



**BIRDING TOUR ARIZONA:  
GENERAL INFORMATION**



*The rather cute **Violet-crowned Hummingbird** will hopefully be found in Arizona.*

Thanks for considering or booking our Arizona tour! With any luck we may soon be looking at Grey Hawk, Thick-billed Kingbird, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, and many more new and exciting species. In addition we may find one or two real local rarities, such as Yellow Grosbeak, Rufous-capped Warbler, or Roseate Spoonbill. On a prior tour we found Purple Gallinule! Hummingbirds almost always put on a great show, and we will make every possible attempt to see California Condor at the Grand Canyon.

## FLIGHTS

Please inform us if any of your flights, times, or arrangements change. During your air travel to Tucson you will need to have your flight schedule and valid passport (or photo ID for US citizens) readily accessible. Increased security measures have been implemented at all airports to insure safer travel. If you have not flown in recent months you may wish to contact your travel agent, airline, or departure airport for current requirements. Arrive at the airport in plenty of time, be patient and cooperative, and be prepared for you and your luggage to be thoroughly checked. Smile and say “thank you” when everyone is finished.

## TRIP INSURANCE

You should purchase travel insurance and trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during the tour. One supplier of this coverage that we suggest is **Allianz Travel Insurance**, The World Access Building, 2805 North Parham Road, Richmond, VA 23294, USA. Their toll-free phone numbers are **1-866-884-3556**, **1-855-284-0331**, and **1-800-284-8300**. You can apply by phone or, for US residents, via the Internet [here](#).

## IDENTIFICATION

We will not cross the border into Mexico during the tour, but we may pass through one or more border patrol checkpoints within the US. Please bring proof of citizenship if you are not a US citizen. A passport is always acceptable.

## WALKING AND CONDITIONS

There is a moderate amount of walking each day of the tour. These walks are not fast-paced and for the most part not terribly strenuous, although they may be a bit hilly and rocky. We try to do most of our walking early in the day before it gets too warm. A possible walk up Miller Canyon to look for Spotted Owl is one of the more strenuous walks, even though it is only about a two-mile round trip. We may also go into Florida Canyon and California Gulch. We will take our time and do a lot of birding along the way. These walks are always optional, but are planned to provide you with the best possible birding opportunities. We will do our best to make another arrangement if you do not wish to join a particular walk. A good regime of exercising and walking from now until the tour begins will help make things easier and more enjoyable for you on the tour.

## WEATHER

You can expect temperatures to range from 60 °F (15 °C) to the low 90 °F (33 °C) for much of the tour. There may be some cooler temperatures early and late in the day, especially in the mountains. On the other hand there may be a few days that are a bit warmer. We do our best to stay out of the really hot areas at midday and spend our time in the shady, cooler mountains and canyons. There is a daily chance of some desirable rain, so a raincoat can be handy and double as a jacket on a chilly evening when looking for Elf Owl or Common Poorwill. A little rain will cool the temperatures considerably and make the birds more active. A small umbrella can be very handy to keep you and your binoculars dry. It is always best to have your raingear in the van, just in case.

## TRANSPORT

The step into our Ford Transit 12-passenger van is approximately 14 inches (35 centimeters) high, not much higher than on an average van. Please let us know if a small step stool would be useful for you.

## DRINKS

We drink plenty of water every day. Please remember to bring a personal water bottle with you. There will be gallon jugs of water in the van from which to fill your personal bottle. Please let us know if you have any other favorite drinks, such as sodas or juice. Your guide will buy these at the grocery store and then have them in a cooler in the van. We need to know your exact preferences, especially caffeinated versus decaffeinated. There are probably ten different kinds of Coke, so please be as specific as possible. Upon your request your guide will purchase wine or beer for you, if you wish, for the end of the day. Again, please be specific with your request, and your guide will do his best to get just what you prefer. You can reimburse him for any wine or beer at a later time, as the cost of alcoholic drinks is not included in the tour fee.

## PACKING LIST

**Items that we suggest you bring, based upon years of experience in Arizona, include:**

- Loose, comfortable clothing.
- Sweatshirt, sweater, or jacket
- Raincoat and small umbrella. Your raincoat can also serve as a windbreaker.
- Plastic bags to protect equipment and hold wet or dirty gear
- A hat for sun protection and to reduce glare
- Sunglasses will be useful.
- Comfortable walking shoes and hiking boots. If you bring new ones be certain to break them in before the tour. Open-toed shoes (sandals, flip-flops) are okay around the lodge or going to dinner, but not while birding.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent. Some people add a long-sleeved shirt for extra protection.

- Hand sanitizer
- Alarm clock and flashlight, with extra batteries for both. Each person should have a flashlight.
- Binoculars are a necessity. The better the quality and condition of your binoculars, the more you will enjoy the birds and wildlife that you observe.
- The guide will have a high-quality spotting scope to share with the group. If you have a scope and are willing to bring it, please let us know. We would like to have at least one additional scope if possible.
- Camera and chargers
- Personal water bottle, so that you can carry water with you during our walks. This is not optional; it is an absolute necessity so that everyone remains healthy and hydrated. There will be gallon jugs of water in the van for you to fill your personal bottle.
- You may want to bring a few of your favorite snacks. There will be fruit, crackers, cookies, and a variety of drinks in the van.
- Daypack or fanny pack to carry personal items during our walks
- Health insurance card
- Any prescription medicines you will need for the length of the tour, which you should pack in your carry-on. Aspirin, hydrocortisone cream, and antibiotic cream may be useful. There will be a basic first aid kit in the van.
- Tweezers can be extremely useful to remove an unwanted cactus spine. Put them in your checked luggage, not in your carry-on because they would be confiscated at the security gate.
- Helpful field guides include National Geographic, Robbins, or Peterson's Western Guide. Many people use the Sibley or Kaufman field guide. Identification apps on your phone are becoming increasingly popular and useful.
- Mammal, reptile, wildflower, cactus, and other nature guides are always helpful.
- Airline schedule, passport (or photo ID if you are a US citizen)
- When you pack your suitcase keep in mind that there is no guarantee that it will arrive in Tucson when you do. Probably it will, usually it does, but it may not. Thus your carry-on luggage is very important. Pack in your carry-on everything that you absolutely must have for the first few days, including a change of clothes, binoculars, all medications for the entire tour, airline schedule, passport or photo ID, money, and other essential items. Either wear comfortable hiking shoes or put a pair in your carry-on. Open-toed shoes are not advised for birding. Sandals and cacti do not mix! Items such as scissors, nail clippers, tweezers, tools, anything sharp, or anything that could be construed as a weapon should be in your checked luggage, not in your carry-on.
- Two small bags are much easier to handle when loading the van as opposed to one large one. You can do laundry at several of our motels. So if you want to pack light plan on enough clothes for five to six days and do a load of laundry along the way. You may want

to bring a small container of laundry detergent.