



# Birding in Northwest Mexico

## October 7-18, 2026



The states of Sinaloa, Nayarit, and the northern part of Jalisco are known by the birding community as the great Western Mexico, this area is located along the eastern shores of the sea of Cortez, the foothills of the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre itself. The Sierra Madre Occidental is a high plateau of volcanic rock that is eroded in areas by rivers to reveal a basement composed of sedimentary rocks that have created some extraordinary habitat and numerous types of micro habitats, and it hosts an amazing number of endemic birds, reptiles, and plants. It's 10 days of a birding in this bird Mecca! Magpie-Jays and so much more!

### Geography and Route

Our trip will cover an area that runs parallel to the Pacific coast of Mexico, from central Sinaloa, south to the state of Nayarit, and getting just into northern Jalisco where it joins with the Sierra Madre del Sur and the Central Volcanic Belt. We will be birding in all major areas and habitats, from the lowlands with its iconic deciduous forest, to wetlands with red and black Mangroves, and the mountains with pines and cool climate.

### Climate and Terrain

The climate varies considerably between the northern and southern extents of this long mountain range and coastal areas. Seasonal variations also occur due to the presence of large bodies of warm water delivering warm damp air from each side of the range. This region undergoes a seasonal variety with two wet seasons, including a summer monsoon, and two dry seasons.

The main areas and climates we will visit include Mazatlan, San Blas and Puerto Vallarta with tropical semi deciduous forest, the average daily high temperature is 86 °F and low temperature is 70 °F, and daily humidity is 75%. The rainy season extends from mid June through late September.

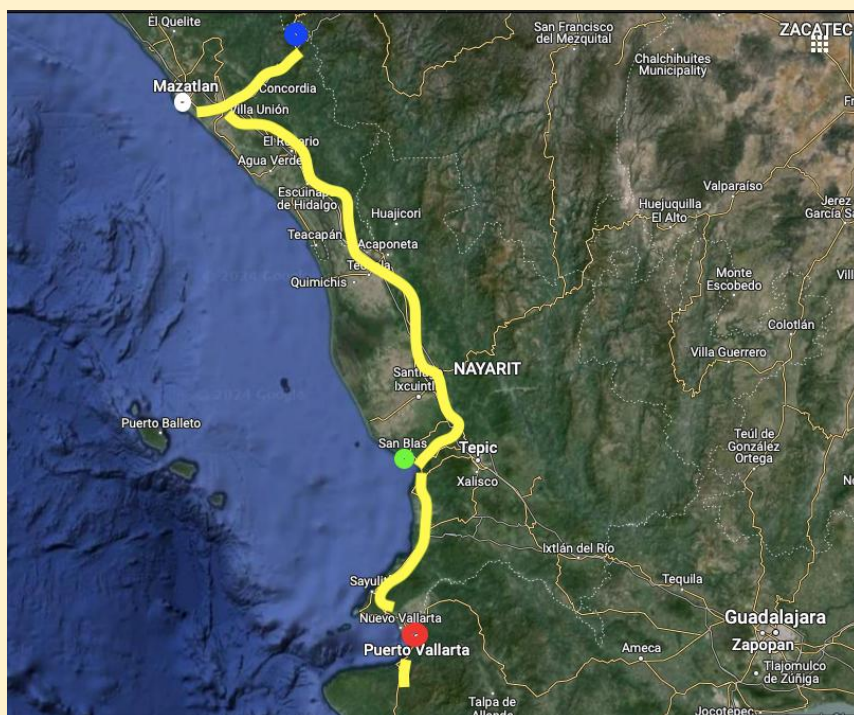
But we also spend time in the mountains of Sinaloa around 8,000ft where the climate is much cooler with temperatures that go from the mid 40 F to 65 F.

The white circle is the arrival point of the city of Mazatlan, the blue circle is the area near El Palmito where we will go up into the mountains, the green circle is the well known town of San Blas, and the red circle the big city of Puerto Vallarta where we will be birding just south into the great Rancho Primavera.

### NOTE:

**We will fly in to one airport, and out of another.**

**Depending on local situations in Sinaloa, some itinerary changes may occur.**



**Day 1 - Wednesday, Oct 7**

Arrival to General Rafael Buelna International Airport in Mazatlan - **Code: MZT**

Overnight in Mazatlan

**Day 2 - Thursday, Oct 8**

Birding in deciduous forest just NW of Mazatlan city into a private reserve where we will see Black-throated Magpie Jay, Purplish-backed Jay, Yellow-winged Cacique, Elegant Quail, Sinaloa Crows, Varied Buntings and many other great birds. We will enjoy a field lunch, and after birding we will head north in the Sierra Madre, where our goal is to reach the land of the enigmatic Tufted Jay. We will do some birding along the road and once we arrive to the Tufted Jay Reserve we will look for this iconic jay and other great birds. Some other endemics possible in the area include Red Warbler, Red-headed Tanager, Green-striped Brushfinch, and Blue Mockingbird. Overnight in Cabins at El Palmito.

**Day 3 - Friday, Oct 9**

Today will be the main day we will be looking for the striking Tufted Jay, other birds in the area include White-striped Woodcreeper, Green-striped Brushfinch, Stygian Owl, Blue mockingbird, and if we get lucky we may find Aztec Thrush, and many other good birds. After birding we will drive back to Mazatlan city.

Overnight in Mazatlán

**Day 4 - Saturday, Oct 10**

Birding near Mazatlán city for Black-capped Gnatcatcher, then we get a quick brunch and make a 4 hour drive to the town of San Blas in the state of Nayarit. At our arrival we will take an afternoon boat ride through the mangroves to look for Rufous-necked Wood Rail, and then wait for dusk to be able to find Northern Potoo.

Overnight in San Blas.

**Day 5 – Sunday, Oct 11**

Birding the forest near San Blas for Mexican Parrotlet, Rufous-Bellied Chachalaca, Rusty-crowned Ground Sparrow, West Mexican Euphonia, Gray-crowned Woodpecker, amongst many other great birds. In the middle of the day we will take a break and, in the afternoon, when temperatures are better we will enjoy some evening birding near the area.

Overnight in San Blas.

**Day 6 – Monday, Oct 12**

Birding the forest north of San Blas for Mexican Woodnymph, Golden Vireo, Brown-backed Solitaire, Mexican Hermit, Spotted Wrens, and chances for Gray-collared Becards. After lunch we will make another long drive to the state of Jalisco, our destination being the town of Punta de Mita.

Overnight in Punta Mita.

**Day 7 - Tuesday, Oct 13**

Today we will take some boats and check out the Marietas Islands. This area is a great place for Blue-footed Booby, Brown (Brewster') Booby, Heermann's Gull, Sooty Tern, Bridled Tern, and some other neat birds. These islands are the best example of volcanic activity in western Mexico with some extraordinary geological structures, and as they are the group of volcanic islands that are reachable. After birding and a great lunch, we will drive to the famous and amazing Rancho Primavera in the town of El Tuito just south of Puerto Vallarta.

Overnight in Rancho Primavera

**Day 8 - Wednesday, Oct 14**

Today we will visit the wonderful Military Macaw Reserve, an area that has been devoted to preserve this extraordinary species. Other birds in the area include White-striped Woodcreeper and Gray-collared Becard. Then we will enjoy the nice and breathtaking Vallarta Botanical Garden where we will enjoy a nice meal and the

birds of the area, including some endemics such as San Blas Jay, Yellow Grosbeak, Plain-capped Starthroat, and many other great birds and butterflies.

Overnight in Rancho Primavera

### **Day 9 - Thursday, Oct 15**

Birding the road to Yelapa, this dirt road goes through a wide range of habitats but the coastal area holds a pocket of tropical forest, home to some extraordinary species such as Russet-crowned motmot, Red-Crowned Ant Tanager, and chances for Black and White Hawk eagle, Black Hawk eagle and Ornate Hawk eagle, seeing all three species at once is rare but by being in the area anything is possible, we will explore all of this area with a nice field

lunch and get back to Rancho primavera for some great local birding.

Overnight in Rancho Primavera

### **Day 10 – Friday, Oct 16**

We will stay and bird the same general area as yesterday for additional chances for the any of the hawk-eagles.

Overnight in Rancho Primavera

### **Day 11 – Saturday, Oct 17**

Birding the famous grounds of Rancho Primavera for Rosy-thrush Tanager, Russet-crowned Motmot, Golden Cheeked Woodpecker, Blue Mockingbird, Citreoline Trogon, West Mexican Chachalacas, Black-throated Magpie Jay, Yellow Grosbeaks, and Rufous-backed Thrushes amongst many other cool birds. After a nice lunch we drive back to Puerto Vallarta to enjoy the area and prepare for our dinner and a nice rest.

Overnight in Puerto Vallarta.

### **Day 12 - Sunday, Oct 18**

Departure from Puerto Vallarta Airport. **Code PVR**

### **Trip Includes**

- Bird Guide(s), including local guides as needed
- Vehicle, Fuel, Driver
- Hotels (Double Occupancy, Single available with additional fee)
- All meals and beverages (alcohol additional)
- Boat ride
- Fees to protected areas
- Water in the van

### **Trip Does NOT Include**

- Airfare/Travel to meeting airport
- Tips to guides
- Alcoholic drinks
- Snacks
- Personal Incidentals

### **Trip Fee**

DOUBLE: \$4,600.00

SINGLE: \$5,250.00

**Max Participants** 10



## Our Guide

Eric Antonio Martinez was born in Oaxaca, Mexico. At the age of eight his passion for birds was born, which led him to travel throughout his entire country in search of endemic birds and regional specialties. In 2008 he spent two seasons at the Long Point Bird Observatory in Ontario, Canada, monitoring bird migration; he also worked at the Navopatia field station in southern Sonora Mexico and was part of a bird banding team at the Pemex Bird Observatory in Veracruz Mexico. He now owns Mexico Birding Tours which is one of the few Mexican-owned birding companies, and leads tours in Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz, the Yucatan peninsula, Baja California, and central México. Each year he spends a few weeks birding in Cuba with his Cuban wife Jilly and their daughter Dacnis.





