



Arizona

Exploring the Sky Islands

Tour Leader: Eric Ripma
August 2-10, 2027

Itinerary Overview:

August 2: Arrival in Tucson - Transfer to Hotel - Birding Mt. Lemmon

August 3: Morning Birding in Tucson - Transfer to Portal

August 4: Full Day Birding the Chiricahua Mountains

August 5: Birding the Chiricahua Mountains - Transfer to Sierra Vista

August 6: Full Day Birding in the Huachuca Mountains

August 7: Birding the Huachuca Mountains and Patagonia Area - Transfer to Tubac

August 8: Full Day Birding the Santa Rita Mountains

August 9: Birding the Santa Cruz River and Santa Catalina Mountains - Transfer to Tucson

August 10: Departure from Tucson

Detailed Itinerary:

August 2: Arrival in Tucson - Transfer to Hotel - Birding Mt. Lemmon

Upon arrival in Tucson, your leader will either meet you at the airport or you'll catch the airport shuttle to where we will be staying for the night. We will meet in the early afternoon and make our way up to the higher elevations on Mt. Lemmon. We'll spend our time walking some easy trails looking for many species such as Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Acorn Woodpecker, Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Mexican Jay, Olive Warbler, Painted Redstart, and Red-faced, Hermit, and Grace's Warblers. After dinner on the mountain, we will head back to our hotel in Tucson.

Overnight: Tucson, Arizona



Red-faced Warbler

August 3: Morning Birding in Tucson - Transfer to Portal

We'll spend the morning birding in the deserts around Tucson. On the west side of Tucson, we will visit Tucson Mountain Park where we will see many of the species that call the Sonoran Desert home. Some of our targets will include Gambel's Quail, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Cactus Wren, and Rufous-winged and Black-throated Sparrow. Afterwards, we'll make a stop at Sweetwater Wetlands where we'll look for an assortment of waterfowl, shorebirds, and Tropical Kingbirds. After lunch, we'll leave Tucson and head towards Portal. We'll make a stop in Wilcox to search for shorebirds, waterfowl, Scaled Quail, and more.

Overnight: Portal, Arizona

August 4: Full Day Birding the Chiricahua Mountains

Our day will begin in the deserts around Portal. Highlights could include Crissal and Bendire's Thrashers, and Botteri's and Cassin's Sparrows as well as other common desert birds. Our next stop will be at the South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon where we'll search for Elegant Trogon, Arizona Woodpecker, Painted Redstart, Hepatic Tanager, and others. After lunch in Portal, we'll drive higher up into the Chiricahuas to Barfoot and Rustler Park. Here we'll look for Mexican Chickadee, Western Bluebird, Red Crossbill, Olive and Red-faced Warblers, Yellow-eyed Junco, and other high elevation species. After dinner, we'll head back out in search of owls such as Western and Whiskered Screech-Owls, Elf Owl, as well as Mexican Whip-poor-will and Common Poorwill.

Overnight: Portal, Arizona



Arizona Woodpecker

August 5: Birding the Chiricahua Mountains - Transfer to Sierra Vista

On our final day in the Chiricahuas, we'll work to find any species that we might have missed in the area so far. We will also bird along the road to Paradise, looking for Black-chinned Sparrow, Juniper Titmouse, and if we're lucky, Montezuma Quail. On the way to Sierra Vista, we'll also drive some roads looking for Montezuma Quail. If time allows, we will spend some time in St. David on our way to Sierra Vista to look for Mississippi Kites that nest in this town. We might also make a second stop in Willcox, as the diversity of waterbirds at this location can change from hour to hour. We will then continue our drive to Sierra Vista where we will be staying for the next two nights.

Overnight: Sierra Vista, Arizona



Buff-breasted Flycatcher

August 6: Full Day Birding in the Huachuca Mountains

Today we'll be birding in the beautiful Huachuca Mountains. We will start at one of the best high-elevation locations in southeast Arizona, Carr Canyon. Here we hope to see many species of warblers, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Zone-tailed Hawk, and much more. In the late morning, we'll make a visit to the Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. Here we will hope to see several species of hummingbirds including the Lucifer Hummingbird. After lunch we'll drive to Miller Canyon which is located in the mid-elevations of the Huachucas. After spending some time watching the feeders, we may hike up the canyon in search of a variety of species.

Overnight: Sierra Vista, Arizona

August 7: Birding in the Huachuca Mountains and Patagonia Area - Transfer to Tubac

Our final morning in Sierra Vista will be spent looking for any of our targets that we may have missed

the day before. There is a good chance we will visit Hunter Canyon in the early morning where we could see species such as Rufous-capped Warbler, Scott's Oriole, Black-chinned Sparrow, and Northern Pygmy-Owl. We will then begin our drive to Tubac. We'll make several stops along our way including a stop in Sonoita for lunch. Before lunch, we will likely make a stop at Las Cienegas NCA where Botteri's and Cassin's Sparrows and Chihuahuan Meadowlarks are usually common. After lunch, we will stop at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds, which is one of the easiest places to see the striking Violet-crowned Hummingbird. We will finish off the day with a delicious dinner in Tubac after checking into our hotel.

Overnight: Tubac, Arizona

August 8: Full Day Birding the Santa Rita Mountains

Today we'll spend the day in the beautifully rugged Santa Rita Mountains where possible specialties are Five-striped Sparrow, Varied Bunting, and Black-capped Gnatcatcher. These species will bring us to Box Canyon early in the morning. This canyon is one of the more stunning in southern Arizona and there are many possible species we could see during our visit. Where we bird for the rest of the morning will depend on recent sightings. Some years, we may have to visit other canyons in the Santa Ritas to look for Black-capped Gnatcatchers. We will likely spend the afternoon in Madera Canyon where it tends to stay a little cooler. Some highlights here could include Elegant Trogon, Scott's Oriole, and Golden Eagle. After dinner, there will be the option to spend a few hours owling!

Overnight: Tubac, Arizona



Varied Bunting

August 9: Birding the Santa Cruz River and Santa Catalina Mountains - Transfer to Tucson

On our final full day of the tour, the morning will be spent birding along the Santa Cruz River where

we'll look for Rose-throated Becards, Green Kingfishers, and Lucy's Warblers among many other riparian species. In the afternoon and evening, we'll drive back to Tucson and possibly bird around the Catalina Mountains for any species we may have missed thus far. After we finish birding, we will have an excellent farewell dinner in Tucson.

Overnight: Tucson, Arizona

August 10: Departure from Tucson



Five-striped Sparrow

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from Tucson, Arizona: \$3,999

Single Supplement: \$750

Minimum Participants: 4

Maximum Participants: 6

Price Includes:

Expert Guide

Ground Transportation in Arizona

All Lodging

All Meals

Park Entrance Fees

Price Does Not Include:

Airfare to and from Tucson, Arizona

Visa and Passport Fees (if applicable)

Alcoholic Beverages

Personal Items

Travel Insurance

Tips

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 (May 4, 2027).

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.

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