

Gillespie Creek Journal



Curved-bill Thrashers Snuggle together

Happy New Year!
 Nature's day to day story of 2021 has ended. I thank you for your encouragement as my fingers type today's first 2022 Nature Notes. My attention was grabbed this morning by Lois Lowry, the children's book author's statement about what literature does. Paraphrasing her **New Yorker** interview statement, ".speaking about things, writing keeps our hearts from breaking, In reading we rehearse the future.

My friends in Northern climates will say to us all, "Baby It's Cold Outside!" My son sitting beside the fire roaring in his wood stove sent this wonderful photo of a surviving flock of **Wild Turkeys**. He sweetened their pallets Wednesday morning by throwing out handfuls of sunflower seeds. A mini blizzard with additional snow had abated slightly as temperatures were again falling below zero in the Gillespie Creek neighborhood.



Here in Arizona we have had heavy frost for the past three mornings. New Year's Day not only were temperatures in the low 40's but the wind was blowing. My photographer friend Buddy Walker and I bundled up to hike the Estrella Park Reserve hoping to see **Vermillion Flycatchers**. Once again I experienced awe in finding a single male in all his splendor. The first photo is mine taken when the Vermillion flew to perch in front of us. The second is Buddy's professional head shot.

Our changing planet is surprising us with unusually dramatic precipitation patterns and abrupt temperate variations. Birds respond by expanding their habitats Northward.



Thrashers, Flycatchers and the **Yellow-rumped Warbler** on the left are members of the "Passerine" bird family which live throughout the Earth. They are considered the largest family of birds known to exist in our world.

What does Passerine mean? "Relating to a large order distinguished by feet that are adapted for perching, including songbirds."



Vermillion Flycatcher