

ARIZONA



"Brilliant hummingbirds, exquisite warblers, bizarre roadrunners and huge condors all vie for our attention. Along with the landscape of your dreams and wonderful American hospitality, it's a trip to treasure." Darren Rees

Dates Sat 20 Apr - Sat 4 May 2019
 Price £4,795
 Deposit £950 Single Supp £800

Leaders Darren Rees and Duncan Macdonald
 Flights British Airways, scheduled
 Outbound: Afternoon, Heathrow-Phoenix
 Inbound: Overnight, Phoenix-Heathrow
 Weather Warm and sunny with the outside chance of showers. Grand Canyon is at altitude, so may be much cooler (15°-30°C)
 Walking 2-3 miles on tracks, occasionally steep and stony
 Walking boots recommended and sandals useful
 Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 14
 A variety of restaurants, from diners to homely guesthouse ranches
 Insects Uncommon, but may be encountered so bring repellent
 Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite
 Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

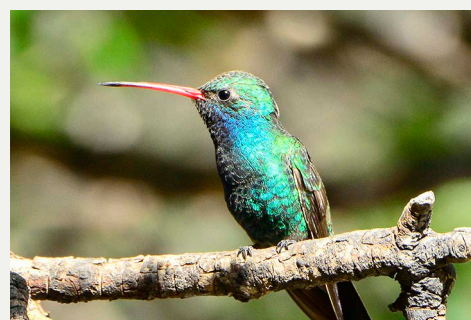
California Condor	Zone-tailed Hawk
Anna's Hummingbird	Greater Roadrunner
Costa's Hummingbird	Elegant Trogon
Magnificent Hummingbird	Vermillion Flycatcher
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Buff-breasted Flycatcher
Lucifer Hummingbird	Painted Redstart
Whiskered Screech Owl	Red-faced Warbler
Great Horned Owl	Cactus Wren
Elf Owl	Lazuli Bunting
Burrowing Owl	Pygmy Nuthatch
Mexican Spotted Owl	Hooded Skunk
Gambel's Quail	Ringtail
Montezuma's Quail	Coyote
Black Hawk	Gunnison's Prairie Dog

A stunning desert landscape and the Grandest of all Canyons. Join us on our tenth tour for magical scenery, colourful trogons, dazzling hummingbirds, vivid warblers and fantastic roadrunners.

- Inspiring landscapes, with 'mesas', 'buttes' and rugged 'sky islands'
- Fabulous Saguaro cacti and a desert in bloom
- Arizona specialities: Roadrunner, Painted Redstart and Red-faced Warbler
- Brilliant hummingbirds, expect ten species, including Magnificent and Lucifer
- Fantastic owls (nine species possible) and night critters (skunks and ringtails)
- Fabulous rural guesthouse ranches, with excellent locations
- The wonder of the Grand Canyon, with soaring condors!

1-3 After our flight to Phoenix we head for our nearby hotel. Refreshed, our Arizona adventure starts by exploring the Sonoran Desert west of Tucson, where incredible stands of Saguaro Cacti dominate the landscape. We'll see Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Cactus Wren, Gila Woodpecker, Gambel's Quail and Curve-billed Thrasher and maybe local Burrowing Owl.

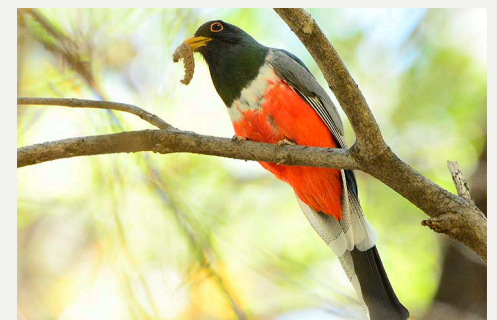
Green Valley is our base near the Santa Rita Mountains – one of Arizona's famed 'sky islands'. At Florida Wash we'll see more birds of the arid mesquite scrub including Lucy's Warbler, Black-throated Sparrow, Costa's Hummingbird or rare Rufous-winged Sparrow. Higher, in Madera Canyon, we'll check the hummingbird feeders – Arizona has more "hummer" species than anywhere in North America. Expect Black-chinned, Broad-billed and Magnificent for starters.



Shady wooded trails lead us to other special birds such as the exquisite Painted Redstart, Black-throated Gray Warbler and Arizona Woodpecker. An evening visit to the foothills is accompanied by the churrs of Lesser Nighthawks and the chuckles of Elf Owls - there are Great Horned and Whiskered Screech Owls too. We've even seen Coyote, Bobcat and Black Bear!

4-6 We drive east with birding breaks at Willcox Pools, where we'll scan the assorted shorebirds for American Avocet, Wilson's Phalarope or Long-billed Dowitcher. Arriving at scenic Cave Creek Ranch, we'll be entertained by the local wildlife at feeders right outside our cabins – both night and day!

We have two days to explore the beautiful Chiricahua Mountains, searching the ponderosa



"The Grand Canyon inspires, bewilders and humbles in equal measure. Standing on the South Rim, it's as if the Earth's crust has been ripped open before your very feet and you are left struggling to comprehend its vastness." Darren Rees



of pines for colourful Grace's and Olive Warbler and specialities such as Mexican Chickadee and Pygmy Nuthatch. At Cave Creek, luxuriant sycamores underneath towering red cliffs host much-prized Elegant Trogons and the bird feeders around our cabins are busy with more stunning hummingbirds, including dainty Broad-tailed and remarkable Blue-throated. Night time can be fun too, when those critters come looking for scraps – we've seen Striped and Hooded Skunks and beautiful Ringtails.

7-9 Our next base is the delightful Casa de San Pedro. Set alongside the San Pedro River, there's great birding within walking distance of our guesthouse, with Gray Hawk, Yellow-breasted Chat and brilliant Vermillion Flycatcher. The cottonwood trees along the river are busy with migrant birds such as Hooded Oriole, Ladder-backed Woodpecker and Ash-throated Flycatcher, while Black Phoebe hawk for insects. Nearby, the Huachuca Mountains are classic 'sky islands', where cool forested mountains rise from the surrounding desert.

At Miller Canyon we'll search for Montezuma's Quail, Red-faced Warbler, Buff-bellied Flycatcher, or maybe a roosting Spotted Owl, whilst Ash Canyon has Wild Turkey and rare "hummers" such as Lucifer or White-eared. Close to the Mexican border at Patagonia are the famous Paton's feeders. Rare Violet-crowned Hummingbirds will be a target species and we're sure to see colourful Lazuli Buntings, Lesser Goldfinch and Bullock's Orioles. We pass through the high grasslands



of Sonoita, where we'll look for Pronghorn, Golden Eagle and Prairie Falcon.

10 The long drive north takes us to the red rock country of scenic Sedona, where spectacular buttes and spires rise from green valleys – home to Brown-crested Flycatcher, American Dipper and rare Black Hawk.

11-13 We head further north through wonderful Oak Creek Canyon to lakes near Flagstaff, to see majestic Bald Eagles, as well as waterbirds including Western Grebe, Ruddy Duck and Green-winged Teal. We'll check the local Prairie Dog colony too! Late afternoon we arrive at our final base at Grand Canyon village, in time to watch the sunset over one of Earth's true wonders.

We have two full days to explore the incredible Grand Canyon - we can also arrange a scenic flight (optional extra). Here, birds are small players on a vast stage, but we'll look for huge winged California Condor amongst the many Turkey Vultures. A small re-introduced population of this, the largest North American bird, has been established in Grand Canyon National Park. Along trails through the Kaibab Forest of the South Rim, we'll find Juniper Titmouse, Rock Wren, Mountain Chickadee, Steller's Jay and Clark's Nutcracker.

14-15 We shall bird the San Francisco Mountains for Mountain Bluebird and Red Crossbill, enroute to Phoenix for our return flight, arriving in the UK on day 15.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Fly to Phoenix and transfer to our nearby hotel - 1 night Ramada Tempe
- Days 2-3** Birding the Sonoran desert enroute to Green Valley
Exploration of the Santa Rita Mountains
2 nights Best Western Green Valley
- Days 4-6** Transfer to the Chiricahua Mountains
3 nights Cave Creek Ranch
- Days 7-9** Drive west to Sierra Vista, two days to explore the Huachuca mountains
3 nights Casa de San Pedro
- Day 10** Drive north to red rock country at Sedona - 1 night Arabella Hotel
- Days 11-13** Two full days exploring the Grand Canyon South Rim
3 nights Thunderbird Lodge
- Days 14-15** Transfer to Phoenix airport for our flight arriving in the UK on the morning of Day 15

Mark Denman: Vermillion Flycatcher, Phainopepla, Elegant Trogon, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Blue-throated Hummingbird
Liz and Keith Barton: Grand Canyon