

Springtime in Arizona

May 1-8, 2021

Leaders: Stefan Schlick & Randy Hill

Tentative Itinerary

Spring in southeast Arizona is delightful! The excessive heat of the summer has not yet arrived and it can be chilly overnight. Yet, it will warm up nicely every day. And all the birds are singing!

Saturday, May 1

Flight to Tucson

Overnight at the [Days Inn in Willcox](#) for next 3 nights

We will probably not linger in Tucson and immediately leave for Willcox. In Willcox, Lake Cochise is a fabulous little spot and you never know what is going to stop over at the pond. This is also the reason why we will stop by there again on the way back. Tropical Kingbird and Vermilion Flycatcher are often present and the golf course edges are great for Scaled Quail. Lillian's Eastern Meadowlarks might be singing.

Sunday, May 2

Stateline Road and the High Chiricahuas

Overnight at the [Days Inn in Willcox](#)



Accommodations in Portal are full so we will have to make two day-trips to the Chiricahuas, based out of Willcox. This means we will have to **leave early and that there will be more driving.**

In the morning we will check out Stateline Rd. Stateline Rd divides AZ and NM, so if you are birding carefully, you will get lists for both states. Bendire's Thrasher is probably the main target here, but Botteri's Sparrow and Scaled Quail are typically also around. Willow Tank might be interesting, but it will depend on whether it holds water.

After that, we will be headed for the high Chiricahuas. We might stop on the way up, especially near the Research Station and Herb Martyr CG for flycatchers and Montezuma Quail, but we really want to

head uphill quickly to find ourselves in the right habitat for Red-faced and Olive Warbler, Greater Pewee, and Mexican Chickadee. High elevation birds like Hermit Thrush, Cordilleran Flycatcher, and other woodland species will be in the firs above 7000ft at Rustler and Barfoot Park.

Monday, May 3

South Fork, Paradise

Overnight at the [Days Inn in Willcox](#)

One of the most exciting birding spots always is South Fork, the easiest place in Southeast AZ to see the Elegant Trogon. The birds are often in and out and we will definitely need a little bit of luck. Other targets there include Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Hepatic Tanager, and Blue-throated Hummingbird.

For the rest of the day, we will work the road to Paradise, the town and uphill. Zone-tailed Hawk can be everywhere, really. There could be Montezuma Quail as well, but the real target in the area is Juniper Titmouse.

An evening outing around Portal could yield Elf and Whiskered Screech-owl and Common Poorwill.

Tuesday, May 4

Willcox, St. David, San Pedro House

Overnight at [Sierra Suites in Sierra Vista](#) for 2 nights

The monastery at St. David is a fabulous low elevation site to visit, often yielding Cassin's and Tropical Kingbird, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, but also Lucy's Warbler and Abert's Towhee. Mississippi Kite will not have arrived yet, but Chihuahua Raven should be easy to see in the general area.

If there is time, we will stop at the San Pedro House. This is an odd lowland site, that is even great in the heat of the day. Green Kingfisher is sometimes seen there, but we will need lots of luck to see it. Maybe the resident Western Screech-Owl will come out of its hole for us.



Wednesday, May 5

Hunter Canyon, Carr

Canyon, Ash Canyon

Overnight at [Sierra Suites in Sierra Vista](#)

Right at sunrise we **will hike 1 mile** into Hunter Canyon. This has been a great site for Rufous-capped Warbler, but they don't always come out on command. The scrubby hillsides are also good for Black-chinned Sparrow and Crissal Thrasher.



Carr Canyon is a high elevation site that you will only get to through a series of switchbacks that offer amazing vistas of Sierra Vista. Olive Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Zone-tailed Hawk and Buff-breasted Flycatcher are often seen up there. Virginia's Warbler is possible, as is Woodhouse's Scrub Jay.

At Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary we need luck to find the very localized Lucifer Hummingbird.

Thursday, May 6

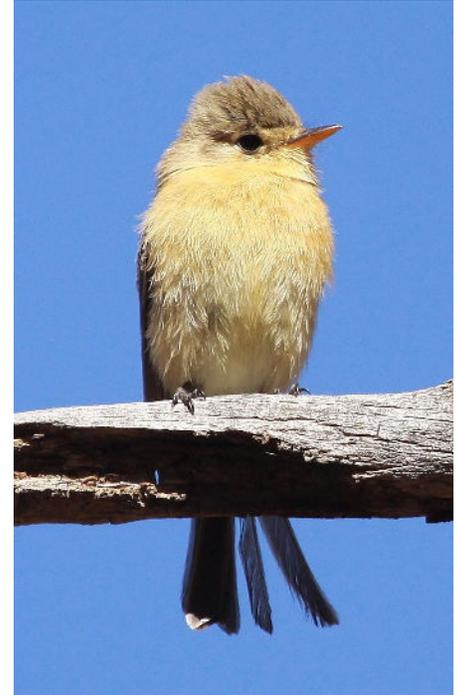
Miller or Ramsey Canyon OR Patagonia

Overnight at [Quality Hotel Americana in Nogales](#)

Depending on what is being seen, we will either go to Miller Canyon or Ramsey Canyon. Either can have a staggering array of rare birds when the timing is right. Both will involve a hike of about 5mi which takes most of the day. Mexican Spotted Owl can be found in both canyons. Some years a family of apache Northern Goshawks will be up there. Red-faced Warbler gets easier the higher up you go.

Brown Canyon would be a fun way to see out the day.

Another plan would take us to Patagonia for the day. Our first stop would be Sonoita Grasslands where Botteri's, Black-throated, and Grasshopper Sparrow are often found very close to each other. There is also another chance for Lilian's Eastern Meadowlark. White-tailed Kite is an uncommon breeder in the area as well.



There are lots of targets around Patagonia, including Violet-crowned Hummingbird at the Paton's and Thick-billed Kingbird at the famous Patagonia Roadside Area. A drive out Harshaw Canyon could yield Eastern Kingbird and Montezuma Quail.

Patagonia Lake State Park is another fabulous place to visit, even in the hottest part of the day. This is our first chance to see Black-capped Gnatcatcher. Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet is yet another target. Neotropical Cormorants are on the lake. The lake edges have good numbers of butterflies and dragonflies.

Friday, May 7

Tubac, Tumacacori, Montosa Canyon

Overnight at the [Best Western in Green Valley](#)



Leaving Sierra Vista early morning, our plan for the day would depend on whether we have already done Patagonia. If so, we could stop at Kino Springs, Rio Rico, and Amado Sewage Pond. There are lots of access points to the Santa Cruz River, some of the best ones are near Tubac and Tumacacori. Some years Rose-throated Becards breed in well-document areas along the river and we will try for them if there is a stakeout. Green Kingfishers are very rare, but occasionally you luck out and see a bird fly up or down the river.

Montosa Canyon is a hotspot for Five-striped Sparrow and Black-capped Gnatcatcher. We will visit this neat spot if time permits. Canyon Wren is often singing even in the hottest part of the day.

Saturday, May 8

Madera Canyon, including Florida Canyon

Last day

Madera Canyon is one of the single best-known birding locations in the US and there are a lot of things to do there. We will start our day with a short hike at Florida Canyon, a great site for Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Rufous-capped Warbler. Both are difficult to see, but there are typically lots of other really nice birds to look at.

At Box Canyon, Five-striped Sparrow is one of the main targets.

Bridled Titmouse and Dusky-capped Flycatcher are near the Santa Rita Lodge which also boasts a nice set of feeders with the occasional rarity. Rivoli's Hummingbird is usually present. The Kubo, yet another lodge higher up, will also have a set of feeders worth visiting.

The higher elevations at Madera Canyon **involve hiking**. If we still need some of the higher elevation species, we will do so. Greater Pewee can be up the Carrie Nation Trail, for example.

Mid-afternoon we will have to pack up, but we may be able to swing by Sweetwater Wetlands before catching our flight back home.