

SATURDAY FIELD TRIP DESCRIPTIONS

Saturday, August 24

Note: All Field Trips are half day and return by 11am

**All trips by Van leaving from the New Mexico Ballroom at the Crowne Plaza,
Albuquerque**

Difficulty levels:

Easy—flat ground some walking.

Moderate—walking needed to get to the birding sites, some elevation changes.

Difficult—fair amount of walking with elevation changes.

1SAT Travertine Falls

Volunteer Leader: TBA

This is a short hike of (1.3 mile round trip) to a waterfall (trickle, really) along a canyon bottom in low elevation pinyon-juniper woodland with ponderosa pine and Gambel oak. The hike can be extended slightly beyond the waterfall if time and ambition of the group allow. This trail is well-used and varies from wide and flat to areas of exposed bedrock. Middle elevation during migration can make for great birding: Migrants should be passing through, and summer residents could still be lingering.

Possibilities here include: Black-chinned and Broad-tailed hummingbirds, Plumbeous and Warbling Vireos, Steller's and Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, Mountain Chickadee and Juniper Titmouse, Townsend's Solitaire, Spotted Towhee, Virginia's, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's and Wilson's Warblers, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak. This is a drive to a short hike.

Departure Time: 6:00 AM

Return Time: 11:00 AM

Cost: \$35

Miles (one way): 16 miles

Time (one way): 25 minutes

Hiking Miles (total): 1.3 miles

Elevation Gain: 250 ft

Restroom facilities: No

Difficulty level: Easy

2SAT Embudo Canyon

Volunteer Leader: TBA

Embudo Canyon is an area of foothill scrub habitat dominated by Apache Plume in the bottoms of the washes, plus chamisa, cholla, saltbush, grading into juniper at higher elevations on the canyon walls. This has not been grazed in decades, so it is among the best scrub habitat accessible near Albuquerque. The trail is good and the terrain is easy. This desert scrub can be great birding: Both Scaled and Gambel's Quail occur in the foothills. Curve-billed and Crissal Thrashers are here, as are Black-throated, Black-chinned and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Canyon and Spotted Towhees, Cactus, Rock, Canyon, and Bewick's Wrens, and Greater Roadrunners. The canyon can host migrant warblers, vireos, tanagers, etc. Scanning overhead can produce raptors including Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Swainson's and Cooper's Hawks.

Departure Time: 6:00 AM
Return Time: 11:00 AM
Cost: \$35
Miles (one way): ~14 miles
Time (one way): ~25 minutes
Hiking Miles (total): 2 miles
Elevation Gain: 350 ft
Restroom facilities: No
Difficulty level: Easy

3SAT Embudito Canyon

Volunteer Leader: TBA

Similar to Embudo Canyon, Embudito is an area of foothill scrub habitat dominated by Apache Plume in the bottoms of the washes, plus chamisa, cholla, saltbush, grading into juniper at higher elevations on the canyon walls. This has not been grazed in decades, so it is among the best scrub habitat accessible near Albuquerque. Trails are rather wide and gravelly at the start but become narrow and a steep scramble over slick bedrock when the canyon narrows. It is easy on the flats and moderate on the bedrock, which starts after one half mile. We are probably not likely to make it beyond this point on a morning trip. This desert scrub can be great birding: Both Scaled and Gambel's Quail occur in the foothills. Curve-billed and Crissal Thrashers are here, as are Black-throated, Black-chinned and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Canyon and Spotted Towhees, Cactus, Rock, Canyon, and Bewick's Wrens, and Greater Roadrunners. The canyon can be good for migrant warblers, vireos, tanagers, etc. Scanning overhead can produce raptors including Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Swainson's and Cooper's Hawks.

Departure Time: 6:00 AM
Return Time: 11:00 AM
Cost: \$35
Miles (one way): 12 miles
Time (one way): 20 minutes
Hiking Miles (total): 1.5 miles
Elevation Gain: 250 ft
Restroom facilities: No
Difficulty level: East to Moderate

4SAT Three Gun Canyon

Volunteer Leader: TBA

This trail provides access to the southernmost end of the Sandia Mountains. The hiking trail here is a slow, gradual climb from Foothill scrub habitat dominated by Apache Plume and cholla cactus in the bottoms of the washes to conifer forest at higher elevations. The main trails are rather wide and gravelly throughout. This desert scrub can be great birding. At the lower elevations, we will look for Scaled Quail, Curve-billed and Crissal Thrashers, Black-throated, Black-chinned and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Canyon and Spotted Towhees, Cactus, Rock, Canyon, and Bewick's Wrens, and Greater Roadrunners. Higher elevations may produce Hairy Woodpecker, Red-naped and Williamson's Sapsucker, Virginia's and Black-throated Gray Warblers. The canyon can host migrant warblers, vireos, tanagers, etc. Scanning overhead can produce raptors including Golden Eagles, Peregrines, Swainson's and Cooper's Hawks.

Departure Time: 6:15 AM
Return Time: 11:00 AM
Cost: \$35
Miles (one way): 12 miles
Time (one way): 16 minutes
Restroom facilities: No
Difficulty level: Easy to Moderate

5SAT Otero Canyon

Volunteer Leader: TBA

This trip will start at the Otero Canyon trailhead in the Manzanita Mountains and is considered pinyon-juniper woodland birding at its finest. We'll be looking for Juniper Titmouse, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, Spotted Towhee, Pinyon Jay, Gray Flycatcher, Plumbeous Vireo, Hepatic Tanager and whatever migrants are around. The hike will be a relaxed pace on an easy grade at mid elevation (about 6,500-7,000 ft). Additionally, this area may produce numerous raptors that are migrating along the spine of the Manzanita Mountains including Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, and Cooper's Hawk.

Departure Time: 6:15 AM
Return Time: 11:00 AM
Cost: \$35
Miles (one way): 20 miles
Time (one way): 30 minutes
Hiking Miles (total): 2-3 miles
Restroom facilities: No
Difficulty level: Moderate

6SAT Valle de Oro NWR

Volunteer Leader: TBA

This is New Mexico's newest and first urban wildlife refuge in the southwestern United States. August at Valle de Oro should have many flooded agricultural fields and smaller ponds (weather and crop irrigation dependent) that may attract numerous migrant shorebirds and waders. Long-billed Curlews can be numerous if the conditions are right. There is a chance for Upland and Solitary Sandpipers. We will also pick through the many migrants and especially sparrows such as Lark, Chipping, Brewer's, Savannah, Vesper, and Lark Bunting. Maybe a Mississippi Kite will come by. Certainly, we'll see a Swainson's Hawk. After thoroughly scanning the fields, we will bird the adjacent bosque along the Rio Grande for more local breeders, migrants, and lucky-to-see birds such as the pair of Common Black-Hawks that nest in the area. Lucy's Warbler's will have likely departed but we will try to find a lingerer. We should expect Summer Tanager, Black-headed and Blue Grosbeaks, Bewick's Wren, Lazuli Bunting, and Eastern Bluebird.

Departure Time: 6:15 AM
Return Time: 11:00 AM
Cost: \$35
Miles (one way): 15 miles
Time (one way): 25 minutes
Restroom facilities: No
Difficulty level: Easy

7SAT Tramway Wetlands and adjacent bosque

Volunteer Leader: TBA

This trip will start at one of Albuquerque's best shorebird birding spots. It is not a pristine wetland but instead an outflow for Albuquerque's storm water runoff which has fluctuating water levels, especially during the monsoon season, but can be ideal for ducks, shorebirds and waders. Expected species are Wilson's Phalarope, Baird's, Western, Least, Pectoral, Solitary, and Spotted Sandpipers, Wilson's Snipe, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. Recent rarities here in August have included Short-billed Dowitcher and Semipalmated Sandpiper. If Mexican Duck hybrids are your thing, this is the trip for you. The waterfowl here will provide close study. Bank Swallows will be flying with Barn, Cliff and Violet-green Swallows. The overgrown weedy vegetation surrounding the wetland will produce migrants to find as well. Ospreys have recently begun to nest here and should have young out this time of year. Mississippi Kites also breed locally and if we are lucky, we will see them. With the remaining time on this trip, we will head to the Alameda Open Space bosque to walk the low flow channels to check for local breeders and migrants. We can expect White-breasted Nuthatch, Summer Tanager, Black-headed and Blue Grosbeaks, Lazuli and Indigo Buntings and Greater Roadrunner.

Departure Time: 6:15 AM

Return Time: 11:00 AM

Cost: \$35

Miles (one way): 8 miles

Time (one way): 20 minutes

Restroom facilities: Yes at Alameda Open Space

Difficulty level: Easy

8SAT Rio Grande Nature Center

Volunteer Leader: TBA

The Rio Grande is the fifth longest river in North America, and the 20th longest in the world. Rising as a clear, snow-fed mountain stream more than 12,000 feet (3,700 meters) above sea level in the Rocky Mountains of southern Colorado, the Rio Grande descends across steppes and deserts, watering rich agricultural regions as it flows on its way to the Gulf of Mexico. The total length of the river is about 1,900 miles (3,060 km). Even though dammed and channelized for much of its length, extensive stands of native cottonwood and willow riparian habitat exist, providing critical year-round habitat for breeders, migrants and resident bird species. The Rio Grande Nature Center provides a wonderful example of the representative bird species found in the riparian habitats from Sandoval County south to Socorro County. There are several trails within the Center, and several large ponds which will allow us to seek out Southwestern specialties such as Blue Grosbeak, Bell's Vireo, Gambel's Quail, and even a possible Common Black Hawk. The RGNC also shelters resident Black-capped Chickadee, Black-chinned, Broad-tailed, Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds, Summer and Western Tanagers, Wood Duck, several species of swallows including Bank, Yellow-breasted Chat, and possibly early fall migrants.

Departure Time: 6:15 AM

Return Time: 11:00 AM

Cost: \$35

Miles (one way): 5 miles

Time (one way): 15 minutes

Restroom facilities: Yes

Difficulty level: Easy

9SAT San Antonito Open Space

Volunteer Leader: TBA

The 168-acre property in the foothills of the Sandia Mountains was purchased by the City of Albuquerque in 1968 and is one of the earliest pieces of property to be set aside by the City for the enjoyment of nature within this diverse mountain habitat. Elevations at this property range from 6,760' to 7,200'. Pinyon-juniper forests dominate this gently rolling site. Well over 130 species of birds have been seen in this area over the years, and we hope to add one or two more! We will explore a small but very productive riparian area with perennial water near the parking area, and then walk on well-maintained trails into pinyon-juniper habitat to seek Juniper Titmouse, Black-headed Grosbeak, Wild Turkey, Band-tailed Pigeon, Virginia's Warbler and other early migrants.

Departure Time: 6:30 AM

Return Time: 11:00 AM

Cost: \$35

Miles (one way): 20 miles

Time (one way): 30 minutes

Restroom facilities: No, but quick stop at convenience store on the way and return

Difficulty level: Easy to Moderate

10SAT Feeder Watching at Lignon's

Volunteer Leader: TBA

The home of retired University of New Mexico Biology faculty David and Sandra Ligon is a beautiful oasis on the east side of the Sandias. Permanent water on the property and extensive gardening and landscaping makes this a naturally birdy spot. Although we are a bit late for the peak of hummingbird season, the patio hummingbird feeders will allow close inspection of up to four species of hummingbird (Calliope, Black-chinned, Broad-tailed, Rufous), and the seed feeders and lush yard vegetation attract migrants and resident birds this time of year.

Departure Time: 6:30 AM

Return Time: 11:00 AM

Cost: \$35

Miles (one way): 18 miles

Time (one way): 30 minutes

Restroom facilities: No

Difficulty level: Easy

11SAT Bird Banding at Nature Center – CARPOOL Volunteer Leader: Steve and Nancy Cox

The Rio Grande Bird Research crew lead by Steve and Nancy Cox will open their long term banding operation to field trip participants on this half day trip. Late August should see an influx in local breeding species and migrants through the Rio Grande Bosque corridor. Participants will get close looks at the birds as they are being banded and will be able to birdwatch with the crew on net rounds. The banding crew will provide tutorials on how the birds being banded are aged and sexed.

Departure Time: 6:00 AM (Steve will leave entrance gate open from 5:45-6AM. Participants should park in parking lot.)

Return Time: 11:00 AM

Cost: \$35

Miles (one way): 4 miles

Time (one way): 15 minutes

Restroom facilities: Yes, at the visitor's center

Difficulty level: Easy

12 SAT Sandia Mountains

Volunteer Leader: TBA

This trip is an hour (25.7 miles, one way) van ride to the Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area (6800 ft) and Doc Long Picnic Area (7360 ft). These picnic areas have maintained trails at a slight incline which we will walk up slowly. The habitat in this part of the Sandias is Wavy Leaf Oak, ponderosa pine and then Quaking Aspen up higher. We should get views of Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeak, Band-tailed Pigeons, Juniper Titmouse, Broad-tailed and Black-chinned Hummingbird, Pygmy Nuthatch, and possibly a Northern Pygmy-Owl. This trip will also focus on the montane warblers of this area which should include: Grace's, MacGillivray's, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's), Virginia's, Orange-crowned, Black-throated Gray, and Townsend's. We can hope for a rarity such as a Hermit Warbler as well. There is a clean restroom at each of the picnic areas for our use.

Departure Time: 6:30 AM

Return Time: 11:00 AM

Cost: \$35

Miles (one way): ~26 miles

Time (one way): ~1 hr

Restroom facilities: Yes

Difficulty level: Moderate

13SAT Warbler ID Field Trip accompanying the Workshop--CARPOOL Volunteer Leaders: Tom Stephenson and Wezil Walraven

After a morning attending Tom Stephenson's Workshop, this will be an opportunity to put his techniques into practice. It takes about an hour to get to the lower reaches of the Sandia Mountains where more than one species of warblers can be found in August. Two picnic areas close to each other will provide multiple opportunities for viewing. There are maintained trails with only a slight incline and walking should be easy as you use Tom's techniques. The habitat in this part of the Sandias is Wavy Leaf Oak, ponderosa pine and in the higher areas, Quaking Aspen. This trip will focus on the montane warblers of the area which should include: Grace's, MacGillivray's, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's), Virginia's, Orange-crowned, Black-throated Gray, and Townsend's. We can hope for a rarity such as a Hermit Warbler as well. There is a clean restroom at each of the picnic areas for our use.

Departure Time: 6:30 AM

Return Time: 11:00 AM

Cost: \$0 [Previously paid when signing up for the workshop.]

Miles (one way): ~26 miles

Time (one way): ~1 hr

Restroom facilities: Yes

Difficulty level: Easy to Moderate

14SAT Student Programs Field Trip: Tingley Beach – Bosque Ponds Birding & Witt Lab--CARPOOL

Leaders: Homer Hansen & Guests

The field trip destination will be Tingley Beach – Bosque Ponds to spend the first half of the morning birding. Two ponds in the bosque hold many ducks, such as Wood Ducks and migrant teal species, and afford opportunities to study Mallard/Mexican Duck plumages. The bosque trails around the ponds are excellent for Summer Tanager, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Grosbeak, Greater Roadrunner, and Black-headed Grosbeak, as well as the migratory species Lazuli Bunting, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Green Heron.

After birding around the ponds and bosque, we will depart for Witt Lab to meet with graduate researchers. The researchers will share details about their projects. Witt Lab is working on projects about the phylogeny and phylogeography of Andean birds, the co-evolution of birds and malarial parasites, and high-altitude adaptations in hummingbirds. These research topics are well represented in the museum and many examples will be on display during our visit.

Tingley Beach – Bosque Ponds is an approximately 20 minute drive from the New Mexico Ballroom at Crowne Plaza. This field trip is planned specifically for the student scholarship recipients, other youths and students in attendance at the conference, and parents (as needed for drivers). The field trip will depart from the New Mexico Ballroom at Crowne Plaza. Young field ornithologists should plan to carpool with parents or trip leaders.

Witt Lab: The University of New Mexico Division of Birds maintains a research collection of over 40,000 birds, with global coverage. The museum focuses on the study of the biology and evolution of birds. The long term goal for Witt Lab is to build a data-rich specimen collection to facilitate studies of avian biodiversity across time and space. The lab's science is repeatable, extendable, and open. This is achieved by archiving research materials in public museum collections with online specimen data and reciprocal links to online data archives and peer-reviewed publications.

Departure Time: 6:30 AM

Return Time: 11:00 AM

Cost: \$0

Miles (one way): ~15 miles

Time (one way): ~25 minutes

Restroom facilities: Yes

Difficulty level: Easy

SATURDAY WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Saturday, August 24

All workshops are in the New Mexico Ballroom at the Crowne Plaza, Albuquerque

SAT-WS1 Workshop: "Beyond Beginning Ear Birding"

Workshop Leader: Nathan Pieplow

Time: 8:00—11:00 AM

Where: New Mexico Ballroom

Cost: \$30

Workshop Description: This workshop assumes you already have basic skills in bird sound identification, and want to reach the next level. We will take the techniques and terms taught in "A Shared Vocabulary for Bird Sounds" and apply them to common problems of audio identification in the western United States. You will learn key comparison species, key audio groups, and tricks for

demystifying difficult challenges such as female hummingbirds – techniques to help you move to the intermediate and advanced stages of birding by ear in the West.

Leader's Bio: **Nathan Pieplow** is the author of the *Peterson Field Guide to "Bird Sounds of Eastern North America"* and the forthcoming Peterson Field Guide to *"Bird Sounds of Western North America."* He has been fascinated by birds since his childhood in South Dakota and has intensively studied bird sounds since 2003. He is the founder of the bird sound blog Earbirding.com, one of the authors of the Colorado Birding Trail, and the former editor of the journal *Colorado Birds*. Nathan teaches writing at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

SAT-WS2 Workshop: "Illustrating Birds – From the Field to the Studio"

Workshop Leader: Bryce W. Robinson

Time: 8:00AM–11:00AM

Where: New Mexico Ballroom

Cost: \$30

Workshop Description: It is no coincidence that many talented birders and ornithologists also hold a desire to illustrate bird life. In fact, many bird experts such as David Sibley and Kenn Kauffmann, actively work to communicate their knowledge and passion through their illustrations. Bird illustration is a fundamental tool for bird study, since its process breaks down the basics of identification in an intimate manner. To create a recognizable image that resembles reality, one must master shape, proportion, components and structure, posture, and plumage. Through such intimate study, one becomes familiar with not only important identification characteristics, but the general character of each species as well, ultimately enhancing skills in field identification and enriching one's experience with birdlife.

In this workshop, we will learn how to develop skills in bird illustration so that you too can create captivating and informative representations of birds, no matter your drawing abilities. We will learn the proper approach to illustration, including which aspects to prioritize in order to create the best representation of your subject. We will then put this approach into practice as we work from photographs to 'build a bird'. We will separate each step, take it slow, and ultimately each participant will not only come away with a refined representation of a bird, but a better understanding of the birds character that will enhance your skills as you enter the field to join the afternoon or Sunday field trips.

Leader's Bio: **Bryce W. Robinson** is an ornithologist and illustrator. He has illustrated birds since he began birding as a child in Ithaca, New York. He has since studied birds across North and Central America, from illustrating McKay's Buntings on their breeding grounds on St. Matthew Island, Gyrfalcon at their nests in the Arctic Tundra, to Orange-breasted Falcons atop high cliffs in the Belizean forest. He is the author of many scientific publications, some of which feature his illustrations. He lives in Boise, Idaho, where he manages Ornithologi: A Studio for Bird Study. To see his work, visit www.ornithologi.com

SAT-WS3 Workshop: Birding "Best Practices" in the Digital Age

Workshop Leader: Ted Floyd

Time: 8:00AM–11:00AM

Where: New Mexico Ballroom

Cost: \$30

Workshop description: Every year, it seems, WFO offers a workshop on digital resources for birders and field ornithologists. Doesn't this ever get old? Answer: No—because the technology is advancing at a blistering rate. What we learned last year is outdated, and what we learned the year before is positively obsolete. In this workshop, we'll look at recent improvements and upgrades to Xeno-Canto, iNaturalist, eBird, and more; we'll also look at recent advances in digital photography, audio recording, and online social media. The workshop will blend a bit of classroom discussion with the experience of creating multimedia field notebooks while actually birding.

Leader's Bio: Ted Floyd Ted Floyd is Editor of *Birding*, published by the American Birding Association, and the author of various bird books, including *How to Know the Birds* (National Geographic, 2019). Introduced to WFO by Mike San Miguel nearly 20 years ago, Ted has been an enthusiastic WFO'er ever since, especially dedicated to conferences, *Western Birds*, and outreach to young field ornithologists.