



WEST MEXICO TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE & WEST MEXICAN ENDEMIC

April 7-15, 2024

**Guide: Adam Sell &
Eric Antonio Martinez**
Maximum group size is 10 participants

Price: \$3575
Based on double occupancy
\$500 Single room supplement

Check out the trip website here: redhillbirding.com/westmexico

To register, fill out the booking form here: redhillbirding.com/bookingform

Mexico is well-known for its spectacular endemic birds, and incredible diversity of habitats. In Western Mexico, this maxim rings especially true. Outlined by the biologically rich Sierra Madre Occidental to the east, and the rugged Pacific coast to the west, this short tour takes us through coastlines, mangrove lagoons, dry forest, subtropical forest, pine-oak highlands and more. An epicenter of endemism, there are over 30 potential endemics for the trip, with targets ranging from the charismatic Tufted Jay to the diminutive Bumblebee Hummingbird.

If the birding wasn't good enough already, we have timed this trip to coincide with a total solar eclipse. Another total eclipse in our region isn't expected for 20 years, so this is our chance! We will be located right at the center of totality and will enjoy over 3 minutes of complete darkness!

We are staying at nice locations that put us close to our birding destinations and we will enjoy what most people think of when Mexico comes to mind – fantastic food! We hope you will join us on what will certainly be one of our more unique tours.

ITINERARY

Day 1, Sun, Apr 7. Arrival in Mazatlán. Night: Mazatlán.

Today is a dedicated arrival day to Mazatlán International Airport (MZT). There is no scheduled birding for this day, but we might look around if there is time. We will enjoy a meal together with the group and have a quick orientation before getting some sleep ahead of our exciting tour!

Day 2, Mon, Apr 8. Forest and coastal birding near Mazatlán and total eclipse experience. Night: Mazatlán

We will be up early today to enjoy some birding at a private reserve north of Mazatlán where we will look for Rufous-bellied Chachalaca, Black-throated Magpie-Jay, Purplish-backed Jay, and Citreoline Trogon. We also have a good chance of finding Elegant Quail at this location.

After a great morning birding, and with a picnic lunch, we will enjoy the total eclipse, which includes over 3 minutes in totality! It will be fascinating to see how birds react to this event that will not occur in North America again until 2044.

In the evening, we will continue to bird around Mazatlán and look for lower elevation and coastal species like Cinnamon Hummingbird, Boat-billed Heron, Golden-cheeked Woodpecker, Sinaloa Wren and Sinaloa Crow. We could also see migrant shorebird species like Whimbrel and some migrant western specialties like Pacific-slope Flycatcher and MacGillivray's Warbler.

Day 3, Tue, Apr 9. Sierra Madre birding and Tufted Jay Reserve. Night near El Palmito

After some early morning birding around Mazatlán, we will make our east into highlands of the Sierra Madre, where our ultimate destination will be the Tufted Jay Reserve. One of the most enigmatic birds in all of North America, we will make a concerted effort to find this species while also searching for other Mexican endemics like Red Warbler, Green-striped Brushfinch, Red-headed Tanager and Eared Quetzal.

Day 4, Wed, Apr 10. Transfer to San Blas, evening mangrove boat ride. Night in San Blas

We will do some early morning birding in the mountains to clean up any montane species we are missing like Mountain Trogon, Russet Nightingale-Thrush, Rufous-capped Brushfinch, and Golden-browed Warbler. A large part of our day will be devoted to travelling to the town of San Blas in the Mexican state of Nayarit. In the late afternoon, we will enjoy a coastal mangrove boat ride, where we hope to find Rufous-necked Wood-Rail, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Mangrove Cuckoo, and many waders. As dusk falls, we will look for Common Pauraque and Northern Potoo.

Day 5, Thu, Apr 11. Birding around San Blas. Night in San Blas

Today, we will focus on taking advantage of the wonderful birding around San Blas. We will visit a few different habitats, including dry forest where we will look for Mexican Parrotlet, Rusty-crowned Ground-Sparrow, West Mexican Euphonia, Gray-crowned Woodpecker and many others.

Day 6, Fri, Apr 12. Highlands near San Blas and transfer to El Tuito. Night in El Tuito

We will start our birding in higher elevation outside of San Blas where a new suite of birds awaits. Some highlights on the morning could include Mexican Hermit, Mexican Woodnymph, Golden Vireo, Brown-backed Solitaire, Spotted Wren and Gray-collared Becard.

After lunch, we will start another longer drive to the beautiful colonial town of El Tuito, which is just south of Puerto Vallarta in the Mexican state of Jalisco.

Day 7, Sat, Apr 13. Military Macaw Reserve & Botanic Gardens. Night in El Tuito

Today will start with a visit to the fabulous Military Macaw Reserve, where land has been preserved to protect this magnificent species. We will also be looking for specialties like White-striped Woodcreeper, Black-headed Siskin and Yellow-winged Cacique. We will then head to have lunch and bird the beautiful grounds of the Puerto Vallarta Botanical Gardens. Here we will look for birds like Plain-capped Starthroat, San Blas Jay and Yellow Grosbeak.

Day 8, Sun, Apr 14. Rancho Primavera all day. Night near Puerto Vallarta

Rancho Primavera may be the most famous birding destination in West Mexico. With over 300 species seen on site, we will spend the day birding the grounds for many endemic and tropical species like West Mexican Chachalaca, Russet-crowned Motmot, Collared Forest-Falcon, Happy Wren, and Rosy Thrush-Tanager.

Day 9, Mon, Apr 15. Morning birding and departure

We will enjoy a final breakfast together, and if there is time in the morning, we will look for any birds that we still need. Otherwise, today is a dedicated departure day out of Puerto Vallarta's international airport (PVR). ¡Buen viaje!

IMPORTANT NOTES

Contact and registration information

Your Red Hill Birding tour manager for this trip is Adam Sell. To sign up, each participant should complete the [booking form](#). Once we receive the form, we will send you information about paying the trip deposit. If you have any questions before registering, please contact the office at info@redhillbirding.com.

Timing and logistics

The trip will begin in Mazatlán on the **evening of Sunday, April 7**. The international airport is the Mazatlán International Airport (MZT). April 7 is a dedicated arrival day, but if you are hoping to arrive earlier, please reach out to us and we can look at arranging accommodations.

The trip will end in Puerto Vallarta on the **morning of Monday, April 15**. The international airport is Lic. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz International Airport (PVR). Please arrange for your flights to be noon or later, as we plan on doing some birding in the morning.

Currently, there are no entry requirements for Mexico outside of a valid passport and there are no COVID-19 entry or exit requirements for travel to and from the United States. Please check the state department for the most updated visa and passport information before traveling.

Please do not book your flights until we confirm that the minimum number of participants (6) have registered for this tour.

Physical difficulty

This trip is **physically easy**. Although a lot of birding will be done from roadsides or wider trails, there can be some steeper trails in the mountains and some uneven trails throughout. Participants should be in reasonably good health and able to walk 2-3 miles at a slow, birder's pace. There might be times when going off-trail is beneficial for improved looks at some difficult species.

Pace

The **pace** of the trip is **moderate**. A typical day will have us up early to take advantage of early-morning bird activity and to beat the midday heat in this subtropical region. This trip travels between a few different locations, with a mix of one-night and two-night stays. Afternoons will be at a slower pace depending on bird activity, and if we are travelling between locations, we will do most of our driving during the heat of the day. When possible, we will take siestas to beat the afternoon heat before heading out for more birding in the evening hours. On some nights, we will have the option for additional nighttime birding.

Price

The price of the trip is **\$3575**. The trip price is based upon double-occupancy. The single room supplement for this trip is **\$500**. The price **includes** all meals (excluding alcoholic beverages) from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9; all transportation and accommodation during that period; a Red Hill Birding guide and fantastic local guide; any park entrance fees; and a bound checklist to keep track of sightings during the trip. It **does not include** alcoholic beverages, travel insurance, optional activities, snacks, laundry, tips (apart from local guide, driver and meals), or other items of a personal nature.

A deposit of **\$700 per person** and the submission of the [booking form](#) will secure your place on the trip. Upon receiving your booking form, we will send you deposit details. Final payment is due by January 7, 2024. We accept payment by Zelle, check, and bank transfer. We also accept payment by credit card with an additional 3.1% processing fee.

Hotels & Food

Accommodations will all be in quality hotels or lodges. Generally, there will be free wireless internet. We favor hotels that are convenient to our birding sites whenever possible. Our hotel on the final night in Puerto Vallarta will be located close to the airport. With food, most breakfast will either be early in the hotel before going birding, or taken from a local convenience store (Oxxo, etc.) to be enjoyed in the field. Lunches will usually be at sit-down restaurants, but we will have the occasional picnic lunch when it is beneficial for us to stay in the field longer. Dinners will be sit-down either at the hotel or at a nearby restaurant. Food will be good to excellent throughout, with an opportunity to enjoy the wonderful flavors of Mexican cuisine. We will have bottled water available on the trip for both drinking and brushing teeth, etc. If you bring a refillable water bottle, you will have ample opportunities to refill with filtered water. It is not recommended to drink the tap water on this tour.

Photography

The **photographic opportunities** are **good**. Although the primary focus of this tour is birding and we will not be making special accommodations for photographers, there will be plenty of opportunities to photograph birds, including some iconic and endemic species. Those interested in photography on this tour should come away with some excellent images.

Weather

In general, the weather in western Mexico is subtropical. The lowland forests and coastal habitats will be warm and some areas will be humid with temperatures in the low to mid-80s by midday with somewhat cooler mornings. The mountains, however, will be much cooler and will be best enjoyed with a light jacket or fleece in the morning. The morning temps could be in the upper 50s and low 60s, reaching the low to mid-70's by midday. Although this is a tropical region, we are visiting in the dry-season where sunny skies are the norm.

Packing considerations

You will generally want to wear comfortable, light-weight clothing. Long sleeves and long pants are recommended for sun and insect protection. Sturdy hiking boots will be beneficial on some trails and a warm sweater or mid-weight jacket is useful for cool mornings in the mountains. If you are prone to be cold, gloves and a hat for the mountain mornings could prove useful. Although we are visiting during the dry season, rain can happen. It would be wise to pack a rain jacket or an umbrella for the trip.

In terms of gear, you will want to bring the usual binoculars, field guide, hat, camera, and other gear you are accustomed to going birding with. A reusable water bottle and, for coffee drinkers, a travel coffee mug, are useful to have along in the car during the day. You will want to bring sunscreen and insect repellent as well.

Tipping

We aim to provide **exceptional service**, using guides that are knowledgeable, interesting, personable, and experienced. While tipping is never expected, if you feel that your guides went above and beyond, you are welcome to leave them a gratuity. Tips at restaurants are included in the cost of the tour.

Travel insurance

We do not require travel insurance for international travel. However, we recommend purchasing it to help protect you against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, go to www.travelexinsurance.com or contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 13-0441.

Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. Travel Insurance is underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276. 55Y

Note that to be eligible for some benefits, travel insurance must be purchased within 1-2 weeks of paying the trip deposit.