

# Now's the Time to Schedule the ULTIMATE Birding Trip and Vacation to Tucson and Southern Arizona

*Which state has the highest species list of any state without an ocean coastline? Arizona with over 560 species.*

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Combine your next bird-watching trip with a "regular vacation" in Tucson and Southern Arizona. Southern Arizona is considered one of the three best birding locations in North America. Tucson is a haven for historical and cultural attractions, along with an abundance of outdoor activities.

The diversity of birds are attracted by the varied elevations, lush Sonoran desert, and migratory flyways from south of the border. Migration schedules impact the diversity of species. Wintering birds begin leaving

in late February, and desert resident birds are nesting in March. The best birding season is between mid-April and mid-May, when millions of songbirds make their way north.

Listed below are 5 "combo locations" in which you can visit a birding hotspot along with a unique local attraction. It is perfect for birders traveling with someone more interested in museums, attractions, and other activities.

## 1. [AZ-Sonora Desert Museum](#) and [Saguaro National Park-West](#)

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is unlike any museum you have ever visited. It combines a zoo, aquarium, botanical garden, natural history museum, publisher, and art gallery, all in a single location. Plus, 85% of the attractions are outdoors. Two miles of walking paths connect natural displays of plants and animals native to the Sonoran Desert.



Black-tailed Gnatcatcher

[WWW.EXPLORETUCSONMOUNTAINS.COM](http://WWW.EXPLORETUCSONMOUNTAINS.COM)

Species Sighted -- 170

Common Sightings -- Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Verdin, Black-Tailed Gnat Catcher, Cactus Wren, Curved-bill Thrasher, Phainopepla, Canyon Towhee, Abert's Towhee, Pyrrhuloxia, and many others.

Saguaro National Park and it's Red Hills Visitor Center provide spectacular views of mountains and Saguaros right from its shaded back porch. The center has cultural and natural history exhibits of the Sonoran Desert.

Species Sighted -- 170

Common Sightings -- Rufous-winged Sparrow, Lesser Goldfinch, Costas Hummingbird, Gambel's Quail, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, American Kestrel, Verdin, Cactus Wren, Curved-bill Thrasher, Black-Throated Sparrow, Pyrrhuloxia, and many others.

## 2. [Sweetwater Wetlands](#) and Reid Park Zoo

Sweetwater Wetlands is a magnet for local and migrating birds. The park uses reclaimed water to create a riparian habitat. It serves as an environmental education facility and habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. It has more than 2.5 miles of pathways that visit several ponds surrounded by cattails, willows, and cottonwoods.

Species Sited -- 309

Common Sightings -- Vermilion Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Abert's Towhee, various wrens and warblers, Cooper's, Red-tailed, and Harris Hawks, Greater Roadrunners, Red-winged, Yellow-headed and Brewer's Blackbirds, various waterfowl, and many others.

Reid Park is a 131-acre park that includes a 24-acre zoo, baseball stadium, an outdoor performance center, two lakes, public pools, along with playgrounds, gardens, and picnic areas.

Species Sited -- 239



Cooper's Hawk



Roadrunner enjoying a meal of Western Diamondback Rattlesnake

Common Sightings -- Anna's, Black-chinned, Broad-billed & Costa's Hummingbirds, Cooper's, Red-tailed, & Harris's Hawks, Gila & Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Black & Say's Phoebes, Vermillion Flycatcher, Cassin's & Western Kingbirds, Yellow Warbler, and various waterfowl.

### 3. Sabino Canyon and Tanque Verde Wash

Sabino Canyon is a popular recreational area in the eastern foothills of the Catalina Mountains. The canyon is known for its stunning vistas, deep canyons, and waterfalls along Sabino Creek. A tram climbs up into the canyon with trailside interpretive information. There are miles of hiking trails that take you into the backcountry.

Species Sited -- 205

Common Sightings -- Phainopepla, Vermilion Flycatcher, Cactus Wren, Elf, Western Screech, & Great Horned Owls, Common Poorwill, Gambel's Quail, Curved-bill Thrasher, Black-throated Sparrow, Greater Roadrunner, Rufous-crowned & Black-chinned Sparrows, and many others.

The Tanque Verde Wash is a convenient metropolitan Tucson birding location. Still, you'll feel like you are far off the beaten path. The wash is dry most of the year but flows during the summer monsoon season. The area provides a beautiful habitat resource for native riparian birds and migratory birds, and other wildlife. It also acts as a travel corridor for wildlife.

Species Sited -- 217

Common Sightings -- Phainopepla, Vermilion Flycatcher, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Purple Martin, Summer & Hepatic Tanager, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, Blue Grosbeak, Chipping Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee, Orange-crowned Warbler, and many others.

If you have some extra time, plan a day trip to popular birding sports south of Tucson.

### 4. Madera Canyon and Canoa Ranch Conservation Park

Madera Canyon is one of the most famous birding areas in Arizona and the United States. The canyon is a riparian woodland with a shallow permanent creek. It is on the northern slopes of the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson. The canyon is a favorite area for birders, along with hikers, photographers, artists, and locals escaping the heat.

Species Sited -- 220

Common Sightings: Black-crested Titmouse, Cedar Waxwing, Chipping Sparrow, Western Wood-Pewee, Broad-tailed, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, & Rufous Hummingbirds, Violet-green Swallow, Pygmy Nuthatch, and many others.

Canoa Ranch Conservation Park is 4,800 acres of the original San Ignacio de la Canoa Grant and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Educational tours are available, including bird walks and stargazing events.

Species Sited -- 268

Common Sightings -- Tree Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Vesper Sparrow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Violet-green Swallow, Chihuahuan Raven, American Wigeon, Black-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and many others.

## 5. Ramsey Canyon and Patagonia Lake State Park

Ramsey Canyon Preserve surrounds a spring-fed stream within high canyon walls providing a moist, cool environment. The 280-acre preserve offers a haven for 14 species of hummingbirds. Inside the Visitor Center is the kid-friendly Please Touch Room with bird nests, snake skins, and other wildlife bits.

Species Sited -- 211

Common Sightings -- White-crowned Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Bridled Titmouse, Acorn Woodpecker, Broad-billed, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned & Rufous Hummingbirds, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Plumbeous Vireo, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Red-faced Warbler, Western & Hepatic Tanager, and many others.

Patagonia Lake State Park is a state park containing a 2.5-mile-long, 250-acre lake. It is a popular site for fishing, camping, boat rental, picnicking, hiking, and birding.

Species Sited -- 323

Common Sightings -- Pine Siskin, Horned/Eared Grebe, Lesser Goldfinch, Bufflehead, Mexican Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, Black-necked Stilt, Lincoln's Sparrow, Montezuma Quail, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Lark Bunting, Nashville Warbler, Western Bluebird, Black-headed Grosbeak Lesser Scaup, and many others.

Before planning your trip visit these recommended websites:

[www.tucsonaudubon.org/](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/)

[www.ExploreTucsonMountains.com](http://www.ExploreTucsonMountains.com)

[www.ebirdhotspots.com/birding-in-arizona](http://www.ebirdhotspots.com/birding-in-arizona)

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