

ITINERARY
ARIZONA NIGHTBIRDS & MORE
May 3-7, 2018



We've been able to find Spotted Owl quite regularly on our Arizona tours. These large birds are often seen on day-roosts, and they will generally allow birders to approach fairly closely. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.

We include here information for those interested in the 2018 Field Guides Arizona Nightbirds & More tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by the guide on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

This short tour is dedicated to the pursuit and detailed observation of owls and nightjars in the premier nightbirding destination in North America: Southeast Arizona. Our search will take us from dry, mesquite-lined washes in the desert to riparian woodlands and pine/oak and spruce/fir forests in the Huachuca and Chiricahua mountains as we seek nine or more species of owls and up to four species of nightjars and nighthawks. Sunset of each evening will find us afield as we work on spotlighting such special birds as Whiskered and Western screech-owls, the elusive Flammulated Owl, Elf Owl, Mexican Whip-poor-will (a recent split from Eastern Whip-poor-will), possibly the rare Buff-collared Nightjar, and Common

Poorwill. Some other species are more likely to be seen by the light of day: Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Northern (Mountain) Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma gnoma*), Burrowing Owl, Spotted Owl, Long-eared Owl (rare and erratic), and Lesser Nighthawk.

But our birding won't be restricted to the nighttime. We should see upwards of 150 species on this short trip, including a fine sampling of the many Southeast Arizona specialties. Outings in the Tucson area, Madera Canyon, the Huachuca Mountains, the Sulphur Springs Valley, and the rich Chiricahua Mountains should garner such species as Gambel's, Scaled, and Montezuma quail, Zone-tailed and Gray hawks, Magnificent, Blue-throated, and Broad-billed hummingbirds, Elegant Trogon, Arizona Woodpecker, Greater Pewee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Mexican Chickadee, Crissal and Bendire's thrashers, Olive, Virginia's, Lucy's, Grace's, and Red-faced warblers, Painted Redstart, Rufous-winged and Botteri's sparrows, and Yellow-eyed Junco along with many others. Now that's some "... & More"!

Since our time is limited on this short tour and the species to find are many and diverse (we'll have but one chance for several of them), participants should be prepared for the possibility of irregular hours of sleep. *Those interested in seeing these owls and nightjars at a more relaxed pace are encouraged to participate in our full-length ARIZONA: BIRDING THE BORDER tours, May 11-20, 2018 or May 19-28, 2018.*

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: This short tour endeavors to see and hear the many owl and nightjar species that are possible in this corner of Arizona. Not all species occur in the same region or in the same habitat, so a fair amount of time in the vehicle is necessary to traverse the sometimes-considerable distances between species and between our lodging and the right habitats. Hikes in most places will be along uneven but mostly flat trails or roads in desert and mountainous habitats. All of the trails have common hazards such as protruding rocks, fallen limbs/tree trunks, thorny plants, and poison ivy (in the mountains only).

When we search for Spotted Owls in the Huachuca Mountains (most likely either on Fort Huachuca or in Miller Canyon), we will hike up a rocky mountain trail with a moderate gradient. Clients in good health usually have no problem with these trails if taken slowly and if a helping hand is offered in the steepest parts. Everyone gets a bit winded and overheated while hiking this trail, even your guides!

Many of our owl species can be seen during the daylight hours, which will narrow our focus at night to a few species. Although long nights are rare on this tour in any year (we're usually back to our accommodations by 9:30 or 10:00 p.m.), they are possible if any particular species gives us some trouble. At night, we'll do our best to stick to birding the roadsides, but a scramble up a trail to get into position to see an owl or nightjar is always a possibility. We'll adjust the start time each morning based on the previous night's activities.

Our birding won't be limited to nightbirds, by any means. During the daylight hours, we'll search for the many Southeast Arizona specialty species that are possible along our route (and there are a good many of these), as well as a wealth of more widespread western species.

If you are uncertain whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.



In addition to the owls and other nightbirds, we'll be able to see many of Southeastern Arizona's other specialty birds. From this angle, it's easy to see why this one is called the Broad-billed Hummingbird! Photograph by participant James Lee.

About the Birding Areas

Tucson—Arizona's second-largest city is situated in the low Sonoran Desert at an elevation between about 2300 and 2650 feet and is bordered by lofty mountains on three sides, some of the peaks rising to well over 9000 feet. We'll have a bit of time on our first afternoon, the morning of Day 2, and our final afternoon together to focus on the low desert surrounding the city, which, as you have undoubtedly heard, can be quite warm (though early to mid-May is typically quite comfortable). We don't plan to spend much time in the heat, though, as our nightbird targets here, if known to be present,

are few. Other species we'll search for in the low desert include Gila Woodpecker, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Verdin, Lucy's Warbler, Pyrrhuloxia, and Rufous-winged Sparrow.



Santa Rita Mountains and Florida Wash—Less than an hour south of Tucson, the lofty Santa Rita Mountains loom above the desert and the nearby retirement community of Green Valley. This is the home of famous Madera Canyon, host to some of the best middle-elevation canyon birding in the state. We'll have most of our first afternoon to bird along the productive roadsides leading to the canyon, and we'll also have a chance to sample the birdlife of Florida Wash below the entrance of the canyon. Nearly all of the Southeast Arizona mountain specialties are found here and it makes a great introduction to the region's bird life. If we're up for some owling at the time of our visit, or if the rare Buff-collared Nightjar is known to be present, we'll plan a picnic dinner here before we return to our Tucson motel.

Huachuca Mountains—The Huachucas have a long history of great birding in their many canyons, streamsides, and pine forests. In recent years, the most popular birding attractions of these mountains have been the Ramsey Canyon Preserve, the hummingbird feeding stations in Miller and Ash canyons, and Fort Huachuca. Talk to most birders around the country and chances are pretty good that they saw their lifer Spotted

Owl either in Miller or Scheelite Canyon in the Huachucas. We'll spend most of the morning in one of these shady canyons at around 6000 feet trying to find these reclusive birds, which often can be seen in the light of day at one of their favorite roosting sites. A decent trail ascends each of these narrow drainages, and we'll hike at a deliberately slow pace, both to enjoy the bird life on the way up and also to avoid getting too winded before looking for the owls. Additional birds to look for are Northern (Mountain) Pygmy-Owl, the spectacular Elegant Trogon, Arizona Woodpecker, Dusky-capped and Buff-breasted flycatchers, and Yellow-eyed Junco. Your guide will have the most current Spotted Owl news by tour time and he'll make a final decision on which canyon to visit at that point.

Chiricahua Mountains—Acre for acre, the Chiricahua Mountains region is one of the richest in North America in terms of biodiversity. There are more species of plants, insects, reptiles, mammals, and, of course, birds here than in nearly any other area of comparable size in the US. This is due to a number of factors, the most important of which are the mountains' geographic location (at the southern end of temperate North America and close enough to Mexico to have a strong Neotropical flavor) and their broad elevation range (from about 4000 feet up to nearly 10,000 feet). Among the many species that we will look for in this area, several diurnal specialties should be mentioned: Zone-tailed Hawk, Blue-throated and Magnificent hummingbirds, Montezuma Quail, Mexican Chickadee, Olive and Red-faced warblers, and Painted Redstart. We'll have two nights and nearly two full days to search for the nightbirds that these mountains conceal in their deep canyons, lush riparian areas, dry desert flats, and dense pine/oak forests.

Itinerary for Arizona Nightbirds & More

Day 1, Thu, 3 May. Arrival in Tucson; to Madera Canyon. Please plan to arrive in Tucson **no later than 2:00 p.m.** today. From the airport, please call the Hampton Inn, located just two minutes away, for complimentary transportation. We will plan to meet in the lobby of the motel at 2:30 p.m. to start our birding. Unless there is a hot tip on the whereabouts of a viewable Buff-collared Nightjar close to Tucson by the time our tour starts, our plan will be to spend our first afternoon and evening in nearby Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains just to the south of Tucson. Madera Canyon hosts a fine variety of nightbirds as well as a number of Southeast Arizona specialty species. *Should the whereabouts of a rare Buff-collared Nightjar be known, we'll change our plans for this first outing of the trip accordingly.*

If all goes according to plan, we'll hope to have seen several of the following, including Elf and Burrowing owls, Whiskered and Western screech-owls, Lesser Nighthawk, Mexican Whip-poor-will—and, if we're really lucky—Buff-

collared Nightjar, before we make it back to our rooms! Good, sturdy hiking boots would be best for today's terrain and don't forget to bring a small flashlight or a headlamp for our post-dinner search for owls and nightjars. We'll likely arrive back at our Tucson hotel tonight between 10:00 and 11:00 p.m. Night in Tucson.

Day 2, Fri, 4 May. To the Huachuclas and on to the Chiricahua Mountains. After breakfast at our hotel in Tucson, we'll drive southeast to the Huachucla Mountains, where we'll hike up either Miller or Scheelite Canyon in mid-morning. The paths in these canyons are somewhat steep, but the birding is invariably rewarding. Again, sturdy hiking boots would be in order for today's hike. For those who choose not to hike, the birding near the trailhead (either in Miller or Scheelite) can be very rewarding as well. A decision on which canyon to visit will be made by your guide based on recent knowledge of Spotted Owl whereabouts.

We'll prepare a picnic lunch before heading east to the Chiricahuas, where we'll spend the next two nights. After an early dinner, we'll begin our search for the fine variety of nightbirds resident in the Chiricahuas. We plan to spend our daylight hours on the few roads and trails of the area to search for the numerous Arizona specialties that inhabit these beautiful mountains. Night in the Chiricahuas.

Day 3, Sat, 5 May. Owling the Chiricahua Mountains. We'll have this morning to get just a little more sleep, both to catch up for the past couple of nights and to prepare for owling this evening when we'll concentrate on locating any species we may have missed thus far. We'll plan to bird one of the many rich habitats of this range this morning after breakfast, taking a midday break back at our rooms after lunch. We'll be back out in the field in the afternoon, searching the Cave Creek Canyon area, or the desert flats below Portal, for the many special birds found here before we head back out into the field after an early dinner to track down any remaining nightbirds. Night in the Chiricahuas.

Day 4, Sun, 6 May. The Chiricahuas; to Tucson. After a final morning high in the upper reaches of the Chiricahuas, we will drive back to Tucson via the wetland habitats of Willcox, planning to arrive with time to clean up before our delicious farewell dinner at a nearby restaurant. Should we still be needing a nightbird or two, we may decide to take a picnic dinner afield to track down our quarry close to Tucson on this final night of the tour. The tour ends this evening after dinner and any additional nightbirding that we plan after eating. Night in Tucson.

Day 5, Mon, 7 May. Departure. If you are flying out this morning, you should take the courtesy van to the airport in plenty of time for your flight.



The tiny Northern Pygmy Owl ranges widely, from the northern US to Central America. This little predator is active in daylight, and we should get some good views. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.

About Your Guide

Tom Johnson grew up watching birds in central Pennsylvania. Interested in science and the outdoors from a young age, he became involved in a variety of field projects throughout his school years, including banding migrant landbirds and conducting point counts for the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas. He was fortunate to pursue undergraduate studies in biology at Cornell University, where he became even more excited to learn about systematics and migration while surrounded by the amazing ornithologists and birders of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Since graduating, Tom has spent much of his time studying seabirds off the East Coast of North America, conducting line transect surveys from NOAA ships between Nova Scotia and the Bahamas. When he's not otherwise occupied, he loves to devote time to wandering, taking photos, and searching for vagrants and hybrid birds.

Tom has long been interested in sharing his enthusiasm for exploring bird identification, distribution, and migration dynamics; he is a regional editor for *North American Birds* magazine and writes a regular column on identification for *Birding* magazine. Perhaps most of all, he loves sharing his passion for the natural world with others out in the field, and he's excited to have the opportunity to do this while leading for Field Guides.

"Tom has an amazing knowledge of birds and the natural world. His enthusiasm and professionalism comes through so much. He kept us on schedule -yet allowed for some great diversions that showed up. Field Guides is so fortunate to have him guiding." L.T. Arizona Nightbirds & More

Financial Information

FEE: \$1675 from Tucson

DEPOSIT: \$170 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: January 3, 2018

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$200

LIMIT: 7

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Caroline Lewis. Caroline will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Please plan to arrive in Tucson no later than 2:00 p.m. on Day 1. You may depart from Tucson at anytime on the last day of the tour. Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility. Our hotel in Tucson will gladly store a bag for you in their storage room if you would like to leave a bag until our return to Tucson on Day 4. We would encourage you to take a smaller bag with you in the van for our two nights away from Tucson.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$1675 for one person in double occupancy from Tucson. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 4, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through dinner on Day 4, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Tucson, airport taxes, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$200. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$170** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by January 3, 2018. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing

conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at www.fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.htm and clicking the link to CSA. Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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