

FRIDAY FIELD TRIP DESCRIPTIONS

Friday, August 23

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

**All trips by Van leaving from the Arizona Room 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.

1FRI Travertine Falls

--FULL--

Volunteer Leader: Dave Mehlman

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 Jays, 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

2FRI Embudo Canyon

--FULL--

Volunteer Leader: Kim Score

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

3FRI Embudito Canyon

Volunteer Leader: Bryan Calk

Similar to Embudo Canon, 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 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): 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

4FRI Three Gun Canyon **--FULL--**

Volunteer Leader: Ryan Terrill

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, Peregrine Falcons, 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

5FRI Otero Canyon

--FULL--

Volunteer Leader: Ashli Gorbet

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, 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

6FRI Valle de Oro NWR

--FULL--

Volunteer Leader: Michael Hilchey

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

7FRI Tramway Wetlands and adjacent bosque

--FULL--

Volunteer Leader: Matt Baumann

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

8FRI Rio Grande Nature Center

--FULL--

Volunteer Leader: Deven Kammerichs-Berke

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

9FRI San Antonito Open Space

--CANCELED--

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-chinned and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Plumbeous Vireo, Woodhouse's Jay, 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, except for a quick stop at convenience store on the way and return

Difficulty level: Easy to Moderate

10FRI Feeder Watching at the Lignons

Volunteer Leader: Kristen Oliver

The home of retired University of New Mexico Biology faculty David and Sandra Ligon is a beautiful oasis on the east side of the Sandia Mountains. 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

11FRI Petroglyph National Monument

Volunteer Leader: Oona Takano

This chain of fissure volcanoes hosts one of North America's largest petroglyph sites and is on Albuquerque's West Side. This impressive monument has a large trail system to walk and explore the cultural areas spread out across the site. Birding here can be quite productive as well. Habitat here consists of large volcanic rock outcroppings, four-winged saltbush, sagebrush, numerous grasses, and cholla cactus. Expected species in this area are both Rock and Canyon Wrens, Black-throated Sparrow, Crissal Thrasher, and Chihuahuan Raven. Prairie Falcon is always a possibility. This area is very exposed and may get hot early in the morning. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen, and appropriate clothing.

Departure Time: 6:30 AM
Return Time: 11:00 AM
Cost: \$35
Miles (one way): 8 miles
Time (one way): 15 minutes
Restroom facilities: Yes
Difficulty level: Easy to Moderate

12FRI Sandia Mountains

Volunteer Leader: Wezil Walraven

This trip departs at 6:30 AM from the hotel for a 1 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 Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeak, Band tailed Pigeons, Juniper Titmouse, Broad-tailed and Black-chinned Hummingbird, Pygmy Nuthatch, and the possibility of a Northern Pygmy-Owl. This trip will also focus on the montane warblers of this area which should include: Grace's, MacGillivray's, 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 restroom at each of the picnic areas.

Departure Time: 6:30 AM
Return Time: 11:00 AM
Cost: \$35
Miles (one way): ~25 miles
Time (one way): ~1 hr
Restroom facilities: Yes
Difficulty level: Easy

13FRI Owling Trip Friday Evening **--FULL--**

Volunteer Leader: Wezil Walraven

The Sandia Mountains are one of the best places in all of the United States to see Flammulated Owl. A special Friday evening trip will be led by Wezil Walraven to popular owling spots in the Sandia Mountains to look for this bird. In fact, Great Horned Owl, Western Screech-Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl and Flammulated Owls are all possible.

Departure Time: 6:30 PM

Return Time: 10:00 PM

Cost: \$35
Miles (one way): ~25 to 35 miles with several stops
Time (one way): ~1 hr
Restroom facilities: Yes
Difficulty level: Easy to Moderate

FRIDAY WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Friday, August 23

All workshops are in the Crowne Plaza New Mexico Ballroom except “Preparation of Bird Specimens”

FRI-WS1 Specimens Workshop: “Preparation of Bird Specimens”--CARPOOL

Workshop Leaders: Phil Unitt and Andy Johnson

Time: 7:15AM–11:00AM

Where: Arizona Room for carpooling to the University of New Mexico Museum 7:15 A.M.

Cost: \$30

Workshop description: Specimens are as fundamental to ornithology today as they have been for the past two centuries. This process is where science meets art, and preparing bird skins is a skill that must be handed down from one generation to the next, as from master to apprentice. In this workshop experienced WFO members and students will demonstrate some diverse ways in which research specimens of birds are prepared. We’ll talk about the kinds of information recorded during preparation and the ways in which specimens are used for research once prepared and integrated into museum collections. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about bird external and internal anatomy. We’ll show how we learn about molt, fat deposition (migration), gonadal development (breeding phenology), parasites, and diet during the process of specimen preparation. With multiple preparators demonstrating, participants can see the different approaches to preparing a specimen, different problems that certain taxonomic groups present, and different preparation types.

If you are experienced in skinning birds and would like to work on one with us, notify Andy Johnson (ajohnson@unm.edu) a week prior to the event so that we have adequate tools and specimens ready – even experienced preparators learn from each other.

The workshop will take place at the Museum of Southwestern Biology, about 3 miles from the Promenade at the Crowne Plaza. All participants must either carpool from the hotel at 7:15 AM or meet outside the museum at 7:30 AM.

Leaders’ Bios: **Phil Unitt** has served as editor of *Western Birds* since 1986 and as collection manager then curator of the Department of Birds and Mammals of the San Diego Natural History Museum since 1988. He is the author of the San Diego County Bird Atlas (2004) and co-author of *Birds of the Salton Sea* (2003), publications in which specimen and observational data are integrated. He has prepared more than 4000 bird specimens, from Calliope Hummingbirds to Common Loons and Canada Geese.

Andrew Johnson: Andrew Johnson has been the Bird Collection Manager at the Museum of Southwestern Biology, University of New Mexico since 2003. He has prepared thousands of bird specimens and teaches a course in how to prepare bird specimens at University of New Mexico.

FRI-WS2 Sound Workshop: “A Shared Vocabulary for Bird Sounds”

Workshop Leader: Nathan Pieplow

Time: 8:00AM–11:00AM

Where: New Mexico Ballroom

Cost: \$30

Workshop Description: In this workshop, you will work on advanced listening skills, paying attention to the fine details of a sound. Just as beginning birders learn the different parts of the bird and how to distinguish colors like “buff” and “rufous,” you will learn the different parts of a sound and how to distinguish tone qualities like “burry” and “polyphonic.” In the process, you will learn a common vocabulary for describing bird sounds. You will also study how to visualize sounds and read spectrograms. No matter what your level of experience, this workshop will help you listen to sounds more analytically, describe them more accurately, and use them more effectively in identifying birds.

Leader’s Bio: Nathan Pieplow is the author of the Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds, published in two volumes (Eastern and 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 and rhetoric at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

FRI-WS3 Data Mining: Finding Bird Information on the Internet

Workshop Leader: Ed Pandolfino

Time: 8:00AM–11:00AM

Where: New Mexico Ballroom

Cost: \$30

Workshop Description: Thanks to the Internet, staggering amounts of data are readily available to anyone with a computer. Buried in these mountains of raw data are gems of important information on bird distribution, population trends, responses to climate and habitat changes, etc. However, these data sources are woefully under-utilized. This provides an ideal opportunity for anyone with an interest in ornithology to make some important discoveries. Ed will show you how to access and use data from Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, eBird, Bird Banding Lab, National Weather Service, and more. Bring your wireless-capable laptop (with Excel software or an equivalent) if you have one and you'll see how easy it is to download and work with data from these sources.

Leader’s Bio: Ed Pandolfino: Ed is past president of Western Field Ornithologists and co-author of *Birds of the Sierra Nevada: Their Natural History, Status, and Distribution* (U.C. Press 2013). He is also an ex-biochemist, ex-business executive, and ex-rock and roll drummer and has published dozens of papers on bird status and distribution, most of which used 'mined' data.

FRI-WS4 13SAT Warbler Workshop and Field Trip: “Warbler Identification Made Easy” [This is a workshop and field trip. When you sign up for FRI-WS4, you’ll also be signed up for Saturday field trip.] **--FULL--**

Workshop Leader: Tom Stephenson

Time: 8:00AM–11:00AM

Where: New Mexico Ballroom

Cost: \$65 for Friday workshop PLUS Saturday field trip.

OR

FRI-WS5 Warbler Workshop Only: “Warbler Identification Made Easy” [This is a workshop only.]

Workshop Leader: Tom Stephenson

Time: 8:00AM–11:00AM

Where: New Mexico Ballroom

Cost: \$30 for Friday workshop only.

Workshop: Our warblers are some of the most beautiful birds of the world. But their beautiful colors often blind birders to many of their most important ID points. This problem is compounded by the often brief and obstructed views we have in the field. This talk discusses many of these very important but often overlooked ID points such as overall contrast, subtle facial features, color impressions, feather edging, rump contrast, and foraging style, location, and behavior. And fortunately, viewing a warbler from below can reveal some of the most important ID points for many species. Learn how many tail and undertail covert patterns are, in fact, diagnostic alone or when combined with one other ID point. Individual species, especially the most challenging to identify, will also be discussed with outlines of the important ID points, comparisons with similar species, and illustrations of how even partial views can be used to identify many of even the most challenging warbler species.

Leader's Bio: **Tom Stephenson** has been birding since he was a kid under the tutelage of Dr. Arthur Allen of Cornell University. Tom's articles and photographs are in museums and in many publications including *Birding*, *Birdwatcher's Digest*, *Handbook of the Birds of the World*, *Handbook of the Mammals of the World*, *Birds of Madagascar*, and *Guide to the Birds of SE Brazil*. Tom has lectured and guided many groups across the US as well as in Asia, where he trained guides for the government of Bhutan. He has donated numerous recordings of Eastern Himalayan rarities and other Asian species to Cornell's Macaulay Library of Natural sounds. He was on Zeiss's digiscoping team for the World Series of Birding and in 2011 his and Scott's team won the World Series Cape Island Cup. In 2014 Tom and Scott set the US record for a Photo Big Day, taking pictures of 208 species in one 24-hour period.

His latest book, *The Warbler Guide*, is published by Princeton University Press and recently won the National Outdoor Book Award. The Warbler Guide App, for iOS and Android, includes 3D rotating models and won the 2015 Design Award for AAUP Book, Jacket and Journal Show. His app, BirdGenie, is a "shazam" for bird song that helps bird enthusiasts identify over 150 common vocalizations in the eastern and western US by recording them on their smart phone. BirdGenie won the prestigious PROSE award from the American Association of Publishers. Tom is also working on new book and app projects for Princeton University Press on identifying and learning all North American bird songs as well as a Field Guide to the Birds of North America.