



Texas

Birding the Rio Grande Valley

Tour Leader: Eric Ripma

December 1-8, 2026

Itinerary Overview:

December 1: Arrival in Harlingen, TX and Oliveira Park - Transfer to Brownsville

December 2: Resaca De La Palma State Park and Boca Chica

December 3: Laguna Atascosa and South Padre Island - Transfer to McAllen

December 4: McAllen Area Preserves and Parks

December 5: Salineño and Beyond

December 6: McAllen Area Preserves and Parks

December 7: Lower Rio Grande Valley and Agricultural Fields - Transfer to Harlingen

December 8: Departure from Harlingen, Texas

Detailed Itinerary:

December 1: Arrival in Harlingen, TX and Oliveira Park - Transfer to Brownsville

Upon arrival at Harlingen Airport (Valley International Airport, HRL), you will meet your guide for this tour and transfer to Brownsville, Texas. If time permits, we will look for Red-crowned Parrots and Green Parakeets in Brownsville in the evening.

-Overnight: Brownsville, TX

December 2: Resaca De La Palma State Park and Boca Chica

The morning will be spent at Resaca De La Palma State Park. Many of the south Texas specialties should be seen including Plain Chachalaca, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, White-tipped Dove, Green Jay, and Long-billed Thrasher. In the afternoon, we'll head to Boca Chica Beach to look for a number of coastal species. The drive to the beach gives us an opportunity to look for the numerous raptors and sparrows that spend the winter in the area. Once we reach the flats and beach, Reddish Egrets and many shorebirds including Long-billed Curlews are likely to be seen.

-Overnight: Brownsville, TX

December 3: Laguna Atascosa and South Padre Island - Transfer to McAllen

We will begin this morning around the Laguna Atascosa area. Our first stop will be at a boat ramp that usually has large numbers of waterbirds. Next, we'll visit a viewing area for the Aplomado Falcon. In addition to the falcon, we'll be looking for a variety of raptors, sparrows, and other grassland species. By the mid-morning, we'll head to South Padre Island. The boardwalks here provide great access to view a variety of gulls, terns, shorebirds, and wading birds. We will also look for Yellow Warbler (Mangrove) and Clapper Rails in the mangrove habitat on the island. In the afternoon, we'll start driving towards McAllen and might make a couple of stops depending on the timing.

-Overnight: McAllen, TX



Green Jay

December 4: McAllen Area Preserves and Parks

This part of the itinerary will be highly dependent on recent sightings in the area which your guide will be tracking. There are many birding locations in the area, and we'll use our time to find as many species as possible. A few of the parks we may go to are Estero Llano Grande State Park, Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park, the Delta Lake area, Edinberg Scenic Wetlands, Frontera Audubon Center, Quinta Mazatlan, and Anzalduous Park. Practically all specialties of the region will be possible, and some rare Mexican species may also show up.

-Overnight: McAllen, TX

December 5: Salineño and Beyond

On this morning we'll head up the Rio Grande to birding locations such as Salineño, Falcon State Park, San Ygnacio, Roma Bluffs World Birding Center, and Zapata. Targets include Muscovy Duck, Red-billed Pigeon, Morelet's Seedeater, and Audubon's Oriole. Salineño provides great access to viewing the Rio Grande and we'll spend some time watching as birds move up and down the river. This is one of the best areas for many of the specialties of the region and for rare Mexican species. The nearby Falcon State Park is a great spot to look for a variety of sparrows. Some of the highlights could include Northern Bobwhite, Cassin's, Clay-colored, and Black-throated Sparrows, and Green-tailed Towhee. Vagrants from Mexico are also found throughout this region with regularity, so we'll have to keep our fingers crossed!

-Overnight: McAllen, TX

December 6: McAllen Area Preserves and Parks

We'll continue to monitor bird reports and will make stops at whichever parks and preserves have any of the birds we still haven't seen. If we are still missing any of the specialties of the region we'll spend time locating them!

-Overnight: McAllen, TX

December 7: Lower Rio Grande Valley and Agricultural Fields - Transfer to Harlingen

We will arrange this day to target the species we're still missing. We may head up the Rio Grande again or stay in the general area of McAllen. We will also spend some time in the countryside looking for species such as Sprague's Pipit, Mountain Plover, and Burrowing Owl. In the evening, we will make our way back to Harlingen to enjoy a final group dinner before departures the next day.

-Overnight: Harlingen, TX

December 8: Departure from Harlingen, Texas



Common Pauraque

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from Harlingen, TX: \$3,799

Single Supplement: \$850

Minimum Participants: 4

Maximum Participants: 6

Price Includes:

Expert Guide

Ground Transportation in Texas

All Lodging

All Meals

Park Entrance Fees

Price Does Not Include:

Airfare to and from Harlingen, TX

Airport Taxes

Visa and Passport Fees (if applicable)

Alcoholic Beverages

Personal Items

Tips

Travel Insurance

Deposit:

A deposit of \$500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (September 2, 2026).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact us at info@sabrewingnaturetours.com, by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at sabrewingnaturetours.com.

Responsibility/Disclaimer Statement:

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