

**Venture to the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas**  
**March 25 – April 4, 2023**

**Itinerary**

**Day 1: Monday, March 25 - Arrival in San Antonio**

You may arrive anytime today and transfer to our hotel (there is a free shuttle from the airport). We will plan to meet for dinner and discussion of the upcoming trip at 6 PM. For those arriving late, we will meet you in the morning. ***Night in San Antonio***

**Day 2: Tue, March 26 - San Antonio to Rockport**

We will bird for a little around San Antonio before we drive to Rockport, birding along the way. We will make a stop in the southeastern forests around Goliad State Park, where we will get our only Carolina Chickadees, American Crow and Red-bellied Woodpeckers of the tour. ***Night in Rockport***

**Day 3: Wed, March 27 - Aransas Bay**

We have an early start this morning as we board our boat for a trip out into Aransas Bay and the Intracoastal Waterway. Shorebirds, ducks and seabirds will be everywhere and we should have close looks at several families of magnificent Whooping Cranes. The remainder of the day will be spent exploring the bays and shoreline of the Rockport / Fulton area looking for ducks, wading birds and shorebirds. ***Night in Rockport***

**Day 4: Thu, March 28 - Aransas to Rio Grande Valley**

After an early morning visit to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and the surrounding area, we will bird the thickets and woods at Goose Island State Park in search of migrant landbirds. Huge open spaces dominate the scenery as we travel south through the King Ranch toward the Rio Grande Valley. Along the way we should see Crested Caracara, Harris's Hawk and Wild Turkey. Once in Brownsville, we will look for some of the naturalized Red-crowned Parrots and Green Parakeets at dusk. ***Night in Brownsville***

**Day 5: Fri, March 29 - Port Isabel Road**

We will spend the morning driving along the Old Port Isabel Road. The open country is home to one of North America's rarest falcons, the beautiful Aplomado. We will search for this as well as enjoy a great selection of sparrows, shorebirds and other species indicative of open country. If we are lucky, we could run into the shy Sprague's Pipit. The afternoon will be spent around Brownsville, where we will look for Tropical Kingbird, Least Grebe and Buff-bellied Hummingbird. We will then drive for just over an hour to our accommodation farther west in the Rio Grande Valley. ***Night in McAllen***

**Day 6: Sat, March 30 - Santa Ana NWR**

The entire day today will be devoted to the outstanding Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. Here the mosaic of forest, wetland and thorn scrub should produce Green Jay, Plain Chachalaca, Great Kiskadee, Altamira Oriole, Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet, and many more south Texas specialties. ***Night in McAllen***

**Day 7: Sun, March 31 - Rio Grande Valley**

Nearby Estero Llano Grande State Park is one of the best birding spots in the Valley and we spend the morning walking the trails and lagoons of this great new reserve. Many ducks will still be present, along with Vermilion and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. Anzalduas County Park is another great spot along the river and some outstanding birds have been recorded here over the past few years. On a recent Venture we watched Tropical Parula and Rose-throated Becard in the same binocular view! ***Night in McAllen***

**Day 8: Mon, April 1 - Salineno**

We will have an early start this morning as we head west. After a few stops along the Rio Grande at Salineno and Chapeno for Audubon's and Altamira Orioles, Brown Jay and, if we are very lucky, Muscovy Duck. We will then leave the riparian woodlands and head into dry country and spend the majority of the day around Falcon Dam/Falcon State Park before driving to Zapata. Birds of this habitat include Scaled Quail, Greater Roadrunner and Pyrrhuloxia. ***Night in Zapata***

**Day 9: Tue, April 2 - Hill Country**

Leaving the Rio Grande Valley ecosystems, we head north into thorny brushland on our way to the Texas Hill Country, looking for Cave Swallows along the way. Once in the Hill Country, we will spend the remainder of the day searching for the two specialties of the area, Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo. A special treat this evening will be the chance to witness the nightly exodus of millions of Mexican Free-tailed Bats from their roosting cave and a raptor or two taking advantage of this easy meal. ***Night in Uvalde***

**Day 10: Wed, April 3 - Hill Country to San Antonio**

Our last full day of birding gives us another opportunity to seek the warbler and the vireo, in case we missed them the previous afternoon, as well look for Rufous-crowned and Black-throated Sparrows, Bewick's and Rock Wrens, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay and Zone-tailed Hawk. ***Night in San Antonio***

**Day 11: Thu, April 4 - San Antonio**

After breakfast we drive to the San Antonio airport for our flights back home.