

# Northern New Mexico Birding – *Truly Enchanted!*

June 14-21, 2025

Join GCBO's Board President Bob Friedrichs, and Executive Director Martin Hagne, for an enchanting and extremely scenic and enjoyable trip to Northern New Mexico. We will have six full days of birding (and two days travel).

## Tour Description:

Northern New Mexico is truly a Land of Enchantment. From the Rio Grande gorge, adjacent sagebrush flats, lush riparian corridors, conifer forests to alpine meadows and snow-covered peaks, the scenery and avian diversity is truly impressive.

In addition to the many montane breeders of the American west, we will search for such special species as Common Merganser, Flammulated Owl, American Dipper, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Juniper Titmouse, Pygmy Nuthatch, Pinyon Jay, Canada Jay, Bendire's Thrasher, Sage Thrasher, Pine Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak, Cassin's Finch, Sagebrush Sparrow, Lucy's Warbler, and hopefully love-struck Dusky Grouse dancing and hooting to attract the attention of an amorous female.

This unique tour offers the rare opportunity to enjoy alpine and high desert birding as well as awesome wildlife viewing and scenic beauty. Marvel at the majesty of the Rio Grande River Gorge while White-throated Swifts zip by and we search for nesting Golden Eagles or Peregrine Falcons on the cliff faces. Admire the splendor of the wide-open alpine parks of the Valle Vidal WMA while searching for Clark's Nutcracker and Hammond's Flycatcher. In addition to the promise of some exciting avian experiences, we will hopefully be treated to encounters with some of Americas mega (and not so mega) fauna like Elk, Mule Deer, Bighorn Sheep, Pronghorn, Fox, Coyote, Muskrat, Prairie Dog. We might even have chances for Pika, Beaver, Badger, with long-shot opportunities for River Otter and Black Bear.

Martin will draw from his many years of guiding tours in the Albuquerque area to get the group on some mesa and bosque avian specialties on our first day birding, along with our guest guide for Rio Rancho, Asher Gorbet. Bob looks forward to sharing his summer 'patch' with everyone, with visits to his favorite birding hot spots in Taos County of northern New Mexico. The itinerary is designed to maximize opportunities for the special breeding birds of northern New Mexico. That may entail quite a bit of driving some days. It's mostly easy birding with very short walks, but one location requires 4-mile walk (total) up (and back) into high elevation on a forest dirt trail.

And... we will enjoy Santa Fe and Spanish-colonial architecture, some delicious food at local restaurants (especially New Mexican green chile!), with the opportunities to sample the local wines and craft beers. You really don't want to miss this one!

## Itinerary:

### Day 1- Saturday, June 14

- Arrive Albuquerque, NM. Transfer to hotel via our vans, and check in. Group dinner, meet your guides, and go over trip, at local restaurant with NM cuisine
- Night in Rio Rancho, NM (West Albuquerque)

## **Day 2 - Sunday, June 15**

- Breakfast at hotel
- Today we will also be joined by local guide Asher Gorbet!
- Bird the Rio Rancho area NW of Albuquerque for Gambel's Quail, Bendire's Thrasher, Lucy's Warbler, Chihuahuan Meadowlark, Lazuli Bunting, and more. Sites may include the Rinconada Canyon at the Petroglyphs National Monument, Bosque Preserve, and the Mesas
- Lunch in Rio Rancho
- Continue birding in the area
- Dinner in Rio Rancho area
- Night in Rio Rancho, NM

## **Day 3 – Monday, June 16**

- Breakfast at hotel
- Travel day with birding stops: Drive to Red River with possible stops in Sante Fe (Randall Davey Audubon Center), Los Alamos (Pueblo Canyon) and Espanola (Ohkay Ohwingeh Fishing Lakes) for over-summering waterfowl, Acorn Woodpecker, Violet-green Swallow, Plumbeous Vireo, Pygmy Nuthatch, Red Crossbill, Grace's and Virginia Warblers
- Lunch in Los Alamos at Pajarito Brewpub and Grill
- Continued travel and birding stops
- Dinner in Red River at Texas Red's Steakhouse
- Night in Red River, NM – Home for the next 4 nights

## **Day 4 – Tuesday, June 17**

- Breakfast at hotel
- Bird Mascareñas and State Line Roads and Wild Scenic Rivers north of Questa for Sage Thrasher, Sagebrush Sparrow, White-throated Swift, Gray Flycatcher and Juniper Titmouse
- Lunch in Questa, NM at Franks
- Bird Red River Trout Hatchery Road for Grace's, Virginia and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Pygmy Nuthatch, Dusky Flycatcher, Plumbeous Vireo and Pygmy Nuthatch
- Dinner in Red River at Red River Brewing
- Possible owling time along Red River Trout Hatchery Road in evening
- Night in Red River, NM

## **Day 5 – Wednesday, June 18**

- Breakfast at hotel
- Transfer to New Mexico Adventure Company for an exciting ride in an open-air 4WD truck equipped with bench seating. We'll ascend to 10,500 feet and explore Midnight Meadows, Midnight Mines and Cabresto Lake in the Carson National Forest. Though at high elevation, we won't do much walking so the altitude should not hinder us much. Target birds are Dusky Grouse, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hammond's Flycatcher, Williamson's Sapsucker, Brown Creeper and Townsend's Solitaire. We also have a chance for Red Crossbill and Canada Jay
- Lunch today... Sack Lunch!
- Bird NM 578 (road) southeast of Red River. This may entail some walking while we target Wilson's Warbler, Lincoln Sparrow, Fox Sparrow and Green-tailed Towhee
- Dinner in Red River at *Madam's*
- Possible owling time along Red River Fish Hatchery Road in evening

- Night in Red River, NM

### **Day 6 – Thursday, June 19**

- Breakfast at hotel
- Drive to Costilla with short visit to Bob’s summer retreat for Pinyon Jays and whatever else are visiting his feeders and then to the Costilla Veery Stakeout hot spot to try for Fox Sparrow and Veery on territory. From here we drive to Amalia for a chance for American Dipper and then continue up to the Rio Costilla Park and the Valle Vidal. Targets here are Common Merganser, Hammond’s Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Cassin’s Finch, Evening Grosbeak, Mountain Bluebirds, Green-tailed Towhee, MacGullivray’s Warbler and more
- Lunch - sack lunch
- Continue exploring the Valle Vidal and Rio Costilla Park. Do any ‘mop-up’ needed on target species in sagebrush flats and Ponderosa forests along Red River Trout Hatchery Road
- Dinner in Red River at *Capo’s*
- Night in Red River, NM

### **Day 7 – Friday, June 20**

- Breakfast at hotel. Pack-up and check-out. Goodbye to Red River
- Drive to Taos Ski Valley (TSV) for an exhilarating hike to Williams Lake. The trail starts at over 10,000 ft and ascends through lush conifer forests to about 11,000 feet, with a 750 ft elevation gain over 2 miles (total 4 mile walk on a forest trail). Those who do not want to make this hike can casually bird the trailhead area and/or browse the TSV shops. Targets here are Pine Grosbeak, Canada Jay, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper with outside chance for Dusky Grouse or even American Goshawk
- Lunch in Taos Ski Valley, NM at Taos Ale House
- Drive down to Taos for breath-taking views of the Rio Grande Gorge and then continue onto the Orilla Verde of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument for more great views and a chance for Bighorn Sheep. Avian targets are Golden Eagle, Rock and Canyon Wren, Burrowing Owl, Black-throated and Rufous-crowned Sparrows and Black Phoebe. Continue to Albuquerque
- Dinner on way back to Albuquerque
- Night in Albuquerque near airport

### **Day 8 – Sunday, June 21**

- Breakfast at hotel on your own, and hotel shuttle to ABQ airport, and flights home

## **Trip Logistics and Info:**

### **Trip Fee:**

Single - \$2,875.00

Double - \$2,550.00

**Max Participants: 12**

**Travel:** two 12 passenger vans

**Arriving and Departing Airport:** Albuquerque International Sunport, NM (ABQ)

**Included in Fee:**

- Local bird guide(s)
- Hotel room
- Hotel breakfast
- Vans & fuel during trip
- Drivers for vans
- Entry fees & parking fees to parks
- Water in vans
- Some snacks in vans
- Insect spray in vans

**Does Not Include:**

- Flights to and from destination
- Meals (other than hotel breakfast and sack lunches)
- Tips for guide, meals
- Drinks & snacks (other than listed above)
- Alcoholic drinks
- Personal items

**Our New Mexico Guides:****Bob Friedrichs, President of Board of Directors of GCBO**

Bob joined the GCBO Board in January of 2019. He's an outdoor enthusiast, conservationist and avid birder who started birding at age 13 while a member of the Golden Nature Club in Victoria, Texas. His life list is 1956, ABA list is 761 and his Texas list is 560 species. Bob compiles the Victoria and Jackson-Calhoun Crescent Christmas Bird Counts. He is a certified Texas Master Naturalist with the Midcoast Chapter and spends most his time in the field conducting tours and surveying birds. He and his wife, Ruth, spend the summers in northern New Mexico and enjoy showing visitors the amazing avian denizens of this enchanted land.



**Martin Hagne, Executive Director of GCBO,**

Martin Hagne was born and raised on the Swedish west coast, where his grandfather instilled a love for nature at an early age. He moved to the United States, and the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, in 1979 and turned his focus towards wildlife viewing and conservation concerns. Martin serves as the Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in Lake Jackson, TX. Previously he served as the Executive Director of the Valley Nature Center in Weslaco, Texas, a non-profit environmental education facility, for 13 years. He has also worked as a Field Biologist doing base-line studies for many years, including avian (bird), reptile and amphibian, mammal, threatened and endangered species, and habitat studies. Martin has served on several national, state, regional and local environmental appointments, committees, and boards. He also leads birding field trips both in the U.S. and foreign locations. Birding, nature viewing, native plants, conservation issues and environmental education are great passions for Martin.



**Asher Gorbet (They/Them)**

Asher is a wildlife biologist and ornithologist based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Their work primarily focuses on songbirds: in particular, utilizing bird banding as a research tool to study songbird ecology. Over the years, Asher has worked with and studied a vast array of species including Black-throated Gray Warbler, Yellow-eyed Junco, Varied Bunting, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Acadian Flycatcher, Burrowing Owl, and many others. Asher is a North American Banding Council (NABC) certified bird banding trainer and a Director-at-Large for NABC; serves as a technical reviewer for American Birding Association magazines; volunteers with Rio Grande Bird Research; and serves on the board of Bird Alliance Central New Mexico. In their free time, Asher is a rabid traveler, dedicated cat parent, and an enthusiastic beekeeper. You're equally likely to find Asher in the woods hugging a tree or at home hugging their cats.







