



Rio Grande Valley of Texas– The Mecca of Birding Nov 15-21, 2026

Join GCBO's Board President Mike Williams and Executive Director Martin Hagne for a sub-tropical birding extravaganza to one of the most bio diverse locations north of Mexico... the Rio Grande Valley of Texas! This is a true birding mecca, and we will spend 5 full days exploring many of the hotspots.

Tour Description:

The RGV is located in the middle between east and west of the US, a major fly going through it, it also borders the sub-tropics to the south, and temperate to the north, it has 12 biotic community within 4 counties, and 4 major habitat layers from the river and north. This creates a rich biodiversity rarely found elsewhere. Well over 500 bird species have been recorded here! That is more than all states except for 3 or 4. There are many species found only here within the US... so a must place to bird. Martin lived in the RGV for over 30 years, and heavily birded all of its fascinating locations. He also enjoys exploring the food scene... so be prepared to eat "local"!

We will chase Green Jay, Great Kiskadee, Black-crested Titmouse, Gray Hawk, White-tipped Dove, Olive Sparrow, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Harris's Hawk, Green Kingfisher, Ringed Kingfisher, Hook-billed Kite, Aplomado Falcon, Morelet's Seedeater, Scaled Quail, Audubon's and Altamira Oriole... and so much more! We plan to take a special tour of Santa Margarita Ranch for Mexican specialties only seen there... like Mottled Owl and Brown Jay, and hopefully others!

To get as many bird species as possible on our trip, we will explore many of these areas and habitats. We will do quite a bit of driving across the valley, especially east to west, to be able to accomplish this. We will also do quite a bit of walking some days, although it's mostly level and easy walking, except for the ranch which can be harder. There will be one very long and late day as well, and many early mornings. But the awesome birds make up for it all!

Itinerary:

1st Day – Sunday, 15th

- Arrive in McAllen International Airport (MFE) – by 3:00pm
- Check in to Hotel
- *Dinner & Trip Intro Meeting - Arturo's, Weslaco*
- *Stay in McAllen area*

2nd Day – Monday, 16th

- La Sal Vieja Salt Lake, San Miguel
- *Lunch – Willie B's BBQ, Edinburg*
- Edinburg Wetlands WBC, Edinburg
- *Dinner – Maria Cruz Plant Based, McAllen*
- *Stay in McAllen*

3rd Day – Tuesday, 17th

- Hwy 100 for Aplomado Falcon
- South Padre Island - Convention center board walks and flats, SPI Birding Nature Center, Valley Landfund Lots, Bridge flats
- *Lunch - Pirates Landing, Port Isabel*

- UTB Campus – Brownsville
- Resaca de La Palma SP – Brownsville
- Oliveira Park for parrots - Brownsville (arrive 4:30-5:00pm - Sunset 5:40pm)
- *Dinner – The Vermillion, Brownsville*
- *Stay in McAllen area*

4th Day – Wednesday, 18th

- Bentsen SP - Mission
- *Lunch – Fresco Green Deli*
- NABA Butterfly Park - Mission
- Pontoon Boat on the Rio Grande - Mission
- *Dinner – The Griffin Grill, McAllen*
- *Stay in McAllen*

5th Day – Thursday, 19th – Very Long Day!

- Salineno – DeWends feeders, upstream trail
- *Lunch – Picnic at Falcon SP*
- Falcon SP
- Santa Margarita Ranch - Special Tour and Owling, Roma ** Late Night!
- *Dinner – TBD*
- *Stay in McAllen area*

6th Day – Friday, 20th

- Estero Llano Grande SP, Weslaco
- *Lunch - Blue Onion, Weslaco*
- Santa Ana NWR, Alamo
- *Dinner – Republic of the Rio Grande, McAllen*
- *Stay in McAllen area*

7th Day – Saturday, 21th

- Check out of hotel
- Leave – McAllen Airport

Trip Logistics and Info:

Trip Fee:

Single - \$2,995.00
 Double - \$2,725.00

Max Participants: 8

Travel: One 12 passenger van

Arriving and Departing Airport: McAllen International Airport (MFE)

Included in Fee:

- Bird guides
- Hotel room
- Hotel breakfast (except if early on the road not paid for)

- Van & fuel during trip
- Driver for van (guide)
- Entry fees & parking fees to parks
- Water in van
- Some snacks in van
- Insect spray in van

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 Guides:

Mike Williams, Board President of GCBO

Mike originates from the UK and has been birding for over 50 years throughout Europe North and Central America and South-East Asia. For the last 20 years he has combined this with photography and has had his photographs published in many articles, newspapers and magazines. Since moving to Tx in 2003 he has seen over 550 birds in Texas and in 2022 his big year reached 500 species. He is a former and the current president of GCBO and a regular visitor to the Rio Grande Valley and indeed all over Texas and guides bird and photographers alike for GCBO. He is married with 3 kids and a graduate in Earth Sciences from Birmingham University.



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.











