



# WINTER SOUTHERN ARIZONA

*January 18 - 24, 2027*

Somewhat surprisingly, winter is one of the very best times to bird southeastern Arizona. Many of the highly sought Arizona specialty birds, such as Gilded Flicker, Arizona and Gila woodpeckers, Mexican Jay, Bendire's and Crissal thrashers, Bridled Titmouse, Painted Redstart, Yellow-eyed Junco, and Rufous-winged Sparrow are resident and readily found at this season. Raptors are present in greater numbers and diversity than at other times of the year. Sparrows abound in the desert flats and grasslands areas with over fifteen species possible. Desert thrashers are just beginning to breed and are perhaps easier to see in late winter than at any other season.

To top it all off, winter has proven to be the absolute best time to encounter vagrant species from Mexico. Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Ruddy Ground-Dove, and Rufous-backed Robin have become



nearly annual visitors in recent years. Rufous-capped Warbler, after a drop in occurrences, is increasing in frequency again. Other exotic species such as Streak-backed Oriole and Nutting's Flycatcher have made periodic appearances. While none of these rarities are to be expected, this is prime time for a stray to occur. In short, winter in southeastern Arizona is a birder's paradise.



*Pajarito Mountains, Arizona © Barry Zimmer*

Our exact schedule will be flexible (to allow for rarity searches), but we plan to cover four of the best and most varied regions in this corner of the state, using Tucson as our base for all six nights. Generally mild weather, an abundance of birds, and hopefully some surprising rarities should be in store.

This tour may be combined with our “Winter Southern California” tour January 12-18, 2027 which immediately precedes this trip with five full days of superb birding from San Diego to the Salton Sea.

## January 18, Day 1: Arrival in Tucson

Participants may plan to arrive in Tucson at any time today and proceed to our hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. We will meet in the hotel lobby at 5:30 p.m. for a brief orientation session followed by dinner.

**NIGHT:** Hampton Inn and Suites, Tucson Airport

## January 19, Day 2: Madera Canyon/Green Valley/Montosa Canyon

Today will be devoted to exploring the various habitats of the Santa Rita Mountains, as well as the grassland and desert slopes below these mountains. Much of our time will be spent in famous Madera Canyon where a wide variety of woodland species are possible. Feeders in the canyon should harbor

Acorn Woodpecker, Mexican Jay, Bridled Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Dark-eyed and Yellow-eyed juncos, Pine Siskins, and likely some over wintering hummingbirds such as Rivoli's or Anna's. In the surrounding oak woodlands, we will make a special effort to locate the uncommon Arizona Woodpecker, as well as Red-naped Sapsucker, Hutton's Vireo, and hopefully, an over wintering Painted Redstart. Even the iconic Elegant Trogon has made winter time appearances in recent years. If any are present this winter, we will make a special effort to locate it.

Desert grasslands and rocky draws below the canyon could yield a wide variety of sparrows, including the highly sought Rufous-winged Sparrow, and more widespread species such as Black-throated and Brewer's. Other species possible include Golden Eagle (very uncommon), Hammond's Flycatcher, Canyon and Rock wrens, Townsend's Solitaire (sporadic), Western Bluebird, and Canyon, Green-tailed, and Spotted towhees. In nearby Green Valley, the xeriscaped residential areas should produce such desert species as Gambel's Quail, Costa's Hummingbird (uncommon), Gilded Flicker (declining), Gila Woodpecker, Cactus Wren, Curve-billed Thrasher, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher and Pyrrhuloxia.

**NIGHT:** Hampton Inn and Suites, Tucson Airport



*Arizona Woodpecker, Madera Canyon, Arizona, © Barry Zimmer*

## January 20, Day 3: North Tucson/Santa Cruz Flats

Sweetwater Wetlands in northwest Tucson is a lovely oasis in the midst of the often-harsh desert. A series of ponds here attracts a variety of waterfowl which should include Cinnamon Teal. Other likely species include Mexican Duck, Common Gallinule, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Verdin, and Abert's Towhee. Further north, the Redrock cattle pens play winter host to good numbers of spectacular

Yellow-headed Blackbirds. In addition, Lark Buntings often frequent the desert areas adjacent to the cattle pens. Some years this site has been good for the increasingly reliable Ruddy Ground-Dove as well.

A short distance away lies the Santa Cruz Flats. Sod farms, agricultural fields, and desert scrub combine to form an excellent birding area. Small numbers of the endangered Mountain Plover winter in this area most years, and, although they can be devilishly hard to find, are a real possibility (we have about a 40% success rate). Other species to look for here include Ferruginous Hawk, Crested Caracara (very uncommon) and Prairie Falcon. Nearby desert scrub provides chances for Greater Roadrunner, Burrowing Owl, Mountain Bluebird (irregular), Bendire's Thrasher, Sage Thrasher (irregular), Loggerhead Shrike, and a variety of sparrows, including Vesper, Savannah, Sagebrush (uncommon), Brewer's, and White-crowned. The late afternoon will be open to chase after any unusual species in the Tucson area.

**NIGHT:** Hampton Inn and Suites, Tucson Airport



*Burrowing Owl, Santa Cruz Flats, Arizona © Barry Zimmer*

## January 21, Day 4: Patagonia/Nogales

Most of today will be spent in the bird rich riparian habitats that line Sonoita Creek and the Santa Cruz River. Cottonwood forests along the Santa Cruz River often harbor Common Ground-Dove, the spectacular Vermilion Flycatcher, Gray Flycatcher, and skulking Crissal Thrashers and Abert's Towhees.

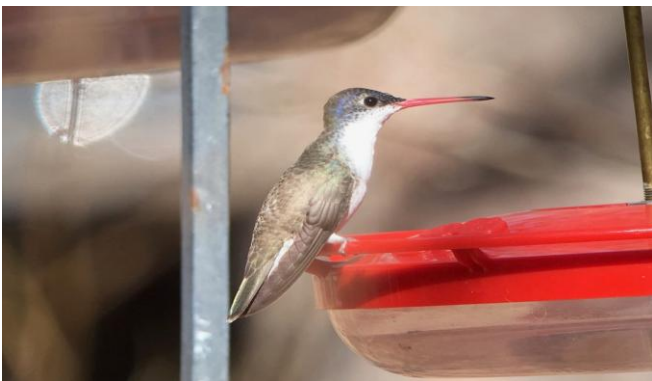
Nearby Patagonia Lake State Park has been one of Arizona's top winter birding hotspots the past several years. Rarities such as Rufous-backed Robin, Elegant Trogon, Black-capped Gnatcatcher (a pair was resident but often hard to locate for almost two decades before disappearing the last several years) and Nutting's Flycatcher have made appearances. While none of these are to be expected, regular fare at this spot includes Neotropic Cormorant; Common Merganser; Sora; Virginia Rail; Gila Woodpecker; Gray, Hammond's, and Dusky (uncommon) flycatchers; Verdin; Bewick's and Marsh wrens; Phainopepla; and Lincoln's Sparrow.

In the town of Patagonia, we will visit a wonderful set of feeders that are generally swarming with birds. Possibilities here include Inca Dove (declining), Lazuli Bunting (sporadic), Abert's and Green-tailed towhees, and Lesser Goldfinch among others. There is also the chance of some over wintering hummingbirds (in some years including the flashy Violet-crowned) at this location. Vagrant Ruddy Ground Doves have made appearances at this location in recent years. Late in the afternoon we will likely visit the scenic Pajarito Mountains, where possibilities include Rock & Canyon wrens, Canyon Towhee, Rufous-crowned Sparrow and perhaps even a Golden Eagle.

Following an early dinner, we will do some owling in hopes of locating Western Screech-Owl. Though much less likely, Whiskered Screech-Owl is also a slim possibility.

**NIGHT:** Hampton Inn and Suites, Tucson Airport

## January 22, Day 5: Sulphur Springs Valley



*Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Patagonia, Arizona © Barry*

A longer drive today will lead us to the birdy Sulphur Springs Valley. This area is renowned for its great raptor viewing with uncommon species such as Ferruginous Hawk and Prairie Falcon likely during the course of the day. Red-tailed Hawks and Northern Harriers abound, and there should be a sprinkling of accipiters as well. Toward the southern end of the valley large concentrations of Sandhill Cranes (about 20,000) gather around Whitewater Draw. The sights and sounds of thousands of

cranes at once is always a highlight. Whitewater also attracts a good variety of waterfowl and may harbor Snow and Ross's goose, Wilson's Snipe, Horned Lark, Black Phoebe, and Vermilion Flycatcher. The grasslands and agricultural areas of the valley also host large numbers of wintering sparrows with Lark Bunting and Brewer's Sparrow among the expected species. Other targets here include Scaled Quail, Great Horned and Barn owls, Bendire's Thrasher, Crissal Thrasher, and possibly longspurs.

**NIGHT:** Hampton Inn and Suites, Tucson Airport

## January 23, Day 6: Potluck Day; Possible Visit to Phoenix

The final day of our trip will be set aside to chase any rare Mexican vagrants that may be present or to pursue more regular species that have previously eluded us. If there are no vagrants to be chased, we might venture further afield either northward or eastward (either of which would require a longer drive). The most likely destination on this day would be a return to the Santa Rita Mountains. The plans for this day will be left wide open until likely the day before.

**NIGHT:** Hampton Inn and Suites, Tucson Airport

## January 24, Day 7: Departures for Home

Participants may plan to depart for home at any time today. If you have time and plan on extending your stay in Tucson, you are encouraged to visit the unique Sonora Desert Museum, west of Tucson. A remarkable exhibit of living flora and fauna can be observed here, all from the Sonora Desert of southern Arizona and northwestern Mexico.

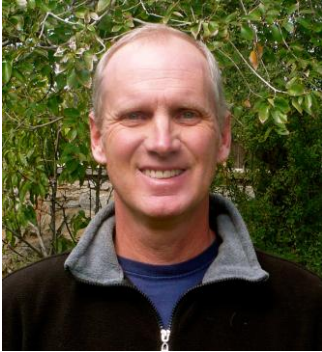


*Vermilion Flycatcher, Continental, Arizona, © Barry Zimmer*

## **ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION**

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 12 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Barry Zimmer and TBA



Barry Zimmer has been birding since the age of eight. His main areas of expertise lie in North and Central America, but his travels have taken him throughout much of the world, including such exotic locales as Japan, Russia, Madagascar, Africa, and New Zealand. Barry is a longtime member of the New Mexico Bird Records Committee, and served on the Texas Bird Records Committee for 12 years. He has coauthored three books: *Birds of the Trans-Pecos*, *A Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley*, and *Birds and Birdfinding in the El Paso Area*. Barry has a keen interest in nature photography, having captured over 1,600 species of birds on film. His other interests include sports (a diehard Red Sox fan), cooking, and movies. He received his degree in psychology at the University of Texas in El Paso. Barry resides in El Paso with his wife, Yvonne, and their daughter, Alexandra.

**EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS:** Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the tour is **\$3,295** per person in double occupancy from Tucson, Arizona. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 7, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Tucson and return, airport departure taxes, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$480**.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. We accept MasterCard and Visa.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits,

second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (September 20, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

## CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

### **CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:**

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

### **CANCELLATION BY VENT:**

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g)

strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends Medjet and its MedjetAssist® plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

### **About Ripcord**

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or

political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.\*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: <https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

\*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19):**

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

### **About MedjetAssist**

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company's primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: [Medjet.com/VentBird](https://Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per-person fees apply for each set of

travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.\* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

\*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

CONDITIONS: Breakfast will be available at 6 AM each day at the hotel. Departures will vary from 6:45 AM to 7:15 AM depending on our destination for the day. Lunches will generally be in restaurants, but we will likely have at least one picnic. Most days we should return to the hotel around 5 PM.

Conditions for weather, hikes and clothing described below.

**CLIMATE AND ALTITUDE:** The weather in Arizona is generally quite pleasant at this season. Daytime highs average in the low to mid 60s and nighttime lows in the mid to upper 30s. Because of the higher elevation, however, temperatures could be cooler, possibly dipping down into the 20s at night and not surpassing the upper 40s to low 50s in the day. Rain is possible at this season, as is snow, if it gets cold enough. One year we had two days in the low 80s and another year experienced a snowstorm in Madera Canyon, so a wide range of temperatures is possible. Altitudinal changes will vary from about 2,200 feet to near 6,000 feet elevation. Most walks on this tour will be over short distances (a mile or less) and will be conducted at a moderate to leisurely pace. If we opt for a hike up Florida Canyon, that will be a short (half mile each way) but very rugged hike requiring some scrambling over large rocks.

**CLOTHING:** Basic field clothing is appropriate for this tour. A combination of long-sleeved and short-sleeved shirts may be useful given the widely varying temperatures. Cool mornings will call for sweaters, light jackets, and possibly a heavy jacket, gloves, and a warm hat up in the mountains. Be sure to have a comfortable pair of walking shoes or hiking boots and a second pair of lightweight shoes. Casual attire is acceptable for all restaurants in which we dine. Lightweight raingear is also recommended.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

**HEALTH:** VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19.

**Insect Repellents – Insects are generally not a problem on this winter tour. However, please note the following:** There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

**SCHEDULE:** Most mornings we will have breakfast around 6:00 a.m. Birding will generally conclude in the afternoon by 5:30 p.m. There will be one evening owling excursion that will likely last until 10 p.m. **As previously noted, our schedule will be flexible on this trip to allow searches for Mexican vagrants that may be present. Alternative locations may be substituted for those listed and the order of the schedule may be switched around.** There is a slight possibility of a trip to Phoenix on the final day. **If we do go to Phoenix, a 4:50 a.m. breakfast followed by a 5:30 a.m. departure would be necessary.**

**Bathrooms will be readily available throughout most of the tour; however, none are available on the Santa Cruz Flats. After an early morning pit stop on that day, bush breaks will be the only option until mid afternoon.**

**SUGGESTED READING:** A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

***Field Guides and General Reading:***

Beadle, David and James Rising. *Sparrows of the United States and Canada; The Photographic Guide*.  
London: Academic Press, 2002.

Dunn, John L. *A Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. 6th ed. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2010.

Epple, Anne Orth. *A Field Guide to the Plants of Arizona*. The Globe Pequot Press, 1995.

Kaufmann, Kenn. *Mammals of North America*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004

Sibley, David. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Second Edition. New York: Knopf, 2014.

Sibley, David. *The Sibley Guide to Birds of Western North America*. New York: Knopf, 2003.

Twiet, Susan J. *The Great Southwest Nature Factbook*. Washington: Alaska Northwest books, 2002.

Wheeler, Brian K. and William S. Clark. *A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors*. San Diego, California: Academic Press, 1995

Zimmer, Kevin J. *Birding in the American West*. Cornell University Press, 2000.

**TIPPING:** An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, \$5 to \$10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) \$15 to \$20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

**RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on June 47, 2025 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant’s Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will

have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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