

ITINERARY

NEW MEXICO: BIRDING THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

January 18 - 25, 2020



A highlight of our 2019 tour was watching banders work with Rosy-Finches at the Sandia Crest. Here, a Black-crowned Rosy-Finch, and a Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch wait to be released. We can't promise a visit with the banders on our upcoming tour, but we will be able to see rosy-finches and many other western specialties. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

We include here information for those interested in the 2020 Field Guides New Mexico: Birding the Land of Enchantment 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 guide(s) 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

New Mexico, is called the land of enchantment with good reason. Between its beautiful Chihuahuan Desert, the lovely forested wildernesses of the Sandia and Sangre de Cristo Mountain ranges, its rugged petroglyph-filled rose-colored deserts, and its expansive native grasslands, there is no shortage of awe-inspiring settings. On this tour, based in the cool high desert of central New Mexico, we will visit many of these breathtaking habitats. A couple of the main avian targets will be the wintering Rosy-Finch fiesta (four varieties in one location!) in the Sandias, as well as the huge spectacle of Sandhill Cranes and Snow and Ross's Geese wintering around Bosque Del Apache. In addition to these two headliners,

we will be seeking high-desert residents such as Cactus Wren and Crissal Thrasher, mountain west breeders like Green-tailed Towhee, Williamson's Sapsucker, Pinyon Jay, and Juniper Titmouse, birds with a more southwestern feel, like Phainopepla and Pyrrhuloxia, and some of the denizens of the western grasslands and prairies, like Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, and multiple species of Longspurs.

We'll also have a chance to have a bit of a window in the rich art scene and cultural history of Santa Fe, with a few hours spent exploring the quaint and fascinating downtown of New Mexico's capital city.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: During our birding we will experience a range of elevation from 4000 to 10,500 feet. Most days will include a full day of birding with a restaurant or cafe lunch. Some days we will return in time for a shower before dinner, while others will find us going directly from birding to dinner.

At the higher elevations we will not be going for long hikes, but those walks that we do participate in will be at a pace to allow everyone to catch his/her breath. Walking will usually be on fairly wide trails or dirt roads, though one invariably gets into the brush or grass at some point to locate a bird. Some ground will be uneven and rocky, so lightweight hiking boots will usually be the footwear of choice. Participants should be able to walk up to two miles (round-trip) in one outing over undulating terrain.

While we will attempt to see all bird species encountered, we will make a concerted effort to see the local specialties of New Mexico at this season. Some of these are quite common and conspicuous while others may take more time or may be the purpose of a visit to a particular locale.

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.

About the Birding Areas



Albuquerque and the Sandia Mountains—The largest city in New Mexico will be where tour begins and ends, but there is also some excellent birding to be had here. Not only are there some good high desert habitats here, but the Sandia Mountains loom over the east side of town, giving us access to several habitat types from 5,000 feet (the elevation of Albuquerque) and over 10,000 feet (Sandia Crest). We will bird a few open spaces and refuges on the outskirts of town where we'll see a nice cross-section of residents including Cactus Wren, Juniper Titmouse, Woodhouse's Scrub-ay, Black-throated Sparrows, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Canyon Towhees, and Curve-billed Thrashers, and we'll also have a shot at Sagebrush Sparrow, Crissal Thrasher, and Scaled Quail. Pure flocks Ross's Geese and Cackling Geese are also on the table here. In the Sandia Mountains themselves, the highlight will be the Rosy-Finch show. We have a good chance to see all four taxa of Rosy-Finches that occur here: Black, Brown-capped, and Gray-crowned (including the "Hepburn's" subspecies), and we should also see Steller's Jay and Gray-

headed Chickadee. The Pinyon-Juniper habitat on the east side of the mountains will be where we'll look for Pinyon Jay, and perhaps some irruptive winter finches like Evening Grosbeak, and more Juniper Titmouse.

Bosque Del Apache NWR and the Socorro area—Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge houses one of the most famous wildlife spectacles in the nation. A tremendous number of Sandhill Cranes and white geese (Snow Geese and Ross's Geese) pass through here each fall, and a large number stick around for the winter. We'll hope to see some nice roost fly-outs or fly-ins of these masses of birds, and then tour the refuge itself which has fantastic habitat throughout, especially for waterfowl. It's also great for mammals, such as Collared Peccary, Bobcat, and Elk. The nearby Magdalena Mountains may hold Chestnut-collared Longspur, Townsend's Solitaire, Pygmy Nuthatch, Golden Eagle, and a nice variety of woodpeckers including Acorn Woodpecker and Williamson's Sapsucker.

Elephant Butte Reservoir area- This is one of the largest bodies of water in the state, and also one of the best places around to compare Clark's and Western Grebe side-by-side. We have a chance to see just about any waterbird that can

turn up in New Mexico here. The areas near here and to the south offer chances at some species of the lower southwestern desert, including Verdin, Pyrrhuloxia, Phainopepla, and are also excellent migrant traps, regularly having birds from both the east and the west overwintering.

Santa Fe- The capital of New Mexico has a rich culture and tradition in the arts, and in addition to birding in the area, we'll also have some time to explore the downtown area, which has many art shops and several interesting museums including the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and the New Mexico History Museum. The nearby Sangre de Cristo Mountains are another chance at the higher elevation species which we may not have picked up, especially ones that don't occur farther south, such as Clark's Nutcracker and Gray Jay, and the Pinyon-Juniper foothills could give us more chances for Pinyon Jay, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, and Williamson's Sapsucker.



Bosque del Apache is the winter home of tremendous flocks of Sandhill Cranes, as well as geese, ducks and many other migratory birds. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Itinerary for New Mexico: Birding the Land Of Enchantment

Day 1, Sat, 18 Jan. Arrival in Albuquerque. We will meet in the lobby of our hotel at 6:20 PM for introductions and to head over to dinner. Night in Albuquerque.

Day 2, Sun, 19 Jan. Sandia Crest. After breakfast we'll head out and bird one or two lower lying locations around Albuquerque, perhaps looking for Pinyon Jay, Sagebrush Sparrow, and Evening Grosbeak (if any are around), before we climb up into the Sandia Mountains, ending at the Sandia Crest. Here we'll hope to find lots of Rosy-Finches at the feeders- some of the southernmost Rosy-Finches in the world! It may be very cold at the peak (10,000 feet) though sunny mornings can feel warmer than it is. We may go for a short walk in the conifer forest near the crest to try and pull out some winter finches as well. We may also check some of the lower elevations along the mountain road for species not found at the summit. We will be birding along dirt trails or roadsides today, but there may be snow or ice up high, so you're your footwear accordingly. Night in Albuquerque.

Day 3, Mon, 20 Jan. Albuquerque to Socorro. We will leave Albuquerque and head south towards Bosque Del Apache NWR perhaps having another shot at the birds in the foothills of the Sandias like Pinyon Jay and Juniper Titmouse if we missed them the day prior. We will head south through some agricultural areas, where we'll especially keep our eye out for Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk, and Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs. If we get into Socorro early enough, we may continue right down to the refuge, to get our first taste of the Sandhill Cranes coming in to roost. Night in Socorro.

Day 4, Tue, 21 Jan. Bosque Del Apache NWR to Percha Dam. This will be a very early morning, as we want to be at the refuge with a chance to see the Geese and Cranes flying around at sunrise. What we see will be greatly impacted by

where on the refuge the birds are roosting, as they are sometimes in closed parts of the refuge, but there should be a spectacle of lots of birds flying around either way. We will then bird the area looking for specialties like Crissal Thrasher, and enjoying the refuge visitor's center (with gift shop) and bird feeders, as well as the extensive and waterfowl-filled auto loop. We will then head south, stopping at Elephant Butte Reservoir, and ending up down at Percha Dam, part of Caballo Lake State Park, where we'll be birding along a riparian corridor and great migrant trap looking for overwintering oddities as well as Phainopepla, Pyrrhuloxia, and Black Phoebe. Night in Socorro.

Day 5, Wed, 22 Jan. Bosque del Apache NWR to Santa Fe.

We will start off today birding locally in the Bosque del Apache area once again, with our exact itinerary depending on conditions and what birds have been around. As we make our way north, we'll be able to look for a couple of other miscellaneous species, including Burrowing Owl (if any have overwintered in the area), more species of geese and the like. We will continue through Albuquerque to the state capitol, Santa Fe. Night in Santa Fe.

Day 6, Thu, 23 Jan. Sangre de Cristo Mountains and Santa Fe.

We will start off by driving up to the Jemez Mountains, northwest of Santa Fe, where we have our best chances for both Gray Jay and Clark's Nutcracker of the tour. We will bird a few other locations on our way back, targeting birds like Williamson's Sapsucker, Pygmy Nuthatch, Barrow's Goldeneye, and perhaps Pinyon Jay. Depending on how expediently our birding goes, we may have a couple of hours in the afternoon to explore some of the cultural attractions in the city of Santa Fe. Night in Santa Fe.



*Pinyon Jays may be found in the foothills near Santa Fe.
Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.*

Day 7, Fri, 24 Jan. Santa Fe to Albuquerque. We will start off by birding the Santa Fe area to clean up anything we may have missed, and then work our way down towards Albuquerque, birding along the way, focusing on any species we may have missed in prior days. We will arrive back in Albuquerque in the late afternoon or evening for dinner. Night in Albuquerque.

Day 8, Sat, 25 Jan. Birding Albuquerque and Departure. You may schedule your flight home at any time today, with the images of crowds of cranes, gaggles of geese, and swarms of rosy-finches still filling your brain. Bon Voyage!

About Your Guide

Doug Gochfeld was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, and his interest in birds was sparked at a young age, in part by his father. This interest soon spiraled into a full-blown obsession for Doug for a few years before he abruptly shelved it, in favor of baseball, for several adolescent years. He picked up his interest in birds again in College and once again became a dedicated/obsessed birder. For several years before starting to lead a full slate of tours for Field Guides in 2016, he traveled extensively as a working birder. These field jobs have included multiple seasons monitoring migration at the legendary migration hotspots of Cape May, New Jersey, and Eilat in Israel. He also guided on St. Paul Island, in Alaska's Pribilof Islands, for parts of four years.

Doug is a Leica Pro Staff member, and he has been a regular leader at birding festivals in Texas, Ohio, Florida, New Mexico, and Virginia. He has worked in Alaska, Suriname, and Brazil studying the breeding and wintering ecology of shorebirds, which hold a special place in his heart. His strongest interests in birding are migration, vagrancy, and patterns of distribution, and he's always excited to share his enthusiasm in, and knowledge of, these subjects and much more on his tours, whether close to home or halfway around the world.

"Doug was truly amazing--in finding birds and in relating to me personally as a participant. He was patient and kind in understanding my lack of extensive birding experience and in trying to help me." C.S., Arizona's Second Spring

A **second guide** will be added as tour size warrants.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for Doug's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Financial Information

FEE: \$2450 from Albuquerque

DEPOSIT: \$250

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: September 20, 2019

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$495

LIMIT: 14

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Tina Rose. Tina 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 at our hotel in Albuquerque no later than 6:00 P.M. on Day 1. 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.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$2450 for one person in double occupancy from Albuquerque. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 7, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 7, 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 Albuquerque 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 \$495. 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 LIMITS: Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open. However, on occasion, we will send along a guide in training on a tour. In these cases, one seat in the van or bus will be taken by the guide in training. Our guides will have a rotation system within the vehicle so that clients share the inconvenience equally. We hope this minor inconvenience will be more than offset by the advantages of having another guide along.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$250** 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 September 20, 2019. 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, and emergency medical transportation. **Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii.** We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance with InsureMyTrip (www.insuremytrip.com) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. Please let us know if you have any questions about this. If you purchase the insurance within 24 hours of 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 <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> 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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