

ARIZONA

July 14 – 25, 2019
12 Days/ 11 Nights

\$2495

Single supplement \$650

You asked for it –

CHEEPERS! delivers!



We have been asked on numerous occasions in our 10 years of operation to offer tours within the United States. We've arranged successful private tours to southern California, North Dakota, and Texas, and we are pleased to announce that we will offer a tour to southeastern Arizona in 2019, in addition to a 2019 North Dakota tour. In future years, we'll be investigating opportunities for tours to other hot spots in the US, including Alaska, Texas, Maine, Florida, and California.

Southeastern Arizona is an eco-crossroad with five life zones within a short distance. Habitats and species from the Sierra Madres of Mexico, the Rocky Mountains, and the Sonora and Chihuahuan deserts can all be found in these "Sky Islands." The bird watching and wildlife viewing areas are world-renowned. The best months for birding in Arizona are April through September as migrant hummingbirds, warblers, vireos, flycatchers, orioles and tanagers pass through, joining strays from Mexico and resident hummers and breeders. Our tour is scheduled to give you the best birding experience possible.

Our guide for our first tour to Arizona is Ethan Kistler, one of the original founders of the Ohio Young Birders Club when he was just a teenager. Ethan began birding at the age of 10 when he literally woke up one morning and decided that he wanted to become a birder. Since then he has worked field jobs from Ohio to Alaska, traveled to 38 countries, and led birding trips throughout North America and Africa (where he lived for 6 years). When not leading tours, he's chasing rarities, off on spontaneous birding jaunts, and reviewing data as one of eBird's data reviewers for much of the African continent. Previously the Education and Outreach Specialist for Black Swamp Bird Observatory and director-at-large of the Ohio Ornithological Society, Ethan's main focus is guiding locally in North America and internationally, while filling in gaps between tours with ornithology related field work.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1, July 14: Arrive in Tucson. Depending on the arrival schedules of the participants, we will enjoy some late afternoon/early evening birding in the Tucson area. The palo verde/desert scrub habitat near Tucson is home to Gambel's Quail, Greater Roadrunner, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Verdin, Cactus Wren, Curve-billed Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia, Canyon Towhee, and Anna's and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, and we hope to have enough time to find a good selection of these and others.

Overnight Comfort Inn, Tucson (no meals)

Day 2, July 15: We will leave early for a full day of birding on Mount Lemon. As we drive up the 27-mile Catalina Highway, we will move through lush Sonoran desert at the base to cool, shady Rocky Mountain forest near the peak. We will make several stops along the way in search of Arizona and Acorn Woodpeckers, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Pygmy Nuthatch, Yellow-eyed Junco, and Hepatic Tanager. In addition, we have chances for a host of warblers – Red-faced, Grace's, and Olive Warblers, and Painted Redstart. In late afternoon we will travel to Green Valley to stage for birding the next day in the nearby Madera Canyon.

Overnight Comfort Inn, Green Valley (B)



Red-faced Warbler

Day 3, July 16: We will leave early to spend a full day birding in the oak woodlands of Madera Canyon, just 14 miles from our hotel. We'll stop at Florida Wash on our way in, where we might find Crissal Thrasher, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Black-throated Sparrow, Phainopepla, and other desert scrub birds.

At other sites within the canyon, we can expect to see Acorn and Arizona woodpeckers, Mexican Jay, Bridled Titmouse and Painted Redstart. At Santa Rita Lodge we will check the feeders which attract oak woodland birds including Scott's Oriole, Yellow-eyed Junco, Black-headed Grosbeak and a variety of hummingbirds. The canyon is also home to several species of owls.

Overnight Comfort Inn, Green Valley (B)



Yellow-eyed Junco

Day 4, July 17: We will spend the morning birding Madera Canyon to “sweep up” any species we might have missed, and then spend the remainder of the day birding along the Santa Cruz River, a historic waterway of the desert southwest. In the portions of the Santa Cruz River that have surface water running, thick riparian habitat is home to a variety of warblers in the summer, and to many



Vermilion Flycatcher

resident birds throughout the year. Bird rarities have been reported in this section of the river. Thick vegetation creates cool summer shade from willow, cottonwood, mesquite, and paloverde trees, interspersed with invasive tamarisk species. Abert's Towhees and both Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers are common year-round. Killdeer, Vermilion Flycatcher, Anna's Hummingbird, Cooper's Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, White-winged Dove, and Common Yellowthroat are among the many species located here.

Overnight Tubac Golf Resort, Tubac (B)

Day 5, July 18: We will depart early this morning for the famous California Gulch. This Important Bird Area (IBA), located in the remote Pajarito Mountains, is a unique thornscrub vegetated canyon. It is home to the highly sought-after Five-striped Sparrow (estimated 10 – 15 pairs) and Montezuma Quail, among others. Some of the possibilities include Gray Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Elegant Trogon, Tropical and Thick-billed Kingbirds, Rose-throated Becard, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Lucy's Warbler, Varied Bunting, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, and Buff-collared Nightjar.

Overnight Tubac Golf Resort, Tubac (B)

Day 6, July 19: We will check out of our hotel after breakfast and head east toward Sierra Vista, birding along the way. Our stops will include Patagonia, one of the sites listed in the book ***Fifty Places to go Birding Before you Die: Birding Experts Share the World's Greatest Destinations.***

The Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve was the Nature Conservancy's first project in Arizona and is home to more than 300 species of birds. The Paton Center for Hummingbirds is dedicated to the celebration and conservation of hummingbirds. 212 bird species have been reported for this cozy home lot on the outskirts of Patagonia, including Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Gray hawk, Varied Bunting, Thick-billed Kingbirds, and many more local specialties. Another IBA in the area is the combined Patagonia Lake State Park/Sonoita Creek State Natural Area, where a few hours of walking could yield dozens of species. The unassuming Patagonia Roadside Rest Area is fairly famous in the birding world due to the number of rare sightings that have come from here. We will visit as many of these sites as time permits.

Overnight Sierra Suites, Sierra Vista (B)

Day 7, July 20: We will enjoy two full days in the Huachuca Mountains near Sierra Vista. We will visit Miller, Ash, Ramsey, Huachuca Canyons (to name a few) between today and tomorrow. These popular canyons lead into the Huachuca Mountains along trails suitable for bird and wildlife watching, hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Part of the Coronado National Forest, these canyons have gained national attention for many rare bird sightings, among them the Plain-capped Starthroat, the Flame-colored Tanager, and the Slate-throated Redstart.

Ramsey Canyon Preserve

The Nature Conservancy's Ramsey Canyon Preserve has been famous among birders and other naturalists for over a century. This 300-acre property in the middle elevations of the canyon provides excellent birding opportunities from April through September. Hummingbirds (including Magnificent, Blue-throated and White-eared) abound. Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher and Painted Redstart are common in summer, while Arizona Woodpecker and Spotted Towhee are visible year-round.

Ash Canyon

Ash Canyon is easily accessible by car. Ash Canyon offers three separate habitats: Chihuahuan Desert grassland, riparian woodland, and oak forest. It is also home to one of the most rarely seen hummingbirds, the Plain-capped Starthroat. Ash Canyon is a great place to spot Scott's Oriole and Lucifer's Hummingbird.



Magnificent Hummingbird

Miller Canyon

There is no greater place to view hummingbirds than Beatty's Guest Ranch. For a small fee (\$5), you can sit under cover and watch as beauties such as White-eared and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, and hope for a rarity such as Beryline Hummingbird..

Overnight Sierra Suites, Sierra Vista (B)

Day 8, July 21: Another full day in the Huachuca Mountains and its variety of habitats.

Overnight Sierra Suites, Sierra Vista (B)

Day 9, July 22: We will leave after breakfast and begin our journey to Portal, birding along the way. There are many potential birding sites between Sierra Vista and Portal, and we will decide which ones to take advantage of based on our bird checklist and which sites will give us the best chances for filling in the gaps.

Overnight Portal Lodge, Portal (B)

Day 10, July 23: Some of the best birding in the United States is in the Chiricahua Mountains and Portal. The Chiricahua checklist presently stands at 375 species, not including 13 species still considered hypothetical — about half of all the birds regularly occurring on this continent north of Mexico. The sheer size and topographic diversity of the Chiricahua region make it possible for most birds to find appropriate habitat. Encompassing approximately 1,000 square miles, elevations vary from 4,000 feet in the San Simon Valley to 9,796 feet at the summit of Chiricahua Peak. Broadly speaking, there are six basic plant communities, and each supports a unique subset of birds. The desert scrub and grasslands provide homes for birds such as Gambel's Quail, Cactus Wren, Verdin and Curve-billed Thrasher—residents of both the Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts. The forested slopes provide habitat for species as diverse as the Western Screech-Owl, Virginia Warbler, Scott's Oriole, Hairy Woodpecker, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Zone-tailed Hawk, Pygmy Nuthatch and Greater Pewee. The mountain crests are home to Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red Crossbill and Golden Eagle.

Overnight Portal Lodge, Portal (B)

Day 11, July 24: We have all day to bird our way back to Tucson. The stops we make will depend on our bird list and the species we are missing. One potential stop is Wilcox, where Cochise Lake harbors a variety of ducks, grebes, shorebirds, and waders as well as a good selection of passerines, including MacGillivray's Warbler. We'll enjoy a farewell dinner in Tucson before going to our hotel.

Overnight Comfort Inn, Tucson (B)

Day 12, July 25: This morning you will take the hotel shuttle to the airport at a time that is convenient for your flight schedule.

(B)

PRICE INCLUDES:

- ~ All ground transportation while in Arizona, including airport transfers
- ~ Lodging in comfortable hotels
- ~ Breakfasts as indicated on the itinerary
- ~ Farewell dinner on the final night of the tour
- ~ Bottled water throughout the tour
- ~ Services of an expert birding guide and a *Cheepers!* driver/tour leader
- ~ Entrance fees to parks and feeder sites
- ~ Customized checklist
- ~ Welcome gift package

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- ~ Roundtrip airfare to Tucson, Arizona
- ~ Lunches and dinners (Meals will be self-paid to allow for personal tastes and budgets, except for the farewell dinner)
- ~ Alcoholic beverages
- ~ Items of a personal nature such as laundry, extra snacks and soft drinks, phone calls, souvenirs, etc.
- ~ Tips (Recommended tip is \$10 per day for the guide and \$5 per day for the driver)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Deposit of \$500 with registration. Balance is due on or before March 14, 2019.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Cancellation should be made in writing (email or snail mail).

More than 6 months prior to departure - full refund of deposit

Between 4 and 6 months prior to departure - 50% refund of deposit

Less than 4 months prior to departure - No refund of deposit

Trip insurance is recommended.

You can compare prices offered by various trip insurance companies at these websites:

http://www.quotewright.com/?sub_id=6056 www.insuremytrip.com

Cheepers! Birding on a Budget LLC reserves the right to make changes in the itinerary if the need should arise due to unforeseeable circumstances such as weather and other natural phenomena, as well as suggestions by local guides in order to take advantage of an unusual birding opportunity. Lodging is subject to change based on availability.



White-winged Dove