



# Sabrewing Nature Tours

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## Birding the Rio Grande Valley *South Texas* with Eric Ripma

December 4 - 11, 2019



The Rio Grande Valley offers the chance to see a large number of species that are difficult or impossible to regularly see in the rest of the United States. We'll explore all the amazing birding destinations in the area while looking for these species as well as any rarities from Mexico that might also be around.

## **Itinerary Overview:**

December 4: Arrival at Harlingen airport and transfer to hotel in Brownsville – Birding for Parrots in the Evening  
December 5: Morning at Laguna Atascosa – Afternoon on South Padre Island  
December 6: Sabel Palm Sanctuary, Boca Chica Beach, and Transfer to McAllen  
December 7: Day in the McAllen area visiting a variety of preserves  
December 8: Salineno and San Ygnacio  
December 9: Day in the McAllen area visiting a variety of preserves  
December 10: Open day to chase missed target species  
December 11: Depart for Home

## **Detailed Itinerary:**

### **December 4: Arrival at Harlingen airport and transfer to hotel in Brownsville – Birding for Parrots in the Evening**

Upon arrival at Harlingen Airport (Valley International Airport) you will meet your guide for the trip and transfer to Brownsville, Texas. If time permits, we will look for Red-crowned Parrot and Green Parakeet in Brownsville this evening.

*Overnight: Brownsville, TX – Hampton Inn or similar*



Plain Chachalaca

### **December 5: Morning at Laguna Atascosa – Afternoon on South Padre Island**

We will begin this morning at Laguna Atascosa NWR. The main specialty of this area is the Aplomado Falcon. We'll also see many of the other targets for the trip such as White-tipped Dove, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Plain Chachalaca, Green Jay, Long-billed Thrasher, and Olive Sparrow. This area also has a diverse selection of waterfowl and sparrows for us to look for. In the afternoon we will head to South Padre Island. Here, we'll see many species of gulls, terns, shorebirds, and wading birds on the island.

*Overnight: Brownsville, TX – Hampton Inn or similar*

### **December 6: Sabel Palm Sanctuary, Boca Chica Beach, and Transfer to McAllen**

The morning will be spent at Sabal Palm Sanctuary. Many of the south Texas specialties should be seen including Least Grebe and Green Kingfisher. In the afternoon we'll head to Boca Chica Beach to look for more of the coastal species. The drive to the beach gives us an opportunity to look for the numerous raptors and sparrows that spend the winter in the area. Once we are finished at the beach, we'll transfer to McAllen.

*Overnight: McAllen, TX – Renaissance or similar*

### **December 7: Day in the McAllen area visiting a variety of preserves**

This part of the itinerary will be highly dependent on recent sightings in the area which your guide will be keeping up with. There are many birding locations in the area and we'll use our time to find as many species as possible. A few of the parks we may go to are Estero Llano Grande State Park, Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park, the Delta Lake area, Edinberg Scenic Wetlands, Frontera Audubon Center, Quinta Mazatlan, and Anzalduous Park. Practically all the specialties of the region will be possible, and many rare Mexican species may also show up.

*Overnight: McAllen, TX – Renaissance or similar*

### **December 8: Salineno and San Ygnacio**

As with yesterday, where we bird today will depend on recent bird sightings. We will head up the Rio Grande to birding locations such as Salineño, Falcon State Park, San Ygnacio, Roma Bluffs WBC, and Zapata. Targets include Muscovy Duck, Red-billed

Pigeon, White-collared Seedeater, and Audubon's Oriole. Vagrants from Mexico are also found in this region with regularity, so we'll have to keep our fingers crossed!

*Overnight: McAllen, TX – Renaissance or similar*

### **December 9: Day in the McAllen area visiting a variety of preserves**

Today will be very similar to December 7. We will continue to monitor bird reports and will make stops at whichever parks and preserves have the best birds!

*Overnight: McAllen, TX – Renaissance or similar*



Burrowing Owl

### **December 10: Open day to chase missed target species**

We will arrange this day to target the species we are still missing. We may head up the Rio Grande again or stay in the general area of McAllen. We will also spend some time in the countryside looking for species such as Sprague's Pipit, Mountain Plover, and Burrowing Owl. In the evening we will transfer back to Harlingen.

*Overnight: Harlingen, TX – Hampton Inn or similar*

### **December 11: Depart for Home**

## **Trip Details:**

#### **Cost:**

Price per person (double occupancy), from Harlingen, Texas: \$2,299

Single Supplement: \$475

#### **Price Includes:**

Expert Guides  
Ground Transportation  
All Lodging  
All Meals  
Park Entrance Fees

#### **Price Does Not Include:**

Airfare to and from Harlingen, Texas  
Passport and Visa Fees  
Alcoholic Beverages  
Personal Items  
Travel Insurance  
Tips

#### **Deposit:**

A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (September 4, 2019).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact Rob at [info@SabrewingNatureTours.com](mailto:info@SabrewingNatureTours.com) or by phone at 317-324-8505.



Sabrewing Nature Tours

## Rio Grande Valley 2019 - REGISTRATION

### Participant 1:

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Email

Phone

Passport Number – Expiration - Country of Origin  
(If not a US Citizen)

List current health and physical limitations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List any allergies and medications: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List any dietary restrictions or preferences: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

In Case of Emergency Please Notify:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Participant 2:

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Email

Phone

Passport Number – Expiration - Country of Origin  
(If not a US Citizen)

List current health and physical limitations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List any allergies and medications: \_\_\_\_\_

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List any dietary restrictions or preferences: \_\_\_\_\_

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In Case of Emergency Please Notify:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# Sabrewing Nature Tours

## Terms, Conditions, and Waiver

**TERMS:** To register for a tour or workshop please complete the above registration form and sign below to acknowledge the terms. Send this form along with you Tour/Workshop Registration Form and your deposit or full tour amount to Sabrewing Nature Tours (SNT) at the below address. Registrations will be processed on a first come first served basis. We will place your name on the waiting list if your tour is full.

The deposit for this trip is \$1,000 per participant. Deposits and all signed forms are required to secure registration of your spot on the tour. Deposits are refundable less a 20% processing fee ONLY if the spot can be filled with another participant at the full tour price. Deposits received after a tour has filled will be returned and your name will be placed on a waiting list. Payment in full is due at least 90 days prior to the start of the tour. Registrants who have not paid their remaining balance will forfeit their deposit and their place on the tour. Payment by personal check is strongly preferred. If you would like to pay with a credit card, additional fees will apply. We strongly suggest you consider trip insurance to cover you in the event of a medical or other emergency that would prohibit you from joining the tour.

The activity level required for each tour will be described on the tour page. If in doubt, please contact SNT to determine if a tour is right for you. Any physical or medical concerns including allergies and/or dietary restrictions should be communicated to SNT. All tours will be non-smoking during group activities including but not limited to meals, slide programs, vehicle travel and when birding/photographing in close proximity to other participants. Tour groups will be kept small for the enjoyment of all participants. Target group sizes are listed in each tour description on our web site. SNT reserves the right to exceed the target group size by no more than one participant.

Tours will be held regardless of weather conditions. Severe weather may dictate informal discussion and/or a slide program while we wait for the weather to break. Tours will begin at the scheduled time. Tardiness may result in missing the boat, or van so to speak. There are no guarantees in nature. Tours are designed to coincide with excellent nature viewing opportunities. Decisions will be made daily to determine where the group should be to maximize opportunities. Deviation from the scheduled itinerary may be necessary.

It is imperative that all participants follow rules and suggestions set forth by the leaders and/or local guides. Failure to comply could pose a safety risk to you or other tour participants. For the safety of all clients we reserve the right to restrict access to tour functions at any time.

Airfare is NOT included in the price of the tour unless otherwise noted on the tour page. Registered participants will receive more specific details of what to bring as well as a more detailed outline of what can be expected on the tour upon payment in full and no later than 60 days prior to the start of the tour.

Photo tour participants wishing to get the most from their tour will have a working knowledge of their camera equipment prior to the tour. Suggestions on exposure modes, camera settings and a variety of techniques will be verbalized throughout the tour. Do bring your camera's manual. Every camera is unique in its operation thus it is impossible to know every feature of every camera model. Participants will be put in the best locations to take advantage of the light, wind, and habitat. We will work to improve compositions and make suggestions to vary your perspective that will improve your resulting images. Participants will also learn techniques to successfully capture action and behavior images.

**Waiver:** I am aware that certain risks and dangers are inherent to nature travel and photography and may occur during a Sabrewing Nature Tours event and that such risk and dangers cannot be eliminated without diminishing the quality of the workshop/tour for which I have registered. Risks include but are not limited to theft or other loss of equipment or personal belongings; illness, injury, accident or death; travel hazards by air, boat, automobile or other vehicle; exposure to elements and other forces of nature and acts of God; both native and non-native wildlife, insects and flora as well as political, civil or military disturbance, strike, quarantine, government restriction and terrorist threat. I understand on or off trail hiking can present risk of falls that may result in damage to camera equipment, or significant personal injury or death. I understand Sabrewing Nature Tours is not responsible for inclement weather and cannot and does not guarantee subject matter will be available for photography on any given date or location. I further understand I am solely responsible for additional expenses incurred by me due to medical emergency or other travel delays, including but not limited to the expense of extra nights lodging or flight itinerary changes. I voluntarily assume all risks and will hold Sabrewing Nature Tours, its partners and cooperating agents, the workshop leader(s), any and all co-leaders, assistants and other participants harmless from any and all liability, actions, causes of action, claims, debts, and demands which arise in connection with the tour. The terms hereof shall serve as a release and assumption of risk for my heirs, administrators, and executors, and for all members of my family, including any minors accompanying me. In the event a lawsuit is filed, the enrolling participant agrees to do so solely in Hamilton County in the State of Indiana.

**I have read and agree with the above terms and conditions.**

Participant 1: Signature

Date

Participant 2: Signature

Date

**Please complete forms, sign the second form, and send them with your deposit or full tour amount.**