

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

DAY 1 - Sun, May 22 - Arrival

We'll meet up at the Oklahoma City airport in the afternoon, and then after checking into our nearby hotel will reconvene in the evening for dinner, introductions, and an overview of our itinerary for the next week. ***Night in Oklahoma City.***

DAY 2 – Mon, May 23 – Oklahoma City to Lawton

We will spend much of our first day in search of shorebirds and waterbirds at several lakes around the Oklahoma City area. In the afternoon we will work our way southwest towards Lawton where we will end the day by checking a small lake. ***Night in Lawton.***

DAY 3 – Tue, May 24 – Wichita Mountains NWR

Today we will make the 45-minute drive from Lawton to Wichita Mountains NWR where we will explore a portion of the property's 59,000 acres. Here, remnant mixed grass prairie and pockets of oak woodland are interspersed with rocky outcroppings, providing habitat for a wide variety of bird species. Our main target this morning will be Black-capped Vireo, which has a healthy breeding population in the Wichita Mountains. We will also bird several wetland, grassland, and riparian areas of the refuge, which should yield a diverse species list for the day. Burrowing Owls are a possibility, and we should also see reintroduced bison. ***Night in Lawton.***

DAY 4 – Wed, May 25 – Wichita Mountains NWR to Elk City

We will return to Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge again this morning for a second day of birding. If we missed Black-capped Vireo yesterday then that will be our top priority this morning, along with any other misses. Otherwise, we will enjoy birding some different parts of the refuge where we may pick up additional waterbirds and migrants. Around mid-afternoon, we'll make the 1.5-hour drive west towards our accommodations for the evening. ***Night in Elk City.***

DAY 5 – Thu, May 26 – Lake Elk City to Amarillo

We'll begin our fourth day by birding around Lake Elk City. The riparian buffer around the north end of the lake can be active in migration and worth a check for warblers, vireos, and grosbeaks, while the lake itself may hold a selection of waterbirds. Around mid-morning we'll head west and cross the border into Texas, making several birding stops en route to Amarillo. ***Night in Amarillo.***

DAY 6 – Fri, May 27 – Palo Duro Canyon SP to Dalhart

Today will be spent entirely within Texas. After an early breakfast at our hotel, we'll start the day at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. This spectacular landmark is the second largest canyon in the United States and home to some terrific birding opportunities. Here we will target Mississippi Kite, Golden-fronted and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Say's Phoebe, Black-crested Titmouse, Bushtit, Curve-billed Thrasher, Bewick's Wren, Canyon Towhee, and Painted Bunting, among others. After a full morning of birding and exploring around the park we'll head north further into the Texas Panhandle. Upon arriving in Dalhart, we'll end the day with some afternoon birding around Rita Blanca Lake (time permitting), which can be a productive migrant trap for songbirds along with waterfowl. ***Night in Dalhart.***

DAY 7 – Sat, May 28 – Black Mesa SP to Guymon

At 4,973 feet above sea level Black Mesa is the highest point in Oklahoma. We'll start the day by making the 1.5-hour drive back into Oklahoma to Black Mesa State Park, where we will spend the morning birding around the lake and environs. Birds we will be targeting around the Black Mesa area include a

number of southwestern and western species such as Scaled Quail, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, Say's Phoebe, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Cassin's Kingbird, Chihuahuan Raven, Black-billed Magpie, Rock and Canyon Wrens, Cassin's Sparrow, Canyon Towhee, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. We will then head over to the nearby Black Mesa Peak where we will target species associated with rocky outcroppings and juniper shrubland, and search for raptors. Around mid-afternoon we'll start heading towards our accommodations in Guymon for the evening, making a short stop along the way to look for any waterfowl and shorebirds at a water treatment plant. ***Night in Guymon.***

DAY 8 – Sun, May 29 – Elkhart to Woodward

This morning we will wake up and make the 45-minute drive up to Elkhart, Kansas. Despite a short amount of backtracking from yesterday, the Elkhart Cemetery is a famous migrant trap and under the right weather conditions can be full of birds. We'll spend a few hours this morning birding the cemetery and adjacent water treatment plant. Then, we will head east towards Woodward, making several stops en route. ***Night in Woodward.***

DAY 9 – Mon, May 30 – Salt Plains NWR to Stillwater

We will spend this morning exploring around Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, which can hold a great number of waterfowl, shorebirds, waders, gulls, and terns. Woodlots here can also be productive for migrant and breeding songbirds. Around lunchtime we'll head south, making a few birding stops around Stillwater before returning to Oklahoma City for the evening. ***Night in Oklahoma City.***

DAY 10 – Tue, May 31 - Departure

Departure day. We return to Will Rogers World Airport in Oklahoma City for our morning flights home. There may be additional birding opportunities this morning for those with a later departure.