

Arizona Monsoon Madness

Birding & Nature in a Season of Wonder

With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



July 31 – Aug. 6, 2021

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The summer monsoon rains turn Southeastern Arizona's mountains and deserts a surprisingly verdant green. During this "second spring," witness up to 14 species of hummingbirds, hear grassland sparrows singing on territory, and spot breeding birds of Mexican affinity just outside your door. Walk in cool, shaded canyons cloaked in oaks and mixed conifers. These are perfect for mid-day hikes; during the early mornings and evenings we explore desert and grassland terrain.

Spend two nights south of Tucson at Amado, where we explore lush canyons of the Santa Rita Mountains and nearby Arivaca Cienega, part of the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge. Traveling south and east, we visit legendary birding sites such as Kino Springs, The Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia, The Nature Conservancy's Ramsey Canyon Preserve, and an excellent wetland area at Whitewater Draw. We've booked four nights at the delightful Casa de San Pedro from which we explore cool, lush canyons of the Huachuca Mountains in search of Mexican Spotted Owl, Red-faced and other warblers, butterflies, dragonflies, and more. In the surrounding Sky Island foothills, we find promise of hummingbirds galore at both public and private feeding stations.

Naturalist Journeys, LLC is an official permittee of the Coronado National Forest, following Leave No Trace principles. We also abide by the ABA's Code of Ethics for birding.



Tour Highlights

- Explore Southeastern Arizona's biodiversity at its peak (we time this meticulously)
- Enjoy two delightful lodges that treat us with special meals and hospitality
- Visit Old Bisbee, with its mining history and eclectic locals
- Experience many photo opportunities — colorful birds and other wildlife abound

Tour Summary

6-Night / 7-Day Tour w/ Carlos Sanchez
\$2390 DBL / \$2890 SGL, from Tucson
Airport is Tucson International (TUS)

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Itinerary

Sat., July 31 Arrival in Tucson

Arrive in Tucson today, a vibrant city surrounded by mountain ranges that rise from the Sonoran Desert floor. Please plan to arrive by 1:00 PM.

From our gathering point at Tucson International Airport (TUS), we head southward to Amado, located between the Santa Rita and Atascosa mountains. Here, desert scrub and grasslands are home to typical southwestern species such as Gila Woodpecker, Pyrrhuloxia, Verdin, Roadrunner, and Cactus Wren, however the stars are Cassin's, Botteri's, and Rufous-winged Sparrows — all in full song as they breed during the monsoon season.

Tonight, in Amado, we stay at a delightful hotel where we settle in and enjoy a welcome dinner, an overview of the week ahead, and the first bird sightings of the trip.

Accommodations at Amado Territory Inn, Amado (D)

Sun., Aug. 1 Madera Canyon | Arivaca Cienega

The first portion of our drive takes us through mesquite grasslands — home to several species of nesting sparrows. Soon, we ascend the west slope of the Santa Ritas, visiting Madera Canyon, home to Elegant



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Trogon, Arizona Woodpecker, Bridled Titmouse, and during recent years, nesting Flame-colored Tanager. In the canyons, thistle, basket flower, and milkweed attract butterflies such as Two-tailed Swallowtail, Mexican Yellow, Juniper Hairstreak, Bordered Patch, Red-spotted Admiral, Dull Firetip, and Moon-marked and Gold-costa Skippers.

After lunch and a short break at our hotel, we head west to Arivaca Cienega, a part of Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, where we investigate the boardwalk trail. Here, we often find Javelina and beautiful Black-bellied Whistling Duck as we gaze at the spire of sacred Baboquivari Peak on lands of the Tohono O'odham people. With luck, we may find Thick-billed Kingbird, migrant warblers or, overhead, a hunting Peregrine Falcon. At the Cienega (a permanent marsh), we expect to see dragonflies such as Flame and Widow Skimmers and perhaps a very local Turquoise Darter.

As sunset draws near, we return to Amado where you have a choice to dine at a restaurant close to our hotel, or venture down to Tubac or a local steakhouse for dinner.

Accommodations at Amado Territory Inn, Amado (B,L)

Mon., Aug. 2

Kino Springs | Patagonia | Hereford

After breakfast we venture east towards the little hamlet of Patagonia, site of one of The Nature Conservancy's very first preserves. Our first stop, just beyond Nogales, is at the ponds of the Kino Springs Golf Course, where we hope to see several locally uncommon species including Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Gray Hawk, Tropical Kingbird, and Varied Bunting.

As we enter Patagonia, we stop at the municipal butterfly garden — close enough to the Mexican



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border to host an unusual stray. A Mexican visitor that appears during the summer rainy season is the Large Orange Sulphur — often encountered in the area's butterfly gardens.

In the town of Patagonia we have lunch and then visit hummingbird feeders for their usually reliable Violet-crowned Hummingbird. We also try for some of Sonoita Creek's nesting birds such as Gray and Zone-tailed Hawks, Thick-billed Kingbird, Brown-crested Flycatcher, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Passing through Sierra Vista, we arrive at Casa de San Pedro — a delightful B&B on the west bank of the San Pedro River.



Casa de San Pedro is a nationally acclaimed inn, 90 miles from Tucson and inches from heaven. Guests have labeled it the most upscale bed and breakfast in Southeast Arizona. We find it the ideal location for our group, with meeting space, incredible hospitality, active bird feeders, a pond, and the San Pedro River right outside our door. From the Casa, we can explore cottonwoods that fringe the river, as well as surrounding grasslands and the nearby Huachuca Mountains, a Mecca for hummingbird enthusiasts. You soon discover why so many guests return here again and again. (www.bedandbirds.com)

Tonight's dinner is catered at the Inn.

Accommodations at Casa de San Pedro, Hereford (B,L,D)

Tues., Aug. 3 Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area | Bisbee | Miller Canyon

We check the Casa's "backyard" of riparian cottonwoods and mesquite grassland for species such as Lucy's Warbler and Abert's Towhee, have breakfast, and then head east to the Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area. Depending on water levels, Whitewater may be one of the only local sites hosting shorebirds, and generally has an assortment of butterflies and dragonflies. The surrounding shrubby flats are home to Bendire's Thrasher, Black-throated Sparrow, Cactus Wren, Scaled and Gambel's Quails, Roadrunner, and Pyrrhuloxia. We also watch for early Brewer's and Vesper Sparrows.

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Our next stop is the historic copper mining town of Bisbee. Participants may enjoy a leisurely lunch at the restaurant of your choice, time to shop a bit, or visit the Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum — an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. After lunch, we drive west, returning to the Huachuca Mountains.



At Miller Canyon, we visit Beatty's orchard and B&B where, on several occasions, fourteen species of hummingbirds have been seen in one day. Beatty's is the most reliable site in Arizona to see White-eared Hummingbird; while waiting for them to appear, we should see other species including Blue-throated, Broad-billed, Rufous, and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds. Butterflies are usually numerous around Beatty's garden and pond. Here too, we have an opportunity to purchase several varieties of apples grown on the property.



Our dinner is at a favorite local restaurant in Hereford. Afterwards, we head up the canyon a short distance and try for Whiskered Screech-Owl. *Accommodations at Casa de San Pedro, Hereford (B,D)*



Weds., Aug. 4

San Pedro River | Fort Huachuca

After an early breakfast, we drive north a bit to the San Pedro House where we can walk along the San Pedro River and an adjacent pond. Birds of interest here include Swainson's and Gray Hawks, Black Phoebe, Cassin's Kingbird, Bell's Vireo, Lucy's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, and several species of grassland sparrows. Rarely, a Green Kingfisher is present along the river or on the pond. If water levels are very high and the trail is not accessible, we may visit another site along the river, such as St. David.

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In the afternoon, we visit Fort Huachuca, bringing a picnic lunch from Sierra Vista. Please note that a visit to Fort Huachuca will involve a security check, and you need photo ID. Special arrangements for an escort are required for non-U.S. citizens, so please let us know if that is a need when you sign up.

A stop in either Garden or Huachuca Canyon offer more opportunities to see such species as Dusky-capped and Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, Hepatic Tanager, Painted Redstart, and, if we're very lucky, Montezuma Quail. Butterflies are often numerous and special dragonflies and damselflies here include Apache Spiketail, Neon Skimmer, Sierra Madre Dancer, and the gaudy Painted Damsel.



Fort Huachuca, constructed in 1877, was one of a chain of forts established to guard southern Arizona against the Chiricahua Apaches, led by Geronimo. The fort was also the headquarters of the famed 10th Cavalry, the "Buffalo Soldiers," one of the Army's elite black cavalry corps. Today the fort is still an active Army post specializing in military intelligence training. It covers more than 70,000 acres, 110 of which are the "Old Post Area." As time and interest dictate, we may visit the fort's historic district that contains many notable buildings. Among these are the Pershing House, an adobe structure built in 1884 and traditionally the Post Commander's quarters; the "Old Post" Barracks, built c. 1882 – 1883; Leonard Wood Hall, a large two-story building used as the hospital; and the Fort Huachuca Historical Museum, an adobe and stone building originally used as the post chapel.

Dinner is at a nearby restaurant.

Accommodations at Casa de San Pedro, Hereford (B,L,D)

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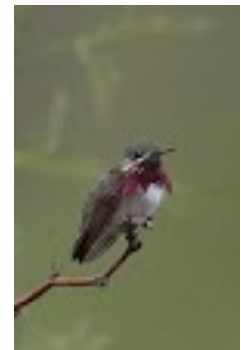
Thurs., Aug. 5

Carr, Ash & Ramsey Canyons

After a delicious (some say outrageous!) breakfast at Casa de San Pedro, we head out to upper Carr Canyon, driving switchbacks up a mountain road to search for the birds of the high pine forest. Here we may find Steller's Jay, Hairy Woodpecker, Greater Pewee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher (extremely local in the U.S.), Hutton's Vireo, Black-throated Gray, Olive and Grace's Warblers, Yellow-eyed Junco, and — with luck — a Northern Goshawk. Beautiful Ponderosa Pines dominate our trail, which is punctuated by exhibits about the silver mines run here over 100 years ago on a geologically dramatic cliff known as "The Reef."

Descending Carr Canyon, we continue on to feeders at the Ash Canyon Bed & Breakfast, a delightful spot where (from comfortable chairs) we hope to see Lucifer Hummingbird, as well as more regular Anna's, Black-chinned, and possibly migrant Rufous Hummingbirds. Acorn, Ladder-backed, and Arizona Woodpeckers, Mexican Jay, White-winged Dove, and up to three species of orioles (including Scott's Oriole) are all expected at the feeders. One of our guides lives just down the road and we visit his yard, which has produced over 100 species of butterflies and nearly 160 species of birds (including 11 kinds of hummingbirds).

After a restaurant lunch, we visit The Nature Conservancy Preserve at Ramsey Canyon — one of the first well-known birding sites in Southeast Arizona. Here, Ramsey Creek descends through oak



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woodlands, its banks lined with massive Arizona Sycamores — the favored nesting trees of Elegant Trogon. We also hope to see Wild Turkey, Painted Redstart, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Black-throated Gray and other warblers, and a variety of colorful hummingbirds at close range. Walk the trails, browse the bookstore and gift shop, or park yourself under a tall, bending sycamore to wait for the birds to come to you! Butterflies occur here in abundance, as do a number of reptiles, amphibians, and dragonflies.

This evening's dinner is at the Casa de San Pedro, and we celebrate our adventures!
Accommodations at Casa de San Pedro, Hereford (B,L,D)

Fri., Aug. 6 Departures from Tucson

After our final breakfast and a bit of feeder watching at the Casa de San Pedro, we drive to Tucson International Airport for departing flights. (B)

Guide Carlos Sanchez



Born in Miami, Florida, Carlos has had a fascination with wildlife since childhood. In college he began to bird in earnest throughout Florida, South America, and even Australia. Currently, Carlos sits on the board of the Tropical Audubon Society, is a regular contributor to the birding blog 10,000 Birds, and leads local tours through his company, EcoAvian Tours. He has also been a resident guide at lodges in both Ecuador and Brazil.

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Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with [Allianz Travel Insurance](#). Their website will show a grid of tour cost and your age category for you to make selections. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Travel Information

Plan to arrive in Tucson, Arizona, on July 31 no later than 1:00 PM. Please plan your departing flights for after NOON on August 6.

Cost of the Journey

Cost of the journey is \$2390 DBL per person / \$2890 SGL from Tucson.

This cost includes all accommodations, meals as specified in the itinerary, professional guide services, other park and program entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses.

Tour cost does not include: round-trip transportation from your home city to Tucson, optional activities or items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone charges, house cleaners, gratuities, or beverages from the bar.

Group Size

Maximum of 12, minimum of 4. Tour price is based on 8 persons, with fewer than 8 a small group surcharge (typically \$100 – \$300) may apply. With 9 or more participants, a second guide will join.

Photo Credits

Dull Firetip Butterfly, Pat Owens; SE Arizona, Naturalist Journeys Stock; Montezuma Quail, Peg Abbott (PA); Elegant Trogon, PA; Mexican Spotted Owl, Greg Smith (GS); Gila Woodpecker, Janice Petko; Rattlesnake, John Rosner (JR); Flame-colored Tanager, GS; White-eared Hummingbird, GS; Mexican Jay, Naturalist Journeys Stock; Summer Tanager, Tom Dove (TD); Casa de San Pedro, courtesy of the Inn; Broad-billed Hummingbird, Evelyn Earlougher; Lucy's Warbler, PA; Painted Redstart, PA; Blue-throated Hummingbird, Steve Wolfe; Spiny-tailed Iguana, GS; Western Tanager, GS; Calliope Hummingbird in Flowers, Karen LeMay; Zebra-tailed Lizard, GS; Tree of Birds, Naturalist Journeys Stock; Claret Cup, GS; Black-throated Gray, Naturalist Journeys Stock; Casa de San Pedro, courtesy of the Inn; Scott's Oriole, Woody Wheeler; Calliope Hummingbird, GS; Gila Monster, JR.

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