

BIRD TREKS

TEXAS HILL COUNTRY on the EDWARDS PLATEAU

Home of two VERY RARE SONGBIRDS!

Dates Wednesday, 26 April through Sunday, 30 April 2017 5 days and 4 nights
All four nights are in **Concan**, one of the best birding spots in the region.

We'll visit The Texas Hill Country, famous for its **Golden-cheeked Warblers** and **Black-capped Vireos**, **Cave Swallow** colonies, and gorgeous scenery.

Lost Maples State Natural Area, one of the most scenic locations in all of Texas. As an added bonus, it contains *prime habitat* for **Golden-cheeked Warbler**, **Black-capped Vireo**, and the diminutive **Green Kingfisher**.

The **Frio Bat Cave**, home of **12 million Mexican Free-tailed Bats**. We'll witness the spectacle of the bats leaving the nursery cave as they depart to hunt for the night. And, the added spectacle as they are hunted by local raptors.

Additional areas and varied habitats such as **Garner State Park** and **Kerr Wildlife Management Area**, where we will find many exciting species in beautiful locations.

Texas specialties that we are likely to see include . . .

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
Zone-tailed Hawk
Chuck-will's-widow
Black-chinned Hummingbird
Green Kingfisher
Golden-fronted Woodpecker
Ladder-backed Woodpecker
Vermilion Flycatcher
Brown-crested Flycatcher
Cave Swallow
Western Scrub-Jay
Bushtit
Canyon Wren
Bewick's Wren
Long-billed Thrasher

Black-capped Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Bell's Vireo
Yellow-throated Warbler
Golden-cheeked Warbler
Yellow-breasted Chat
Summer Tanager
Blue Grosbeak
Painted Bunting
Indigo Bunting
Olive Sparrow
Rufous-crowned Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Dickcissel
Hooded Oriole



Dickcissels sing from the fields.

- - Tom Amico

[Day 1 begins on page 2]

TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

26 - 30 April 2017

Day Agenda

- 1 We will meet at about noon at the San Antonio Airport and begin our adventure. Mature junipers are a source of nesting material for **Golden-cheeked Warblers**; **Black-capped Vireos** nest in the thick understory of un-grazed oak thickets. Our search for these two birds will take us into some of the most beautiful landscape in all of Texas. **All four nights will be at Neal's & Buchanan Lodges** in Concan, where we have observed a male **Black-capped Vireo** singing *five feet from our cabin window*, and had the privilege of watching a nesting pair *feeding young* as we gazed in awe through the spotting scope! This elusive bird may also *bathe at a water drip* at cabin # 61, along with many other species. **Bobcat** and **Collared Peccary** have visited this same water drip and feeding area. The **Bobcat** was carrying a (very dead) rat!
- 2 We'll spend most of the day birding the scenic Lost Maples State Natural Area. **Golden-cheeked Warbler** nests here and may be found singing near **Yellow-throated Vireo**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Black-and-white Warbler**, and a nice assortment of additional songbirds. There will be **Black Phoebe** along the creek, where we'll also watch and listen closely for **Green Kingfisher**. **Black-chinned Hummingbird** is reliable at the feeders and **Zone-tailed Hawk** and **Common Raven** nest here. Twice we have found **Mississippi Kites**, and once a very cooperative **Sora**. After a hearty Texas dinner at Neal's Cafe, we will re-focus our attention to another winged creature, the **Mexican Free-tailed Bat**. We'll visit Rio Frio, a nursery cave where we can also expect great looks at **200 Cave Swallows** that share the same roost site. Then we'll watch in awe as **12 million bats** emerge in the last hour of daylight. We're also likely to see **Red-tailed and Swainson's Hawks**, and other raptors feeding upon the bats, and possibly find a **Ringtail** (a nocturnal mammal), as we have in the past. After dark we'll search for **Chuck-will's-widow** and **Nine-banded Armadillo**. What a day!



Golden-cheeked Warbler

- - Barry Ulman, tour participant

- 3 We'll begin our day on the grounds of our lodge, some of the best habitat there is for **Black-capped Vireo**. We're also likely to find **Bell's Vireo**, **Hooded and Scott's Orioles**, **Painted Bunting**, and possibly a **Lazuli Bunting**. Bald Cypress along the Frio River at Garner State Park may yield some **Neotropical migrants**, plus **Yellow-throated Warbler** and **Bushtit**. We are also likely to see **Dickcissel**, **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, **Lark Sparrow**, **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck**, and **Crested Caracara**. Recently we found a **Tropical Parula**! We'll return to Neal's Lodges, a fine outdoor dinner, and the late day calls of **Chuck-will's-widow** and possibly a **Great Horned, Barn, Barred, or Eastern Screech-Owl**.

- 4 If we still need to see **Black-capped Vireo**, we'll go to Kerr Wildlife Management Area, where it is relatively easy to find. One year we had a female on a nest with its mate nearby. We saw at least five others in the same general area. If we've already had good looks at **Black-capped Vireo**, we may opt to visit the Uvalde area for a variety of shorebirds, waterfowl, and some nice sparrows. Our final night in Concan.

- 5 We'll pack the van after breakfast and head toward San Antonio for our flights home. The drive to the airport may produce a pair of **Harris's Hawks** as it has in the past. Those continuing on for the **Big Bend Tour** will fly to El Paso. There is a **\$200 discount** if you participate in both the Texas Hill Country and Big Bend Tours. The Big Bend itinerary is listed separately.

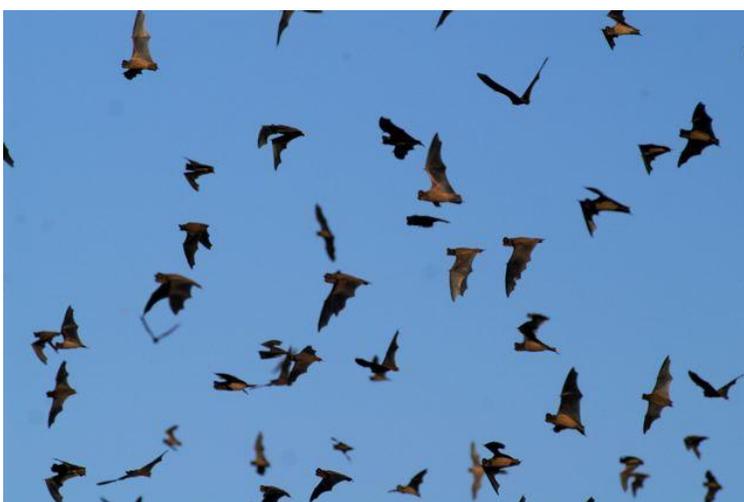
Click on the following link for a **map of the tour route**:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1-Hz0j34u8YroDo1LaR66Mp-Nx8Y&hl=en>

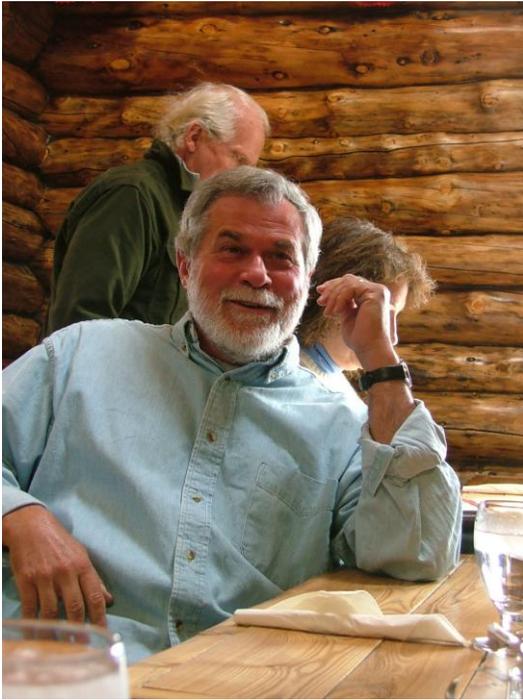
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Mexican Free-tailed Bats
exiting the Frio bat
cave to feed.

- - *Barry Ulman,*
tour participant



[Important details on page 4]



Leader **Bob Schutsky** will lead your **Texas Hill Country Tour**. Bob has birded the Hill Country many times in the past. He knows how to find the specialty birds of this beautiful area.

Price \$1995 per person based upon double occupancy. Single accommodations are available at an extra charge of \$285. 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 all four nights, **ALL meals**, all ground transportation within Texas, and entrance fees. **ALL tips** are also included in the tour fee, except for anything extra that you may wish to give to your tour leader(s).

Does not include the cost of alcoholic beverages or items of a personal nature. Also not included is the cost of airfare to and from San Antonio.

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.

Deposit A \$400 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is due 26 February 2017.

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 by going to **www.allianztravelinsurance.com** or by phone at **1-800-284-8300**.

Long-billed Thrasher,
Hill Country specialty.

- - *Barry Ulman,*
tour participant

