



BIRDING TEXAS & BEYOND

ITINERARY, 2026

Southeast Arizona Arizona's Ultimate Birding Experience August 6-14, 2026



The Chiricahua Mountains © Troy Hibbitts

This southeast Arizona birding tour covers a variety of habitats and elevations and should tally over 150 species of birds, highlighting some of the region's specialties like Olive Warbler, Bridled Titmouse, Elegant Trogon, Mexican Spotted Owl, Rose-throated Becard, Mexican Chickadee, Gilded Flicker, Arizona Woodpecker, and Thick-billed Kingbird among many others. Timed for the peak of the monsoon season, also known as the second spring, this region offers an unparalleled combination of species diversity, dramatic weather, and beautiful landscapes; spectacular wildflower blooms, particularly fairy dusters, desert marigolds, and various cacti flowers, which attract hummingbirds and other nectar feeders.

An incredible fifteen species of hummingbirds are possible in late summer. Eight species found in the region are regular breeders: Black-chinned, Costa's, Broad-tailed, Anna's, Broad-billed, Violet-crowned, Blue-throated Mountain-gem, and Rivoli's. Lucifer, Berylline, and White-eared Hummingbirds are present most years and three others occur in late summer and early fall migration: Rufous, Allen's, and Calliope and finally - the Plain-capped Starthroat – a post-breeding vagrant from Mexico, which is not present every year. Late July to early August is the prime time to search for these rarities. Examples of recent sightings include Tufted Flycatcher, Flame-colored Tanager, Rufous-capped Warbler, Slate-throated Redstart, and Short-tailed Hawk, to name a few. In addition to the hummingbird bonanza, several other species like Varied Bunting and Botteri's Sparrow initiate their breeding season during the monsoons and are more visible than at other times of the year. This time of the year is a naturalist's playground with lots of viewing opportunities not only for birds, but for mammals, herps, butterflies and flowers.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy beautiful, breathtaking scenery and visit Arizona's top birding hotspots in the Santa Catalina, Chiricahua, Santa Rita, Pajaritos, and Huachuca Mountains.
- Visit numerous canyons with diverse habitats including Ramsey, Madera, and Montosa Canyons – and several parks and preserves such as Patagonia Lake State Park, Saguaro National Park, Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary and more!
- Experience prime time for finding greater concentrations and variety of vibrant hummingbirds and migrating and breeding species – in addition to Arizona's year-round species.
- Welcome the opportunity to encounter vagrant species from Mexico.



Rivoli's Hummingbird © Troy Hibbitts

TOUR LEADER: Troy Hibbitts



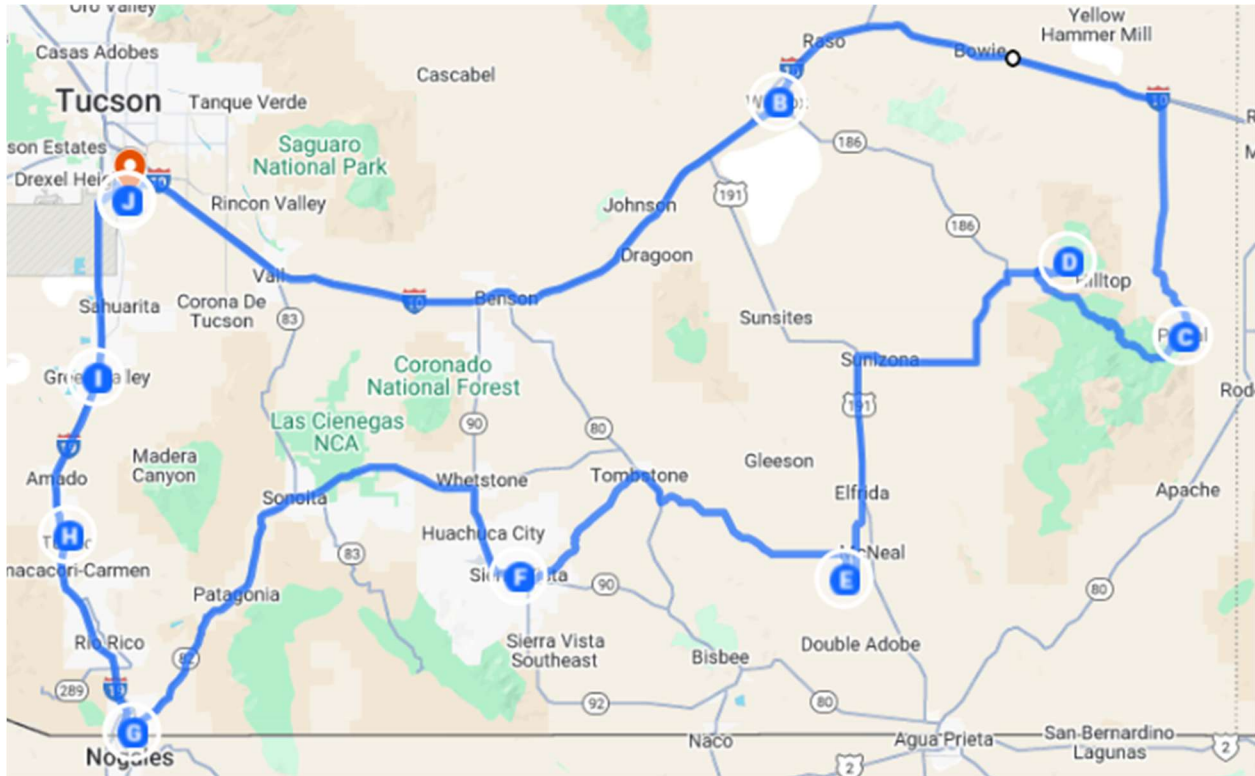
Troy grew up birding on family vacations across the mountain west. After earning his master's degree in evolutionary biology from the University of Texas at Arlington, Troy began a career as a High School Science teacher while filling his weekends and vacation time with birding and general wildlife observation and photography. In addition to birding, he is a leading expert on Reptiles and Amphibians in the southwest, having co-authored three field guides for the state of Texas. He also has somewhat of an eclectic expertise in areas such as dragonflies & damselflies, butterflies, scorpions, and mammals. Troy serves as an eBird reviewer for 5 counties in southwest Texas. He has birded in all of Texas's 254 counties and has many years of birding experience specifically in south and west Texas, as well as in southeastern Arizona.

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 8 participants

DIFFICULTY LEVEL & PACE OF THE TOUR: Moderate (2-3 miles of daily walking). Field time each day is typically between 7-10 hours (weather permitting) and some moderate drive from location to location (up to 2 hrs. between stops). Most of the birding is done on trails, boardwalks, and along the road as we drive to various birding destinations. Walking on uneven, soggy terrain, or in the rain is highly possible. Days start with breakfast at the hotel and departure for the field between 6:30 to 7:00 am. We bird throughout the morning, take a break for lunch and resume birding until around 5:00 pm followed by dinner at a local restaurant.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION: The tour price is \$3,825 per person in double occupancy. The single supplement for this tour is \$680. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single room accommodations, or if you prefer to share a room but have no roommate and we cannot arrange one for you. The package includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9, ground transportation during the tour, entrance fees to parks/preserves, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, and guided services provided by the tour leader(s). It does not include travel expenses including but not limited to airfare to and from the tour destination, travel insurance, extended stays (before and/or after the tour), alcoholic beverages, gratuities, and items/expenses of personal nature.

TOUR ROUTE



A - Start: Tucson International Airport (TUS)

(Overnight: Night 1 – Home2 Suites by Hilton, Tucson Airport)

Tucson Area: Sam Lena Park, Sweetwater Wetlands, Saguaro National Park

B – Willcox: Lake Cochise and Twin Lakes Golf Course

C – Portal: Cave Creek Canyon, South Fork Area, Southwest Research Station, George Walker House, Portal, Pinery Canyon, Onion Saddle, Barfoot and Rustler Parks

(Overnight: Nights 2 & 3 – Portal Peak Lodge Store & Café, Portal)

D – Chiricahua National Monument

E – Elfrida/Whitewater Draw

F – Sierra Vista: Sierra Vista EOP, Huachuca Mountains (various canyons), San Pedro River

(Overnight: Nights 4 & 5 – Holiday Inn Express, Sierra Vista)

G – Patagonia, Sonoita, and Nogales Area: Paton Center for Hummingbirds, Sonoita Creek, Patagonia State Park, Atascosa Highlands

(Overnight: Night 6 – Best Western Sonora Inn & Suites, Nogales)

H – Tubac (Overnight: Nights 7 & 8 – Tubac Golf Resort & Spa)

I – Green Valley Area: Santa Rita Mountains (various canyons), Canoa Ranch Conservation Park, Amado WTP



J- End: Tucson International Airport (TUS)

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive at Tucson International Airport (TUS) before 2 pm. Participants will transfer to the hotel where a room will be reserved in their name. The hotel offers complimentary shuttle service from the airport. We will meet at the hotel lobby by 5 p.m. for a tour orientation and welcome dinner. Overnight stay: Home2 Suites Tucson Airport, Tucson.

Day 2: Tucson area – Saguaro National Park, Willcox, and Portal.

On our first morning in Tucson, we search the Sonoran Desert's Giant Saguaro cactus landscape for lowland birds such as Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Costa's, Rivoli's and Broad-billed Hummingbirds, Verdin, Cactus Wren, Black-throated Sparrow, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Phainopepla. The Saguaro National Park, located east of Tucson, protects one of America's iconic symbols of the southwest, the saguaro, also known as the giant cactus. The cacti serve as shelter and a valuable source of food and water to animals living in the desert. The Gilded Flicker and Gila Woodpecker excavate nest cavities inside the cacti. Once the nesting season is over, Elf Owls, Screech Owls, Purple Martins, finches and sparrows move in. Harris's and Red-tailed Hawks also use the saguaro for both nesting and hunting platforms. We then travel east toward the Chiricahua Mountains and make a couple of stops along the way. Our route will take us



Gila Woodpecker © Greg Lasley

through the northern part of Sulphur Springs Valley where we may be able to find Scaled Quail, Swainson's Hawk, Great Horned Owl, and Chihuahuan Raven, among others. We will stop at Willcox Lake Ponds to check for migrant shorebirds such as American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Baird's Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, White-faced Ibis, and Western and Eared Grebes. We end the day at Portal where, depending on time, we may do some more birding around the town before dinner. Overnight: Portal Peak Lodge.

Day 3: Portal and the Chiricahua Mountains. We spend the next two days birding around Portal and the Chiricahua Mountains. The small community of Portal, nestled at the range's eastern base, has become legendary among birders as a gateway to some of the most sought-after species in the U.S. The feeders maintained by the many resident birders who graciously open their yards to visitors attract an incredible variety of species. On a typical morning, we are likely to observe Broad-billed, Blue-throated Mountain-gem, Black-

chinned, and Anna's Hummingbirds competing for nectar, while Acorn Woodpeckers, Bridled Titmice, and Mexican Jays work the seed feeders. The feeders also attract more unusual species. Painted Buntings occasionally visit during migration, and rare breeding hummingbirds like White-eared and Berylline have been present in recent years.

Rising dramatically from the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts, the Chiricahua Mountains represent one of North America's most extraordinary birding destinations. This isolated sky island harbors a remarkable assemblage of species, supporting both Mexican montane birds at their northernmost limits and North American species in unique desert-mountain habitat. The combination of riparian vegetation along Cave Creek Canyon, oak woodland on the slopes, and careful landscaping creates a birding oasis. The creek represents the biological heart of the Chiricahuas, a narrow gorge that cuts deep into the mountains and concentrates the region's incredible diversity. The year-round stream creates a riparian oasis that attracts both resident specialties and an endless



Elegant Trogon © Greg Lasley

parade of migrants. Here we may find many highly sought after species, including Elegant Trogon, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Western Flycatcher, Hutton's and Plumbeous Vireos, Painted Redstart, Blue-throated Mountain-gem, Lark Sparrow, Rock Wren, Juniper Titmouse, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, and Mexican Chickadee. We will venture out at night to look for Whiskered Screech-Owl, Flammulated Owl, Elf Owl, Western Screech-Owl, Common Poorwill, and Mexican Whip-poor-will. Some other species are most likely to be seen during the day, such as Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Burrowing Owl, and Lesser Nighthawk. Overnight: Portal Peak Lodge.

Day 4: Portal, Chiricahua Mountains, and Sierra Vista. We depart Portal, but first we bird the upper elevations of the Chiricahua Mountains (Barfoot Park, Rustler Park, Onion Saddle and Pinery Canyon) in search for Montezuma Quail, Olive Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Greater Pewee, Western Flycatcher, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Mexican Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Pygmy Nuthatch, Grace's Warbler, and Hermit Thrush. We then start working our way southwest towards Sierra Vista, our destination for the next two nights. We bird along the way and, if time allows, we stop at the Chiricahua National Monument,



Red-faced Warbler © Greg Lasley

Elfrida, Whitewater Draw, and Sierra Vista EOP. Commonly seen birds around the Chiricahua National Monument include Mexican Jay, Acorn Woodpecker, Canyon Wren, White-breasted Nuthatch, Canyon and Spotted Towhees, Bushtit, Northern Flicker, Common Raven, Bridled Titmouse, and several raptor species. The Sierra Vista EOP is a treatment facility on the west side of the San Pedro River. Species commonly seen in the wetlands include various species

of waterbirds, Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Virginia Rail, and Sora among many others. Overnight: Holiday Inn Express, Sierra Vista.

Day 5: Huachuca Mountains and San Pedro River. Today we visit the Nature Conservancy Preserve at Ramsey Canyon, one of the first well-known birding sites in Southeast Arizona in the Huachuca Mountains. Ramsey Creek descends through oak woodlands, its banks lined with sycamores, maples, cacti, yucca, and agaves. Here we may find Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Zone-tailed Hawk, Painted Redstart, Greater Pewee, Brown Creeper, and Hutton's Vireo. Berylline Hummingbird has been present here in recent years as well. On our way to Ash Canyon, we may stop and visit other feeder locations, such as Beatty's in Miller Canyon, where White-eared Hummingbird and Flame-colored Tanager have been present in recent years.

We may also find other notable species in this area including, Mexican Spotted Owl, Red-faced Warbler, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Hepatic Tanager, Bridled Titmouse, and Dusky-capped Flycatcher. We then continue to the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary to look for hummingbirds such as Lucifer, Rivoli's, Anna's, and Broad-billed, as well as other specialties of the



Mexican Spotted Owls © Troy Hibbitts



Lucifer Hummingbird © Greg Lasley

pine-oak woodlands, which include the Arizona Woodpecker, Mexican Jay, Gila Woodpecker, Canyon Towhee, and Woodhouse's Scrub Jay. We drive a short distance to San Pedro House RNCA, a visitor center with walking trails. San Pedro House was identified as being significant for world bird conservation by the American Bird Conservancy. The riparian forest, one of the rarest forest types in the world, provides essential habitat for a variety of wildlife, including over 350 species of birds. We bird along the cottonwood riparian areas,

adjacent mesquite woodlands, and grasslands in search of species to include Gray Hawk, Loggerhead Shrike, Crissal Thrasher, Lazuli Bunting, Lark Sparrow, and Abert's Towhee. Overnight: Holiday Inn Express, Sierra Vista.

Day 6: Patagonia, Sonoita, and Nogales. We continue our journey west; most of the day will be spent birding the Sonoita Creek and along the Santa Cruz River. The Sonoita Creek Natural Area provides habitat for over 200 species of birds. Several species can be found here like Gray Hawk, Lucy's Warbler, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Tropical Kingbird, Thick-billed Kingbird, and Varied Bunting. Rose-throated Becards are irregular breeders in the area, and we may specifically target them if there is a known resident pair present. We'll then head over to Patagonia Lake State Park, one of Arizona's top birding hotspots. Notable species found in this location include Mexican Duck, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Phainopela, and Abert's Towhee. This state park promises unforgettable wildlife encounters, breathtaking scenery, and an incredible opportunity to observe a variety of birds. We'll spend the rest of the day birding the Paton Center for Hummingbirds. The center's many feeders and water features are always full



Broad-billed Hummingbird © Greg Lasley

of birds and is the premier site in the US to see Violet-crowned Hummingbird, as well as more common species such as Rivoli's, Anna's, Costa's, Black-chinned, Rufous, Broad-tailed, and Broad-billed Hummingbirds, Mexican Jay, and Gambel's Quail. Overnight: Best Western Sonora Inn & Suites, Nogales

Day 7: Atascosa Highlands and Tubac.

Today we venture west of Nogales through the Pajarito Mountains in search of the Five-striped Sparrow and Montezuma Quail. Mid-to-late summer is prime time to locate these sought after species, as their breeding often coincides with the arrival of the monsoon rains. Most Pajarito Mountains birding begins along the Ruby Road (Highway 289), which provides access to the range while passing through excellent habitat offering numerous birding opportunities along its 30-mile length. We bird in-route to



Montezuma Quail © Greg Lasley

California Gulch and Sycamore Canyon, along the way we may find Greater Roadrunner, Rock and Canyon Wrens, Varied Bunting, Scaled Quail, Crissal Thrasher, and Scott's Oriole. Both California Gulch and Sycamore Canyon represent premier birding destinations within the Pajarito Mountains proper. This broad canyon cuts deep into the range's heart, providing access to all major habitat zones within a single drainage system. California Gulch is one of the prime spots in the US for Five-striped Sparrow and Northern Beardless Tyrannulet. The



Five-striped Sparrow © Troy Hibbitts

gulch combines year-round water, diverse vegetation, and accessibility to create exceptional birding opportunities. We end the day in Tubac, Anza Trail along the banks of the Santa Cruz River through a lush cottonwood-willow riparian forest and mesquite bosque. Here we may find Rose-throated Becard, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Curve-billed Thrasher, Lesser Goldfinch, and Zone-tailed Hawk, to name a few. Overnight: Tubac Golf Resort & Spa, Tubac.

Day 8: Green Valley and Santa Rita Mountains. Today we will spend the day exploring the beautiful Santa Rita Mountains. The monsoon rains create a verdant oasis in these mountains, with streams flowing through the various canyons and vegetation at its most lush. We first travel toward Green Valley to Canoa Ranch Conservation Park. Here we can expect to find Rufous-winged Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Gambel's Quail. The centerpiece of the Santa Rita Mountains is Madera Canyon, at a higher elevation than Tucson, the canyon forms a deep, wooded ravine that attracts birds to the sky islands. Here we will see species including Mexican Jay, Acorn Woodpecker, Arizona Woodpecker, Bridled Titmouse, Blue Grosbeak, Bell's Vireo, Varied Bunting, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Botteri's Sparrow, Painted Redstart, and Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, among many others. The feeders at the Santa Rita Lodge will give us an excellent serving of the Yellow-eyed Junco, Wild Turkey, Black-headed Grosbeak, Hepatic Tanager, and tons of hummingbirds including Rivoli's, Costa's, Broad-billed, and Black-chinned. Other possible hummingbirds we may find here are the Rufous, Anna's, and Broad-tailed. With multiple options (Montosa, Box, and Florida Canyons) nearby, we will tailor our expedition to those sites based on recent bird



Painted Redstart © Greg Lasley

reports. Birds that have been reported in these sites in recent years include Rock and Canyon Wren, Abert's Towhee, Thick-billed Kingbird, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Scott's Oriole, Five-striped Sparrow, Hooded Oriole, Hutton's Vireo, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Crissal Thrasher, Lucy's Warbler, and Buff-collared Nightjar, to name a few. Overnight: Tubac Golf Resort & Spa, Tubac.

Day 9: Tour Conclusion & Departures. Our Arizona birding tour concludes today. If time allows, we will stop at a few locations along the way back to the airport. Airport drop-off by no later than 12 pm. Participants may arrange departing flights from Tucson International Airport (TUS) after 2pm.

Target Species

While we cannot guarantee sightings of the birds listed below, we believe that encountering these species is likely during this tour.

Elegant Trogon	Crissal Thrasher
Zone-tailed Hawk	Five-striped Sparrow
Thick-billed Kingbird	Montezuma Quail
Botteri's Sparrow	Blue-throated Mountain-gem
Rufous-capped Warbler	Violet-crowned Hummingbird
Red-faced Warbler	Costa's Hummingbird
Mexican Chickadee	Anna's Hummingbird
Gray Hawk	Broad-tailed Hummingbird
Rose-throated Becard	Broad-billed Hummingbird
Mexican Jay	Black-chinned Hummingbird
Arizona Woodpecker	Rivoli's Hummingbird
Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher	Olive Warbler
Buff-collared Nightjar	Mexican Spotted Owl
Gilded Flicker	And many more!

REGISTRATION & PAYMENTS: To register for this tour you will need to complete an online reservation form. The non-refundable deposit for this tour is \$300 per person. All payments, including initial deposits and final balances, may be made by credit card through PayPal, check, money order, or bank/wire transfer. Deposits are due 14 days from the date you submit your reservation form. The remaining balance is due as soon as the tour confirms or 60 days prior to the tour start date, whichever comes first. We will invoice you accordingly.

Please read our Terms and Conditions for more information before booking any of our tours or services. Our Terms and Conditions include important information about how we operate our tours, including cancellation policy, travel insurance, health and fitness requirements, and more.