

14 December 2017

Dear Friends and Family,

Eileen and I hope that you and your families are doing well. The year has been an excellent one for us. As it has been described in fair detail in 20 blog posts, this letter will just hit the highlights. Details of how to follow the blog are given at the end of the letter.

Our truck finally arrived in mid-January, after sitting, completed, for 6 weeks in a parking lot at the Ford factory in Kentucky. We drove it to Washington State for installation of the flatbed one day, and the camper the next. We then spent several weeks back in El Paso customizing the camper and truck, and packing it for the big trip. We're thrilled with how it turned out!

Our departure was delayed while I had a prostate biopsy, but fortunately it was negative. We finally hit the road at the end of February and spent 8 months traveling in the camper. The primary emphasis this year was learning about prairies, as we had spent little time exploring this habitat previously, despite its great original extent in North American.

We spent 4½ months slowly zig-zagging north from Texas to Saskatchewan, alternating between shortgrass prairie habitats in the west, tallgrass prairie remnants in the east, and mid-grass prairies in between. We visited all 17 National Grasslands in the Great Plains, 28 preserves established by The Nature Conservancy, and about 25 other locations.

In August, we made a loop west to Oregon for the total solar eclipse, our first, which was truly sensational! On this loop we also sampled a number of locations in Montana, and spent time at Mount Hood in Oregon, and in Yellowstone National Park.

During September and October, we headed to the Northeast. After visiting Isle Royale National Park by boat from Minnesota, we spent four weeks in Ontario, canoeing about 100 miles. October was devoted to visiting friends and family in New York and Pennsylvania, which we enjoyed greatly.

We drove back through the Appalachians, which had nice fall color, and got back to El Paso at the very end of October. We really enjoyed the camping lifestyle on the road! We're now in an apartment in the same extended stay facility where we lived last winter. We have a two-week trip to Panama coming up, and expect to be back on the road in the latter half of January.

In total, we saw about 386 new species during the 8-month trip, mostly plants (308 species), bringing my world species total to about 9008 (5174 plants, 3130 birds, 378 mammals, and 326 others). I should have a good chance of reaching my goal of 10,000 in the next few years.

Our contact info, which has not changed, is given below. We'd love to hear from you! Happy holidays --

Brian and Eileen Keelan

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831-331-1507 (Brian's cell)

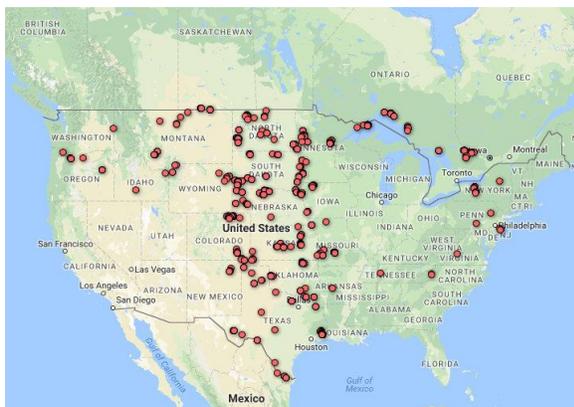
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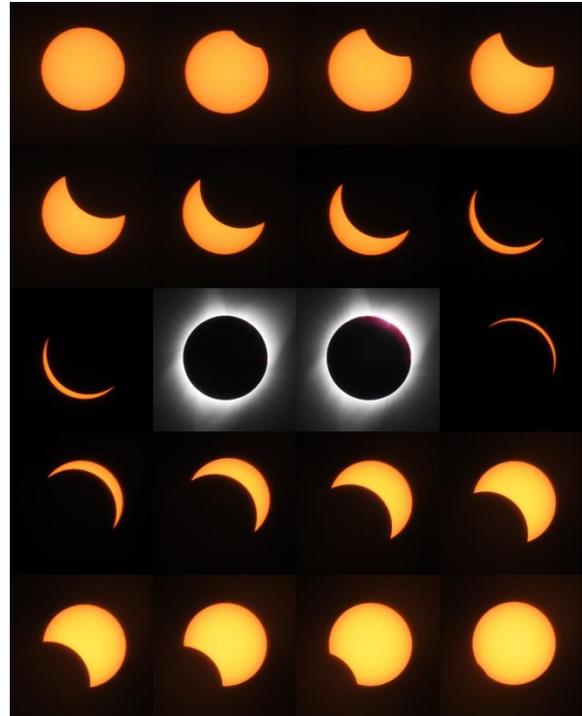
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### Nomadic Naturalists: Blog Details

Blog entries with photos are posted about twice per month on average, and are kept short enough to be read in roughly three minutes. To subscribe to our blog, [click here](#) to reach our cover page, then click on "Show" in the top left corner. In the panel that appears at left, enter your e-mail address in the field near the bottom (you may need to scroll), and click on "Follow". You will get an e-mail requiring a simple response and then you're done. No info other than your e-mail address is required, and you can unsubscribe easily.



Map showing places we visited on our 8-month road trip in 2017.



Total solar eclipse, Aug. 17, 2017, Oregon.



New truck camper, raised for camping (above), and lowered for travel (below).

