

BIRD TREKS

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK, TEXAS

The only place in the United States to see *COLIMA WARBLER*, and the Davis Mountains, home of the *MONTEZUMA QUAIL*!

Dates Sunday, 30 April through Monday, 8 May 2017: 9 days and 8 nights

We'll visit The Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park, including Laguna Meadow and Boot Spring, for the rare *Colima Warbler* and many colorful local specialties.

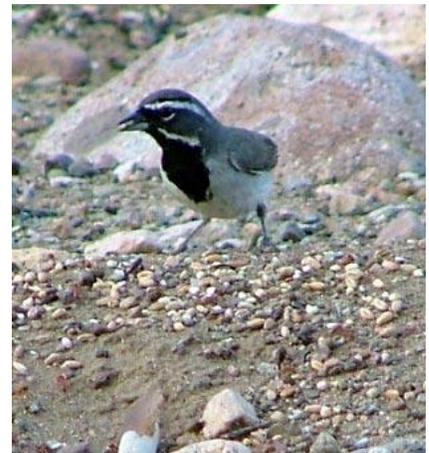
The Big Bend of the Rio Grande, which defines 118 miles of the Park's southern boundary. There is great birding at locations such as Cottonwood Campground, Blue Creek Canyon, and Rio Grande Village.

The Chihuahuan Desert with its specially adapted plants and animals and wonderful diversity of birds. Of great interest are small oases at Sam Nail Ranch and Dugout Wells that are great for mid-day birding.

The Davis Mountains and Limpia Creek, with its thickly forested habitats, montane grasslands, and excellent chance for *Montezuma Quail*, nesting *Common Black-Hawk*, and the vocal nocturnal *Common Poorwill*.

West Texas birds that we will search for include . . .

Clark's Grebe	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Western Grebe	Vermilion Flycatcher
Common Black-Hawk	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Gray Hawk	Mexican Jay
Zone-tailed Hawk	Verdin
Prairie Falcon	Bushtit
Montezuma Quail	Canyon Wren
Scaled Quail	Cactus Wren
Gambel's Quail	Black-tailed Gnatcatcher
Inca Dove	Crissal Thrasher
Snowy Plover	Phainopepla
Western Screech-Owl	Gray Vireo
Elf Owl	Hutton's Vireo
Common Poorwill	Colima Warbler
Lesser Nighthawk	MacGillivray's Warbler
White-throated Swift	Nashville Warbler
Lucifer Hummingbird	Pyrrhuloxia



Black-throated Sparrow
- - Bob Coley, tour participant

[More target birds are on page 2]

Blue-throated Hummingbird
 Black-chinned Hummingbird
 Greater Roadrunner
 Golden-fronted Woodpecker
 Acorn Woodpecker
 Ladder-backed Woodpecker
 Ash-throated Flycatcher
 Black Phoebe
 Say's Phoebe

Painted Bunting
 Varied Bunting
 Canyon Towhee
 Black-throated Sparrow
 Rufous-crowned Sparrow
 Black-chinned Sparrow
 Scott's Oriole
 Western Tanager
 Lesser Goldfinch



Montezuma Quail - - David Schutsky

A complete list of the species found on previous **Big Bend Tours** is available on the Bird Treks website at:
<http://www.birdtreks.com/birdwatching-tours.php?region=Texas>
 Scroll down to Big Bend and click on 'Past Checklists'.
 180+ species are quite possible on this tour.

* * * * *

BIG BEND, TEXAS

30 April - 8 May 2017

DAY AGENDA

- 1 Arrive at El Paso International Airport on Sunday afternoon. On our way to Davis Mountains State Park we'll look for **Scaled Quail**, **Swainson's Hawk**, and our first **Greater Roadrunner**. We'll see if the **Common Black-Hawk** is nesting along Limpia Creek and look for **Montezuma Quail** before dinner. Overnight in Fort Davis, where we once watched **Common Poorwill** hunting from the lodge roof and perching at our feet.
- 2 We'll awaken to the calls of **Cassin's Kingbirds** and a full day of birding in the Davis Mountains. This is the most reliable location in North America to see **Montezuma Quail**, and we will make every reasonable attempt to find one. Madera Canyon Picnic Area has **Hepatic Tanager**, **Western Bluebird**, and **migrant warblers** including **Hermit** and **Black-throated Gray**. After a visit to Lake Balmorhea for **Snowy Plover**, **Wilson's Phalarope**, **waterfowl**, **gulls**, and **terns**, we'll try for **Western Screech-Owl** and **Common Poorwill** at dusk. A second night in Fort Davis.
- 3 Today's destination is Big Bend National Park. Along the way we're likely to see **Black Phoebe**, **Vermilion Flycatcher**, and **Phainopepla**. **Golden-fronted Woodpecker** and **Cactus Wren** should be easy in Marathon, with **Swainson's Hawk** along the highway. We'll enter Big Bend at Persimmon Gap, then go to the visitor center at Panther Junction where we may find **Golden Eagle** and **Lucifer Hummingbird**. **Javelina**, **Bobcat**, and even **Mountain Lion** are found here. Our next four nights are at Big Bend.
- 4 Boot Spring offers some of the best birding in Big Bend for **Neotropical migrants** and **local breeders**. We'll spend the day hiking along the South Rim Trail through Laguna Meadow and Boulder Meadow. **Colima Warbler** is the major attraction, as the Chisos Mountains provide *its only nesting habitat north of the Rio Grande*. A few additional species that we are likely to see include **Blue-throated Hummingbird**, **Swainson's Thrush**, **Virginia's Warbler**, and **Black-chinned Sparrow**. **White-throated Swifts** will perform their incredible mating flights. Additional high altitude species may include **Townsend's Solitaire**, **Painted Redstart**, and even **Williamson's Sapsucker**.

[Day 5 begins on page 3]

- 5 We'll drive to the eastern edge of the Park to begin our day of birding in Rio Grande Village. Here we should see **Verdin**, **Bushtit**, **Marsh Wren**, and **Painted Bunting**. **Greater Roadrunners** and **Turkey Vultures** walk around the campground like pets and may even join our picnic lunch. A very cooperative **Common Black-Hawk** has nested here in recent years. Dugout Wells is good for **Scaled Quail**, **Ladder-backed Woodpecker**, **Crissal Thrasher**, and **Black-throated Sparrow**. Some birding after dinner may produce **Elf Owl**, **Western Screech-Owl**, and maybe a nocturnal mammal or two. This will be our third night at Big Bend.
- 6 Today we'll explore the western portion of Big Bend, visiting the oasis at Sam Nail Ranch, Cottonwood Campground, and Blue Creek Canyon. Species of interest at these locations include **Scott's Oriole**, **Lucifer Hummingbird**, **Long-billed Thrasher**, **Gray Vireo**, and **Canyon Wren**. Migrants including **Blue Grosbeak**, **Painted Bunting**, and **Summer Tanager** often abound, and there is a chance for unusual migrants such as **Yellow-throated Warbler** and **Townsend's Warbler**. Tonight is our final night in Big Bend. It is a wonderful place to stay!
- 7 We'll take an early morning walk along the Window Trail that could yield great looks at **Scott's Oriole**, **Black-chinned Sparrow**, **Hammond's Flycatcher**, and perhaps a **Black-capped Vireo** that we found here on a past tour. As we proceed toward the western exit of the Park, we'll stop at Sam Nail Ranch to see if any new migrants have been enticed by the water that is pumped by the old windmill. Our next stop is Elephant Mountain Wildlife Management Area, where we have found **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, and **Crissal Thrasher** during our picnic lunch. With any luck we may see some of the **Desert Bighorn Sheep** that are propagated here for reintroduction programs. We then return to Fort Davis for one more night and another chance to see the exquisite **Montezuma Quail**.
- 8 After a look around Davis Mountains State Park, we'll make a return visit to Lake Balmorhea. Migrants come and go from the lake on a daily basis, so we are likely to see several newly arrived species. Some recent sightings have included **Long-billed Curlew**, **Common Loon**, **Cinnamon Teal**, and **Least Tern**. **Reddish Egret** has been a surprise visitor several times in the last few years. We'll picnic at the nearby state park, where the springs yield 26 MILLION gallons of water daily. We'll hope for a peek at **Virginia Rail** or **Sora** in the cienega, a **Western Tanager** or **Painted Bunting** in the mulberry tree, and perhaps a **Great Horned Owl** roosting behind the office, or a nearby **Burrowing Owl**. Then we'll drive to El Paso for our final night.



Western Grebe
-- John Puschock

[Day 9 begins on page 4]

9 We will head for the Fort Bliss sewage ponds near El Paso. This area more closely resembles a national wildlife refuge than any sewage ponds I have ever visited. There may be hundreds of **Wilson's Phalaropes** spinning in tight formation, **Olive-sided Flycatchers** working the snags, and a **Crissal Thrasher** lurking in a dry hedgerow. We have seen **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, **White-faced Ibis**, **Green-winged Teal**, and **Gadwall**. **Gambel's Quail** is quite likely, as are **Northern Harrier** and **Harris's Hawk**. **Bobcat** was an excellent find! We'll spend our morning at this exciting location before returning to El Paso International Airport for our afternoon flights home.

* * * * *

Please consider joining the TEXAS HILL COUNTRY TOUR that immediately precedes BIG BEND. Texas Hill dates are 26-30 April 2017. After TEXAS HILL we fly to El Paso to begin BIG BEND. There is a **\$200 discount** for participating in both the Texas Hill Country and Big Bend Tours.

* * * * *

A map of the Big Bend Tour route can be seen by clicking on this link:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?ll=30.410782%2C-104.655762&spn=5.134221%2C9.876709&msa=0&mid=13n_OM8c3SwkrrMq03J4wpP3eg

* * * * *

This **Bobcat** was barely hiding behind five blades of grass!

- - Paul Kunstek,
tour participant



[Final details are on page 5]

Leader This trip will be led by **Bob Schutsky**, who has been to **Big Bend** and the **Davis Mountains** several times. Join him for a great birding adventure!

Price \$3175 per person based upon double occupancy. Single accommodations are available at an extra charge of \$525. We will take a maximum of seven participants. On rare occasion we may extend the maximum to ten participants.

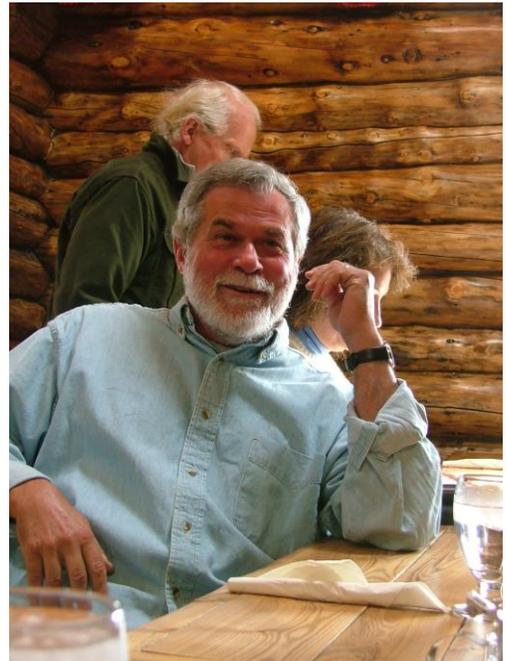
Includes Expert guide service, entrance fees, lodging for all eight nights, **ALL MEALS**, and all ground transportation within Texas. **ALL tips** are also included in the tour fee, except for anything extra that you may wish to give to your tour leader(s).

Price does not include airfare to and from El Paso, Texas. Bird Treks will, upon request, help you to obtain the best possible air transportation. Also not included are the costs of alcoholic beverages and items of a personal nature.

Deposit A \$700 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is payable on 28 February 2017. Big Bend National Park is a popular and spectacular birding destination. Send your deposit soon to assure your spot on this tour. An additional \$300 deposit will hold your place on the Texas Hill Country pre-tour.

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 and is a veteran birder. Contact her at Bailey Travel / Travel Time toll-free at **1-800-224-5399**, direct line at **717-855-2128**, or e-mail Lori at **lori@trvltime.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 will be a small fee for these services.

Refund and 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 30-60 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** and mention **BIRD TREKS ACCAM # F021096**. You can apply via the Internet at **www.allianztravelinsurance.com** or by phone at **1-866-884-3556**.



Bob Schutsky is your scheduled tour leader.
- - *Mary Brenner, tour participant*