

# BIRD TREKS

## BIRDING AND NATURAL HISTORY IN CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO

Monday, 14 May - Friday, 18 May 2012  
5 days & 4 nights

Harboring about ten percent of Earth's biodiversity, Mexico is one of the most biologically rich countries in the world. During this natural history and birding adventure, we'll explore and learn about some of that richness as we travel through Chihuahuan desert and into the northern Sierra Madre.

Semi-desert grassland, Chihuahuan desert scrub, oak woodland, and mixed conifer forest make up the varied habitats we'll visit on this journey. In the vast pine forests and drier foothills we'll likely encounter Madrean species including **Elegant** and **Mountain Trogons**, **Crescent-chested** and **Red-faced Warblers**, **Slate-throated Redstart**, **Mexican Chickadee**, **Buff-breasted Flycatcher**, and endemics at the northern limit of their range, **White-striped Woodcreeper** and **Russet Nightingale Thrush**. Of course, the local stars of the show, **Thick-billed Parrots**, will be on their breeding grounds. We usually find several other special birds, namely **Eared Quetzal** and **Striped Sparrow**, as we explore the area.

On our return to Arizona, we'll stop in Casas Grandes where we'll spend the final night at Las Guacamayas, a memorable B&B run by a remarkable woman who has a superb gallery of some of the finest Mata Ortiz pottery to be found. From there, we'll visit the charming town of Mata Ortiz, made famous by local artist Juan Quezada. Inspired by the pottery of the people who inhabited Paquime, Juan resurrected the art that has flourished in his home town.

Led by naturalist and bird guide **Mark Pretti**, the cost will be about \$900 per person, double occupancy, and includes all lodging, meals, and transportation from Sierra Vista, Arizona. Group size is limited to eight participants.

# Birding and Natural History in Chihuahua, Mexico

Mark Pretti, Tour Leader  
14 - 18 May 2012

**Day 1** - Depart from Sierra Vista, Arizona around 7:00 AM. The departure location will either be a local hotel or my home in Hereford, just south of Ramsey Canyon Road. I'll provide you with the details in advance. We'll cross the border at Agua Prieta where you'll need to get your free visas. We'll then pass through Chihuahuan desert grassland and scrub as we head east and then south to the large agricultural town of Nuevo Casas Grandes. Here, we'll stop for lunch at the town of Zocalo and maybe make a brief birding/leg stretch stop before continuing on to Madera, a small logging and agricultural town at 6500 feet. We will spend three nights at the Hotel Real del Bosque, our home base for exploring the vast pine, oak, and mixed conifer forests of the area. For those not too tired from the long drive (it will be about seven hours from Sierra Vista), we may have some time in the afternoon for an optional birding outing just fifteen minutes from the hotel.

**Day 2** - After a 6:00 AM breakfast, we'll head north of town where we'll work our way along a rough dirt road, passing through pine forest and then mixed conifer and aspen forest. White fir, Douglas fir, white pine, bracken fir, Rocky Mountain maple, Gambel oak, and quaking aspen create a gorgeous background for the amazing sights and sounds of the area's avian stars, **Thick-billed Parrots**. Parrots are usually in the area most of the day, so we can take our time getting to the site as we enjoy a variety of Madrean and other species. Along the way we are likely to encounter **Buff-breasted Flycatcher**, **Mexican Chickadee**, **Western Bluebird**, **Grace's Warbler**, **Blue Grosbeak**, **Eastern Meadowlark**, and perhaps **Mountain Pygmy-Owl**. In the high forests where the parrots are found, we'll look for **Red-faced Warbler**, **Slate-throated Redstart**, **Crescent-chested Warbler**, **Russet Nightingale Thrush**, **Townsend's Solitaire**, **Band-tailed Pigeon**, **Mountain Trogon**, and, with luck, maybe **Eared Quetzal**. In addition to birds we may see up to four species of squirrel, white-sided jackrabbit, eastern cottontail, various butterflies (we may find pine satyr, a butterfly found in only two small border mountain ranges in the U.S.) and reptiles including striped plateau, Yarrow's and Clark's spiny, bunchgrass, short-horned and Mexican plateau horned lizards, and black-necked garter snake. We'll have lunch in the parrot area before working our way back to Madera, where we'll have a break before dinner.

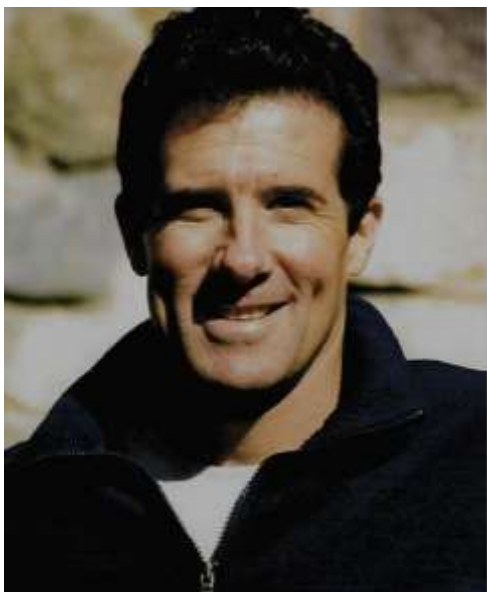
*[Day 3 begins on page 3]*

**Day 3** - Today, after our 6:00 AM breakfast, we'll head west to a beautiful riparian area about 30 minutes from Madera. Amidst the pines on the way there, we've found **Hepatic Tanager, Red Crossbill**, various Madrean warblers, and other goodies. In the main riparian area, a rare section of fenced-off and cattle free stream, we've had the good fortune to reliably find **Eared Quetzal, Elegant Trogon, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Common Black-Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk**, and a Madrean endemic, **Striped Sparrow**. We are likely to have lunch in this area before returning to town. In the afternoon, we'll have the option of heading north to a ruin site, Las Cuarentas Casas, where we can do some birding and sightseeing.

**Day 4** - After our 6:00 AM breakfast, we'll make one last outing to a nearby location in the pine and oak forest to look for some of the typical Madrean species such as **Hepatic Tanager, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Greater Pewee, Mexican Chickadee**, and others. We'll then drive a little more than three hours to Casas Grandes where we'll spend the final night at Las Guacamayas, a memorable B&B run by Mayte Lujan. Mayte is a remarkable woman who has a superb gallery of some of the finest Mata Ortiz pottery to be found. We'll have lunch here, do a guided tour of the adjacent Paquime ruins, and perhaps do some birding in a nearby riparian area.

**Day 5** - After an early breakfast, Mayte will lead us on a guided tour of the charming town of Mata Ortiz. This town was made famous by local artist Juan Quezada who, inspired by the pottery of the people who inhabited Paquime, resurrected the art that has flourished in his home town. We'll return to the B&B for lunch and then make the 4.5-hour trip back to Sierra Vista, Arizona where the tour ends.

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Mark Pretti, your tour leader.

**Leader** This trip will be led by **Mark Pretti** who has led numerous tours throughout Mexico. Mark will have you in the right place at the right time for the best birding opportunities and an educational, worry-free tour.

**Price** Approximately \$900 per person based upon double occupancy. Single accommodations may be available for an extra charge. Please inquire early.

**Includes** Expert guide service, lodging for four nights, **ALL meals**, entrance fees, and all ground transportation within Mexico and Arizona.

Does not include cost of airfare to Sierra Vista, Arizona. BIRD TREKS will, upon request, help you obtain the most suitable airfare. Also not included are the cost of alcoholic beverages and items of a personal nature.

**Deposit** A \$200 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is payable in mid March 2012. Mark's tours to Mexico almost always sell out. Send your deposit soon to insure your reservation and to obtain the best possible airfare.

**Extra Services** We offer the services of our exclusive BIRD TREKS travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel and other extras. Lori has 26 years of experience in the travel industry and is a veteran birder. Contact her at Bailey Travel at **1-800-224-5399**, or e-mail **lori@baileytravel.com**. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free telephone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There may be a fee for these services.

**Refund and Cancellation Policy** With written notice more than 90 days prior to the first day of the tour, 100% of your deposit will be refunded, minus a \$100 service fee. With 30-90 days notice, you will receive a 50% refund of the full cost of the tour. No refund can be made with less than 30 days notice. You will receive a full refund if you provide a replacement for your spot on the tour. No partial refund can be given once the tour begins. We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment. Contact **Allianz Global Assistance** (formerly Access America) and mention **BIRD TREKS ACCAM # F021096**. You can apply via the Internet at **www.allianztravelinsurance.com** or by phone at **1-800-284-8300**.

A pair of **ELEGANT TROGONS**  
at the opening of a nesting hole.

- - Paul Kunstek, tour participant



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