

BIRD TREKS

NEW MEXICO & Bosque del Apache NWR *Great Bird Watching in the American Southwest!*

Dates Saturday, 11 November through Sunday, 19 November 2017, 9 days and 8 nights

We'll visit The snow-capped **Sandia Mountains** near **Albuquerque**, with habitats that range from low grasslands to spruce-fir forests that reach to **10,678 feet** at Sandia Crest - - almost two miles high!

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico's *crown jewel of birding*, winter home of Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, and incredible numbers of waterfowl and raptors.

Elephant Butte Reservoir to search for Clark's Grebe, **Water Canyon**, home of Prairie Falcons, Pinyon Jays, and Pronghorn, and **Percha Dam** for a nice variety of songbirds and waterfowl.

Some of our target birds include . . .

Eared Grebe	Black Phoebe
Western Grebe	Say's Phoebe
American White Pelican	Steller's Jay
Neotropic Cormorant	Clark's Nutcracker
White-faced Ibis	Chihuahuan Raven
Greater White-fronted Goose	Pygmy Nuthatch
Ross's Goose	Rock Wren
Cinnamon Teal	Marsh Wren
Ferruginous Hawk	Mountain Bluebird
Golden Eagle	Canyon Towhee
Prairie Falcon	Green-tailed Towhee
Gambel's Quail	Sagebrush Sparrow
Sora	Black-throated Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Western Meadowlark
Sandhill Crane	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Long-billed Dowitcher	Brewer's Blackbird
Greater Roadrunner	Red Crossbill
Western Screech-Owl	1, 2 or THREE species of Rosy-Finch!
Burrowing Owl	Pine Siskin
Crissal Thrasher	Lesser Goldfinch



Greater Roadrunner, a bird with LOTS of personality.

- - Bob Schutsky, tour leader

[Day-by-day itinerary begins on page 2]

NEW MEXICO & Bosque del Apache NWR

11 - 19 November 2017

Day

Agenda

- 1 Plan to arrive in Albuquerque by early afternoon. We will begin our tour with a visit to the Rio Grande Nature Center and State Park. In the nature center pond and the adjacent large stands of cottonwoods we are likely to find our first **Cackling Geese**, **Gambel's Quail**, **White-crowned Sparrow**, **Wood Duck**, and possibly a **Western Screech-Owl** or **Great Horned Owl**. I saw my very first **Greater Roadrunner** in this area more than 40 years ago. Unusual birds that we have found here included a very late **Green Heron**, a somewhat out-of-range **Brown Thrasher**, and a highly unusual **Harris's Sparrow**, studied well in the spotting scope! Overnight in Albuquerque.
- 2 Today we climb into the sub-alpine zone of the Sandia Mountains to look for high elevation species such as **Golden Eagle**, **Clark's Nutcracker**, and **Red Crossbill**. We'll pass through additional elevational zones to search for the typical Rocky Mountain birds of the Ponderosa Pines. These include **Steller's Jay**, **Mountain Chickadee**, and **Pygmy Nuthatch**. There is always the possibility of rarities in these mountains, such as **Northern Goshawk**, **Dusky Grouse**, **Pine Grosbeak** (we have had GREAT looks at this beauty), and **American Three-toed Woodpecker**. Our past tours have yielded a mixed flock of all three **Rosy-Finches** high on the Crest. Second night in Albuquerque.
- 3 We will drive south from Albuquerque to spend most of the day among the thousands and thousands of **Sandhill Cranes** that call Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge their winter home. There will be **Bald Eagles** and perhaps a **Peregrine Falcon** on the snags, **Gambel's Quail** in the thickets, and **Ross's Geese** among the thousands of **Snow Geese**. Highlights at the feeding station should include **Spotted Towhee**, lots of **White-crowned Sparrows**, and perhaps a **White-throated Sparrow** or **Yellow-headed Blackbird**. We'll scour all of the water-courses, lakes, and cottonwood groves (bosques) for wintering **waterfowl**, lingering **shorebirds**, and **songbirds**. In November 2008 an incredible **SUNGREBE** was found here! We'll retire for the night further south, in the town of Truth or Consequences. Interesting name, eh?



We are likely to see a **Great Horned Owl**.

- - Tom Amico

[Day 4 begins on page 3]

- 4 Today we'll bird desert habitat more intensively to look for **Cactus Wren, Curve-billed Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia, and Phainopepla**. Our next destination is the Black Range for more montane species that should include **Pygmy Nuthatch, Cassin's Finch, and Steller's Jay**. There is a chance that we could find a (Mexican) **Spotted Owl** in this area. The birding is nice and the scenery is spectacular. A second night in Truth or Consequences.
- 5 New Mexico State University in Las Cruces has a resident population of **Burrowing Owls** on the campus. With any luck we will find them and have excellent views. Dripping Springs, located at the base of the Organ Mountains east of Las Cruces, is our next stop. The scenery here is spectacular. Towering granite cliffs serve as the backdrop for some great birding. We should see **Western Bluebird, Pyrrhuloxia, and hopefully many different sparrows** - - we have found as many as **TWELVE species**. The highlight was definitely several **Black-chinned Sparrows**, but **Green-tailed Towhee, Black-throated Sparrow, and a Fox Sparrow** were also nice sightings. A stop at nearby Isaac's Lake may add **Brewer's, Cassin's, and Grasshopper Sparrows**. We'll spend the night further north in Socorro.
- 6 We'll visit a few of the reservoirs that are the winter home of large numbers of aquatic species. Most notable among these is Elephant Butte State Park, with its selection of **diving ducks, gulls, loons, grebes** and more **cranes**. We could easily see **Western, Clark's, and Eared Grebes, American White Pelican, Bald Eagle, and Ross's Goose**. Also possible are **Barn Owl, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Crissal Thrasher, and Black Phoebe**. Percha Dam is located farther south and is likely to yield **White-winged Dove, Green-tailed Towhee, Pyrrhuloxia, Phainopepla, and Wilson's Snipe**. We once witnessed a close encounter between an adult **Golden Eagle** and a stunning **Prairie Falcon**. Returning to Bosque del Apache, which means 'Woods of the Apache,' we'll explore the system of desert trails for **Gambel's Quail, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Verdin, Pyrrhuloxia, Black-throated and Sagebrush Sparrows, and Green-tailed Towhee**. In the afternoon it is back to the marshes and pools of the refuge. We'll spend one more evening watching the flocks of **Sandhill Cranes** and **Snow Geese** go to roost, perhaps being stalked by several **Coyotes**. Then we'll spend our second night in Socorro after a world-famous green chili cheeseburger at The Owl Restaurant (or something slightly calmer, if your stomach would prefer).

White-crowned Sparrows are common in New Mexico.

- - *adult & immature*
by Tom Amico



[Day 7 begins on page 4]

- 7 Today we're back in the mountains. We'll explore some middle elevation pinyon-juniper and ponderosa habitats west of Socorro that include Water Canyon in the Magdalena Mountains. Typical birds in this area are **Pinyon Jay**, **Rock and Bewick's Wrens**, **Mountain Bluebird**, and **Juniper Titmouse**. At 10,000 feet we are likely to find **Clark's Nutcracker** and perhaps a flock of **Red Crossbills** and/or **Pine Siskins**. After an intriguing tour of the **VLA (Very Large Array)**, some spotlighting may produce a **Barn Owl** or **Badger** on our return trip to Albuquerque, where we spend the night.
- 8 We'll set out northeast from Albuquerque for Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge. This area is great for **ducks** and other **diving birds**, and the surrounding prairie is excellent for sparrows and raptors including **Ferruginous Hawk**, **Prairie Falcon**, and **Loggerhead Shrike**. Our final destination is the ski area at Santa Fe. This is excellent habitat for some montane species that may include **Gray Jay**, **Clark's Nutcracker**, **Dusky Grouse**, and **Williamson's Sapsucker**. We'll have our farewell dinner and final night in Albuquerque.
- 9 We may return to Sandia Crest for another chance at the **Rosy-Finches** or, if we did well with them earlier in the tour, go to Petroglyph National Monument to look for **Sagebrush Sparrow**. We usually find a small flock in the expansive sage habitat. Then we'll drive to the airport for our mid-day flights home.

Click on the following link for a **map of the tour route**:

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=215986731009322774066.00046324c602cfd9adee1&msa=0&ll=36.208823,-106.75415&spn=5.176069,9.876709>



Sandhill Cranes will be seen in abundance, sometimes being stalked by a **Coyote**.

- - *Kristine Sowl,*
New Mexico tour participant

- - *Tom Amico*



[Important details on page 5]

- Leader** The leader of the New Mexico - Bosque del Apache Tour will be selected at a later date. Your leader will know the area very well and show you a great time in this wonderful portion of our American Southwest.
- Price** \$2695 per person based upon double occupancy and a minimum of three participants. Single accommodations are available at an extra charge of \$495. We will take a maximum of seven participants. On rare occasion we may extend the maximum to ten participants.
- Includes** Expert guide service, lodging for eight nights, **ALL meals** for the entire tour, entrance fees, and ground transportation within New Mexico. **ALL tips** are also included in the tour fee, except for anything that you may wish to give to your tour leader(s).
- Does not include the cost of airfare to and from Albuquerque. BIRD TREKS will, upon request, gladly help you obtain the best possible airfare. Also not included are the cost of alcoholic beverages and items of a personal nature.
- Extra Services** We offer the services of our exclusive BIRD TREKS travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel. Lori has 32 years of experience in the travel industry. Contact her at Bailey Travel/Travel Time toll-free, **1-800-224-5399**, direct at **717-855-2128**, or e-mail her at **lori@trvltime.com**. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free phone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There is a small fee for these services.
- Deposit** A \$600 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is due 11 September 2017.



We are likely to find **Burrowing Owls** in Las Cruces.

- - *Bob Schutsky*

Refund & Cancellation Policy With written notice more than 60 days prior to the first day of the tour, 100% of your deposit will be refunded, minus a \$75 service fee. With 30 to 60 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 through the Internet at **www.allianztravelinsurance.com**, or by phone at **1-866-884-3556**.

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