

Southeastern Arizona Specialties

July 23-August 1, 2023

Itinerary

Day 1: Sun, July 23 - Tucson

Arrive on afternoon/evening flights and transfer to our Tucson hotel. For those of us not arriving on late night flights, we will meet for dinner and an orientation at 6 PM in the hotel lobby. ***Night in Tucson.***

Day 2: Mon, July 24 - Saguaro National Park and Tucson Area

We wake early this morning to explore the desert scrub at Saguaro National Park. Target birds here include Gilded Flicker, Greater Roadrunner, Costa's Hummingbird, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Phainopepla, Verdin and more. As temperatures begin to soar in the park, we'll have an early lunch before spending the rest of the afternoon and evening birding around the Tucson area. We will visit Sweetwater wetlands, one of the best birding locations in the Tucson area. Tropical Kingbird is reliable here as well as Mexican Duck. We also may make a trip up to the Mt. Lemmon area to search for high elevation specialties such as Red-faced and Grace's Warblers. ***Night in Green Valley.***

Day 3: Tue, July 25 - Madera & Florida Canyons; California Gulch

Our morning will be spent further exploring canyons in the Santa Rita Mountains. We will probably head back into Madera, but will also have time to check out Florida, Montosa and Chino Canyons. Florida Canyon has been excellent the last few years for Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Rufous-capped Warblers, while Montosa & Chino Canyons still hold small numbers of Five-striped Sparrow. After lunch, we head south and check in to our hotel in Green Valley. An evening outing to the remote California Gulch will give us another chance at Five-striped Sparrow and we'll stay out after dark with the hope of finding Buff-collared Nightjar. ***Night in Green Valley.***

Day 4: Wed, July 26 - Patagonia to Sierra Vista

Today we head west to Sierra Vista and the Huachuca Mountains. There are excellent birding opportunities on the way, and the Patagonia area offers much. We should find Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Cinnamon Teal, Mexican Duck, and more at Patagonia Lake State Park. A brief visit at the famous Patagonia Rest Stop will see us compare Thick-billed and Cassin's Kingbirds, and an afternoon stop at the Tucson Audubon's Paton Hummingbird House should turn up Violet-crowned Hummingbird, plus Bronzed Cowbird and Inca Dove. ***Night in Sierra Vista.***

Day 5: Thu, July 27 - Ramsey, Miller, & Ash Canyons

This morning we'll hike up Ramsey Canyon, a must visit for any birding trip in Southeast Arizona. Over the past few years Flame-colored Tanagers & Tufted Flycatchers, two species commonly found in Central American highlands, have been reliable and have even nested here. If we've not yet seen Elegant Trogon, we'll have another great chance today. Northern Pygmy-Owls are active during the day and can often be heard in the canyon. Even Northern Goshawk is possible here! Beatty's Guest Ranch in Miller Canyon hosts another hummingbird feeding station and holds the record for most hummingbirds

seen in one day (14), and has been one of the best spots through the years for White-eared Hummingbird. A hike up the canyon may produce Spotted Owl, and later in the afternoon we visit another feeding station in Ash Canyon, where hopefully Lucifer Hummingbird awaits. ***Night in Sierra Vista***

Day 6: Fri, July 28 - Huachucas to Chiricahuas Provided we can get access (regulations are in a state of flux these days), our day will begin in Huachuca Canyon, where we hope to find Buff-breasted Flycatcher. Sinaloa Wren has also been found here with some regularity. Nearby Carr Canyon can also be quite productive and if we can't get into Huachuca, Carr will be a great substitute for the morning before we head west to Portal. After lunch and checking in to our Portal lodge, we'll spend the evening birding on Stateline Road, which runs in a north-south direction along the Arizona and New Mexico border. Beyond the novelty of birding in 2 states at the same time, it's an excellent area for many species typical of this scrub habitat – Gambel's & Scaled Quail, Cassin's, Botteri's, and Black-throated Sparrow, Say's Phoebe, and Pyrrhuloxia. ***Night in Portal.***

Day 7: Sat, July 29 - Barfoot & Rustler Parks

Today we rise into the Chiricahuas all the way to Barfoot & Rustler Parks in search of Mexican Chickadee, Greater Pewee, Yellow-eyed Junco, Grace's Warbler, Hutton's Vireo, and many others. On our drive up we'll check several good spots for Black-chinned Sparrow, and over in Cave Creek Canyon we'll check the feeders for the beautiful Blue-throated Mountaingem. During our time in Portal we will have an evening out owling with one of the local experts and hope to see Whiskered and Western Screech-Owls and maybe Elf Owl as well. ***Night in Portal.***

Day 8: Sun, July 30 - Portal area cleanup

An early morning in the deserts between Portal and Rodeo, NM will give us a good chance for finding both Bendire's & Crissal Thrashers before it gets too hot. Later, we'll further explore Cave Creek Canyon or other nearby areas in search of anything we have missed so far. Our itinerary today will remain somewhat open to allow for rarity chasing as well. ***Night in Portal.***

Day 9: Mon, July 31 - Portal to Tucson

After one last quick stop in the Portal area, we'll be on our way back west toward Tucson. A shorebird trap in Willcox is often nothing short of spectacular with Baird's Sandpiper, Long-billed Curlew, Wilson's Phalarope, and American Avocet featuring prominently at this time of year. Another nearby migrant trap often has Black Phoebe, Tropical Kingbird, Ash-throated & Brown-crested Flycatchers, Common GroundDove, Blue Grosbeak, and Lazuli Bunting. If there is a particularly good rarity in the area, we may chase that as well, which may mean a trip back into one of the National Forest units. We'll have one last dinner in Tucson and tally up our species before departing tomorrow. ***Night in Tucson.***

Day 10: Tue, Aug 1 - Departure

After breakfast we head to the Tucson airport for our late morning flights back home.

*Itinerary is subject to change based on the weather, birds, and whims of the leader!