



Southeast Arizona Birding Spectacular

Day 1: Arrival Flights and Birding in Tucson Area

Today, clients can arrive in Tucson at any time before 1:00 PM.

After arriving in Tucson, we will make a trip to Tucson Mountain Park, where we will spend some time looking for Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Cactus Wren, Verdin and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher.

Depending on time and temperature we may be able to bird other nearby hotspots as well, before returning to the hotel in the evening.

Overnight in Tucson.

Day 2: AM Birding Tucson Area (as needed) and Lake Wilcox; then Birding Chiricahua Mountains Rest of Day

Today we will optionally bird for an hour or two in the Tucson area, and then begin our drive to Portal via the town of Willcox.

We will make a quick stop at Lake Wilcox on our way out of town. It usually has some interesting species present as it is the only lake for miles around. The lake is a good place for waterfowl and other species which we will find later in the trip, including Cassin's Kingbird, Say's Phoebe, Lucy's Warbler and more.

We will be taking the long way to Portal through the Chiricahua Mountains this morning, along dirt Forest Service Roads that lead up and over the top of the mountain range. Our main target bird here will be the Mexican Chickadee, which can only be found in the United States in these specific mountains. We will of course also be looking for other birds, like Red-faced Warbler, Olive Warbler, Williamson's Sapsucker, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Steller's Jay, Bushtit, Yellow-eyed Junco and Grace's Warbler. We will have lunch

at one of the picnic areas at the top of the mountain and then begin our descent towards Portal in the afternoon.

We will check in to our hotel then spend the rest of the afternoon enjoying the birds at some feeders around town. We will likely see Scott's Oriole, Rivoli's Hummingbird, Cactus Wren, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Pyrrhuloxia, Gambel's Quail and more.

Overnight in Portal.



Day 3: Full Day Birding around Portal and Nearby Sites: Elegant Trogon, Cave Creek Ranch Feeders, Mexican Chickadee and Much More; PM Nocturnal Birding for Owls and Nightjars

Today we will rise early and head a little way up the canyon to try for our first look at Elegant Trogon. We should also be able to find Painted Redstart, Blue-throated Mountain-gem, Arizona Woodpecker, Western Wood-Pewee, Mexican Jay, Hammond's Flycatcher, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher and, with some luck, a Whiskered Screech-Owl.

We can return to the lodge for breakfast, or eat a picnic breakfast at the Cave Creek Ranch feeders.

Depending on our luck the previous day we can drive back up the mountain to chase chickadees again. Otherwise we will spend the day visiting a number of feeders and birding hotspots in the immediate Portal area. Black-headed Grosbeak, Scaled Quail, Gambel's Quail, Lucy's Warbler, Crissal Thrasher, Western Tanager, Scott's Oriole, Cassin's Finch, Bridled Titmouse, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Lazuli Bunting, Green-tailed Towhee and more and all possible here. There are usually stakeouts for Thick-billed Kingbird and other rarities that show up from time to time.

This evening we can drive up near the research station to try for Flammulated Owl and will likely find Mexican Whip-poor-will, Whiskered Screech-Owl, Western Screech-Owl and Elf Owl.

Overnight in Portal



Day 4: Morning Final Birding near Portal (Willow Tank); then Birding to Sierra Vista and Birding in Canyons near Sierra Vista

This morning we will spend a few hours in Portal looking for any final birds we may need, then we will check out of the hotel and begin our drive towards Sierra Vista.

On our way out of town we will stop at Willow Tank to look for Bendire's Thrasher, and likely see large dust devils forming out in the desert as temperatures quickly rise.

After a two-hour drive we will arrive in Sierra Vista.

This afternoon we will try to visit Ash Canyon Sanctuary, where Montezuma Quail can be seen well and Lucifer Hummingbird is almost guaranteed along with Mexican Jay, Costa's Hummingbird and Anna's Hummingbird.

Plans may change if any rarities can be included in the day. The canyons from Sierra Vista are often filled with reports of rare birds and/or other tough-to-get birds for USA-listers.

Overnight in Sierra Vista.



Days 5 and 6: Two Full Days Birding Canyons, Mountains and Plains around Sierra Vista: Carr Canyon, Miller Canyon, Beatty's Feeders, San Pedro Reserve and More

This area is well known by birders and offers many excellent birding sites, so we will be spending two full days here to see as much as we can. The assorted canyons that lead into the mountains frequently have rare birds being reported, so we will take some time to find them along with the usual birds of the area. Spotted Owl is usually being seen somewhere, but it will take a little luck to find as they don't always return to the same perches.

Morning birding could be at either Carr Canyon or Miller Canyon or Ramsey Canyon. As we are staying two additional nights in the area, we will also have a third morning here for additional canyon or other good birding in the area.

- **Carr Canyon:** Carr Canyon is a good place for Buff-breasted Flycatcher and Grace's Warbler. Other birds found here include Cordilleran Flycatcher, Arizona Woodpecker, Yellow-eyed Junco, Olive Warbler, Zone-tailed Hawk, Virginia's Warbler, Plumbeous Vireo, Rock Wren and more.
- **Miller Canyon:** We may opt for Miller Canyon to look for the resident Northern Goshawk, White-eared Hummingbird and Spotted Owl. We will eventually visit Beatty's hummingbird feeding station located at the entrance of the canyon for looks at Rivoli's Hummingbird, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Anna's Hummingbird, Blue-throated Mountain-gem and, with some luck, Berylline Hummingbird. Miller Canyon offers opportunities to find Scott's Oriole, Hepatic Tanager, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Band-tailed Pigeon, Greater Pewee, Red-faced Warbler and more.

- **Ramsey Canyon:** We may opt to visit the Ramsey Canyon Preserve run by the Nature Conservancy, though sometimes the crowds here can be large. There have historically been several rare birds reported here on numerous occasions, including Tufted Flycatcher and Flame-colored Tanager. This site generally involves more hiking than other areas we may visit, though there can be good birds anywhere along the trail, like Painted Redstart, Elegant Trogon, Western Tanager, Brown Creeper, Red-naped Sapsucker and more.

Other fine birding opportunities exist in the area to round out our two days of birding here.

- **Perhaps Fort Huachuca and Scheelite Canyon:** Depending on reports we may enter the Fort Huachuca military base. This can take some additional time as there is a check-in protocol that needs to be followed, and the base is subject to being closed at any time. However local birders do frequently hike the canyons in the base, so if there are interesting birds being reported it may be worth it to try our luck there.
- **San Pedro River Reserve:** We may also choose to go down to the San Pedro River Valley to look for Gambel's Quail, Scaled Quail, Common Ground Dove, Gila Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Say's Phoebe, Chihuahuan Raven, Verdin, Curve-billed Thrasher, Phainopepla, Bell's Vireo, Pyrrhuloxia, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Green-tailed Towhee and Abert's Towhee. Sometimes showing up here is Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet.
- **Rare Bird Reports:** Lots of birders live in the area and put out feeders, and sometimes allow visitors if a rare bird like a Streak-backed Oriole shows up. We will certainly work a visit into the plan if this happens during the trip.

Two nights in Sierra Vista.



Day 7: Final Morning in Sierra Vista and Most of Day in Patagonia Birding: Paton Feeders, Sonoita Creek Nature Reserve, Patagonia Rest Area and More

This morning we will either bird a bit more in Sierra Vista if there are any birds that still need to be seen, or head directly to Patagonia.

Our first stop after we leave Sierra Vista will be the Paton Center for Hummingbirds where we hope to see Violet-crowned Hummingbird as well as Broad-billed Hummingbird and Rivoli's Hummingbird. Seed feeders here also draw interesting birds like Abert's Towhee, Gambel's Quail, Curve-billed Thrasher and Lazuli Bunting.

After leaving the hummingbird center we will likely visit the Sonoita Creek Nature Reserve to look for more species we may need like Hammond's Flycatcher, Red-naped Sapsucker, Cassin's Vireo, Lazuli Bunting, Common Black Hawk and more.

On our way out of town we will stop at the Patagonia Rest Area and look for Rose-throated Becard, Thick-billed Kingbird and Black-capped Gnatcatcher. We may stop at Patagonia Lake State Park, where Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet can often be found. This area also has sporadic rarities like Ruddy Ground Dove, Rose-throated Becard, Rufous-backed Robin and Sinaloa Wren, so if they are being reported we can go look for them. Otherwise we will continue on to our lodging for the night.

We will turn in early tonight to rest up for a very early morning departure.

Overnight in Rio Rico.





Day 8: AM The Quest for Five-striped Sparrow in California Gulch and AM Birding Other Nearby Areas; Afternoon Birding in Madera Canyon

Today we will depart before sunrise to make the one and a half hour drive down to California Gulch to look for Five-striped Sparrow. While the sparrow can sometimes be seen in other areas, this is by far the most reliable spot. Our route takes us down a long winding dirt road and passes by the ghost town of Ruby, an old abandoned mining camp from the late 1800s. Do note that occasional flash floods can make access impossible at times, but usually the road gets repaired fairly quickly by border patrol.

Along with the sparrow we will look for Varied Bunting, Lucy's Warbler, Phainopepla, and with extreme luck and a pre-dawn arrival, Buff-collared Nightjar. The hike down from the road isn't long, but there is loose gravel and uneven footing so wear good shoes and watch your step. We will spend the morning birding here, and enjoy the remote scenery.

When things start to warm up we will depart, and begin the bumpy drive out of the wilderness. We may make a quick detour through Tubac as there are often rare birds reported there, and one trail has previously had a documented pair of nesting Rose-throated Becards.

We will arrive later at Madera Canyon, where we will spend the afternoon at Santa Rita Lodge enjoying the many different birds that come to the feeders. Elegant Trogons are frequently found on the roads and trails nearby. In the evening we may opt to do some owling. Elf Owl and Western Screech-Owl can be found near the lodge, with Whiskered Screech-Owls further up the canyon.

Dinner will be self-prepared at the lodge, as there are no restaurants nearby. We will have time earlier to stop and pick up any supplies needed for tonight and the next day.

Overnight in Madera Canyon.

Day 9: Full Day Birding in Madera Canyon

This will be our last full day of the trip, so we will prioritize any birds we still need to see. Our first site today will likely be at nearby Florida Canyon to look for Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Black-chinned Sparrow and Rufous-capped Warbler.

Later in the day we will return to Madera Canyon to relax, have lunch, and look around for Elegant Trogon and other higher altitude birds we may still need. Other birds we might find include Brown-crested Flycatcher, Botteri's Sparrow, Elegant Trogon, Common Poorwill, Zone-tailed Hawk, Band-tailed Pigeon, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Arizona Woodpecker, Phainopepla, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher and many more depending on where we go throughout the day.

In the evening we will have the option to try for the sparrow or gnatcatcher again or look for any final birds we may still need. Again, dinner will be self-made at the lodge, and we may opt for more owling before bed.

Overnight in Madera Canyon.

Day 10: Final Morning in Madera Canyon Area; Afternoon Flights Home

Today we will have one final chance to pick up any needed birds and can stop at any sites between Madera Canyon and Tucson. Birds we might find include Gilded Flicker, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, or any number of rare birds that happen to be reported. Madera Canyon in recent years has been offering up a number of rare birds, and we may need a bit more time to find these key bird species for the trip. Otherwise, we can enjoy birding in the area, which is both serene and full of interesting birding opportunities.

As the morning heats up (and it can be hot here) and once birding is done, you will be dropped off at the Tucson Airport for flights home. Later afternoon (after 3:00 PM ideally) flights are preferred to allow for a full morning of birding.

