jacob Lake Inn, and Bryce Canyon

**Lark Sparrow** *Chondestes grammacus*—One of the more elegant species of sparrow, we saw these at Grafton and along the east entrance road to Zion

**Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis*—Seen on almost all days at North Rim and Bryce Canyon; all were of the breeding Gray-headed form

**White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—Nearing the tail end of their migration, we found these at Grafton and at Calf Creek Campground

**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*—Infrequently encountered on the tour, these were seen or heard at Tonaquint, Zion, Boulder pond, and Capitol Reef

**Abert's Towhee** *Melospiza aberti*—Found at Tonaquint, the only site with Mojave Desert habitat on the tour

**Green-tailed Towhee** *Pipilo chlorurus*—Seen at 2 different viewpoint stops at Bryce and again at Calf Creek Campground

**Spotted Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*—Encountered throughout the tour, but most often in Zion and at Calf Creek Campground

### **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: Icteriidae (1)**

**Yellow-breasted Chat** *Icteria virens*—We first mostly heard (with brief glimpses) this fascinating bird at Calf Creek Campground, but they really put on a show for us with great views along the Fremont River Trail in Capitol Reef

### **NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (6)**

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*—Great views of males and females at the pond behind Ruby's Inn on both visits; we saw them again at the Boulder pond

**Bullock's Oriole** *Icterus bullockii*—Found at the start and end of the tour at Tonaquint and Capitol Reef

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*—Seen on 3 days at Tonaquint, Jackson Flat Reservoir, and Boulder pond

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*—Found at Tonaquint, Coral Pink Sand Dunes, and Capitol Reef

**Brewer's Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*—Although very common around Bryce Canyon City (at Ruby's pond), the only other place we saw this blackbird was at the woodpecker tree

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*—Found at Tonaquint and Jackson Flat Reservoir

### **NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (7)**

**Virginia's Warbler** *Leiothlypis virginiae*—One of the "ladies' warblers", we found these on the east entrance road to Zion and at Grand Canyon, North Rim

**MacGillivray's Warbler** *Geothlypis tolmiei*—One was seen by Charlotte and Dave while eating lunch at Calf Creek Campground

**Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga petechia*—Commonly encountered in areas with riparian habitats, particularly cottonwoods, visited at Tonaquint, Grafton, Zion, Calf Creek, and Capitol Reef

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*—The most commonly encountered warbler of the tour, these were recorded on 4 days at many sites; all were of the western, Audubon's, form, with a yellow throat

**Grace's Warbler** *Setophaga graciae*—A ponderosa pine specialist, we found these on 3 days along the east entrance road to Zion, at North Rim (where seen or heard at many stops), and at the Jacob Lake Inn fountain

**Black-throated Gray Warbler** *Setophaga nigrescens*—

**Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla*—Unexpectedly scarce on this tour, we only found one in the willow thickets along the Fremont River at Capitol Reef

### **CARDINAL, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (4)**

**Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra*—Only found in Zion on 2 of the days there

**Western Tanager** *Piranga ludoviciana*—Quite frequently seen throughout the tour at most sites visited; evidently some still on their northward spring migration

**Black-headed Grosbeak** *Pheucticus melanocephalus*—Found at most sites visited throughout the tour

**Lazuli Bunting** *Passerina amoena*—Oddly, only found at Capitol Reef during our day there, where they were easily seen; Carol and Dave had the remarkable experience of seeing 7 on the ground at the same time eating dandelion seeds!

### **MAMMALS (11 species recorded):**

**Mule Deer** *Odocoileus hemionus*—Seen on almost all days of the tour, sometimes very close by as on the front lawn at Zion and in the Capitol Reef orchards

**Pronghorn** *Antilocapra americana*—Recorded on 2 days, generally while driving

**Black-tailed Jackrabbit**, *Lepus californicus*—One reported in Zion

**Desert Cottontail** *Sylvilagus audubonii*—Seen on both days near Capitol Reef

**Utah Prairie Dog** *Cynomys parvidens*—Present in the known colonies inside Bryce Canyon

**Yellow-bellied Marmot** *Marmota flaviventris*—Found at Capitol Reef

**Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel** *Callospermophilus lateralis*—Several of these seen while at Bryce Canyon

**Rock Squirrel** *Otospermophilus variegatus*—A common and, in many places such as Zion, ubiquitous mammal; recorded on 6 days of the tour

**Cliff Chipmunk** *Neotamias dorsalis*—Grand Canyon, North Rim

**Hopi Chipmunk** *Neotamias rufus*—Calf Creek Campground

**Muskrat** *Ondatra zibethicus*—Seen swimming in the pond behind Ruby's Inn on both visits

### **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (3 species recorded):**

**Western Whiptail** *Aspidocelis tigris*—This very large and handsome whiptail as recorded on 4 days at Zion and Capitol Reef

**Plateau Striped Whiptail** *Aspidocelis velox*—Photographed by Charlotte at Zion

**Canyon Tree Frog** *Dryophytes arenicolor*—At least 18 seen sunning on a large boulder in Middle Emerald Pool in Zion

### **INSECTS (4 species recorded):**

**Cabbage White** *Pieris rapae*—Seen on many days of the tour

**Field Crescent** *Phyciodes pulchella*—

**Coral Pink Sand Dunes Tiger Beetle** *Cicindela albissima*—Several seen by Steve at its namesake park

**Flame Skimmer** *Libellula saturata*—

### **LOCATIONS AND NOTES:**

Day 1: Saturday, May 18, 2024: St. George (Tonaquint Park), Grafton, Zion National Park

Day 2: Sunday, May 19, 2024: Zion National Park (Riverside Trail, Middle Emerald Pool trail, Grotto Trail)

Day 3: Monday, May 20, 2024: Zion National Park, Zion East Entrance, Checkerboard Mesa, Jackson Flat Reservoir, Kanab, Navajo Bridge, Grand Canyon National Park, North Rim

Day 4: Tuesday, May 21, 2024: Grand Canyon National Park (North Rim): Lodge area, Point Imperial, Roosevelt Point, Cape Royal, Walhalla Overlook and Pueblo

Day 5: Wednesday, May 22, 2024: Grand Canyon National Park (North Rim); Jacob Lake Inn; La Fevre Overlook; Kanab; Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park; Red Canyon Visitor Center, Dixie National Forest; Bryce Canyon Lodge

Day 6: Thursday, May 23, 2024: Bryce Canyon National Park: Bryce Point, Farview and Piracy Points, Rainbow Point; Bristlecone Pine Trail; Ruby's Inn ponds; Fairyland Point

Day 7: Friday, May 24, 2024: Bryce Canyon National Park; Ruby's Inn ponds; Mossy Cave Trail (Bryce Canyon NP); Escalante; Calf Creek Campground; Boulder Mountain Lodge pond; woodpecker tree; Boulder Mountain; Capitol Reef Resort, Torrey

Day 8: Saturday, May 25, 2024: Capitol Reef Resort, Torrey, Capitol Reef National Park: Fremont River Trail, Petroglyphs, Goosenecks Panorama

Day 9: Sunday, May 26, 2024: Capitol Reef Resort, drive to St. George