



Tucson Audubon and The Riverpark Inn Welcome You to the **TUCSON BIRD & WILDLIFE FESTIVAL** August 12–16, 2015 • At The Riverpark Inn

Read on for more details to help you prepare for your Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival experience. Additional information on visiting southeastern Arizona can be found online at www.tucsonaudubon.org/what-we-do/visit and www.visittucson.org . **See you soon!**

PLANNING YOUR TRIP:

We hope you will consider staying close to the Festival action at the Riverpark Inn, a longtime member of Tucson Audubon's Birds & Business Alliance.

Visit the Festival website for special Festival rates from the [Riverpark Inn](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/localinfo.html) and [Enterprise Rent-a-Car](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/localinfo.html): <http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/localinfo.html>

For information on Tucson's Sun Link streetcar and how it can help you navigate Tucson during your stay, visit their website: <http://www.sunlinkstreetcar.com>. Passes to ride the streetcar can be purchased at the Riverpark Inn's front desk during festival time.

Directions to the Riverpark Inn (Festival HQ and field trip starting point): 350 S. Freeway



From the North & West (Phoenix):

Get off I-10 at the Congress Street. Exit # 258 and continue straight ahead on the southbound Frontage Road. The Riverpark Inn will be on the right -- ½ block past Congress Street.

From the East (New Mexico):

Get off I-10 at the 29th Street Exit # 258. Turn left at Congress Street and go underneath the Freeway. Take an immediate left turn at Carl's Jr. onto the southbound Frontage Road. The Riverpark Inn will be on the right ½ block ahead.

From the South (Green Valley):

Get off I-19 North and merge onto I-10 West. Get off I-10 West at the Congress Street Exit # 258. Turn left at Congress Street and go underneath the Freeway. Take an immediate left turn at Carl's Jr. onto the southbound Frontage Road. The Riverpark Inn will be on the right ½ block ahead.

From Tucson International Airport: Exit Tucson International Airport on Tucson Boulevard and continue straight. Turn left onto Valencia Road. Turn right onto I-19 North. Get off I-19 North and merge onto I-10 West. Get off I-10 West at the Congress Street Exit # 258. Turn left at Congress Street and go underneath the Freeway. Take an immediate left turn at Carl's Jr. onto the southbound Frontage Road. The Riverpark Inn will be on the right ½ block ahead.

Directions to Sweetwater Wetlands

Click [here](#) for directions on our website and scroll down to the bottom of the page.

HEALTH:

The Arizona sun is intense in August. A broad-brimmed hat, proper clothing and a strong sunscreen lotion are essential. Much of our birding is at elevations between 4000 and 9000 feet. While none of our scheduled trips involve any strenuous activity at the higher altitudes, anyone with known cardiac or respiratory problems should consult his or her doctor before scheduling the trip. Birders and hikers should use common sense and be alert for venomous critters in desert and mountain areas. Arizona is blessed with the highest diversity of rattlesnakes in the world, with an incredible 12 species found in the state, and 9 species found just in southeastern Arizona. Trip Leaders actively look for reptiles and would certainly appreciate any spotted by participants! Scorpions are nocturnal and rarely seen, and the tarantulas often seen on the highways are not dangerous. Chiggers or biting insects may be encountered occasionally in moist areas and we suggest bringing insect repellents with a high concentration of DEET. Care must be taken, however, to avoid getting the DEET repellent on optical equipment as DEET dissolves rubber and plastic and can damage coated lenses. Camping supply stores and outfitters carry some reasonably effective alternatives that contain natural products and aren't corrosive.

The most likely injury for birders results from plant spines penetrating lightweight shoes. Almost every desert plant in Arizona is armed with thorns or spines. We recommend tough canvas or leather shoes of at least ankle height and cool trousers as the best safeguards.

We urge everyone to drink lots of water during outings and also to bring along some food to snack on (salty foods are best given the climate), especially for the full day trips. In the intense sun and low relative humidity of Arizona, it is easy to become dehydrated before you are even aware of it; drinking lots of water is the only sure way to avoid this. *Please help us reduce waste by refilling your bottle instead of drinking from disposable plastic water bottles and cups. Drinking water will be available in the hotel lobby all day long and in each van for refills during the field trips.*

CLIMATE:

Temperatures remain high in August, with daytime highs regularly crossing the 100 degree mark in the lowlands. Monsoonal rains occur throughout late July and August, regularly bringing severe thunderstorms (and cooler temps) in the afternoons. Mornings however typically have little rain, and as most trips are scheduled to end in the early afternoon, it is likely that trip participants will not experience any real complications from the rains. At the elevations where we spend most of our time (3000-6000 feet) the daytime highs average in the low 90's F and nighttime lows average about 70-75° F, although we do spend some time at lower elevations.

An important note for those who plan to explore on their own:

Please DO NOT park in washes or drive through any flowing water on roads! Flash floods carry an amazing amount of energy and cars regularly become stuck or overturned due to drivers trying to cross a flowing river or wash. "Wait it out, or change your route!"

FIELD CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT:

Don't forget to pack your:

- ✓ Binoculars!
- ✓ Sun Hat and Sunscreen
- ✓ Sturdy walking shoes
- ✓ Long pants (breathable material)
- ✓ Long- and short-sleeved cotton shirts
- ✓ Folding umbrella or lightweight rain gear
- ✓ Water Bottle or Canteen & Travel Mug

If applicable, consider bringing:

- ✓ Lightweight camp stool if standing for long periods of time is uncomfortable
- ✓ A red light (flashlight or headlamp) is recommended for Go Batty! workshop participants.

REGISTRATION & CHECK-IN:

When you arrive at the Riverpark Inn, please stop by the Festival Registration Zone (in the Palo Verde Room) to check in. At that time, you'll receive your Festival Welcome Packet. Your packet will include your nametag, personalized schedule of events, bird checklist, and meal tickets (if applicable). The Festival Registration Zone will be your one-stop shop for festival questions, local Tucson info, lost & found, etc. Stop by and say hello to our friendly volunteers!

FESTIVAL REGISTRATION ZONE HOURS

Thursday, Aug 13	12:00pm to 7:30pm		Palo Verde Room
Friday, Aug 14	4:30 to 6:00am	9:00am to 7:00pm	Palo Verde Room
Saturday, Aug 15	4:30 to 6:00am	9:00am to 7:00pm	Palo Verde Room
Sunday, Aug 16	4:30 to 6:00am	9:30am to 2:00pm	Palo Verde Room

FIELD TRIPS:

Pre-registration is required for all field trips. All trips depart from the Riverpark Inn, except where noted*. Vans will load from in front of the hotel. **Please plan to arrive a few minutes early as vans will depart on time!** We cannot accommodate any special pick up or drop off requests for field trip participants.

Vans will be coded by destination and signage in the lobby will direct you to your designated van. Coffee will be available in the lobby during early morning field trip departure time.

Water and a light snack will be provided in coolers on the vans. Lunches are provided on Full-Day field trips. Tour Leaders may carry a spotting scope for group use. Feel free to bring along your personal scope as well, especially if you are a digiscoper (the leader's scope should not be counted on for digiscoping as under most circumstances it will be needed for viewing birds by the trip participants). Don't forget your binoculars!

Please note the Border Patrol maintains immigration checkpoints along rural highways. All passengers should be prepared to state citizenship and show proof thereof if asked.

Birding Field Trips to Sweetwater Wetlands do not include transportation and participants are to meet the leader on site. For directions to Sweetwater, see above.

MEAL OPTIONS:

Breakfast buffet (for Riverpark Inn guests only) is served from 6:30 to 9:00am. Hotel guests who are departing on birding field trips before normal breakfast hours may opt to pick up an "Early Birder Breakfast To Go" at the front desk. Arrangements must be made with the Riverpark Front Desk by 9:00pm the night before.

The Terrace Café at the Riverpark Inn will be **open for lunch** on Friday and Saturday from 11:00am to 1:30pm and **open for dinner** on Friday and Saturday from 5:00pm to 9:00pm. There are many excellent restaurants that serve a variety of cuisines within a short distance of the hotel, in downtown Tucson, on 4th Avenue, and at the Mercado San Agustin. Stop by the Festival Registration Zone or Front Desk for ideas, and check out these links for meal and entertainment ideas: <http://mercadosanagustin.com/>, <http://www.downtowntucson.org/>, <http://visittucson.org>, and <http://www.fourthavenue.org/>.

EVENING ACTIVITIES:

THURSDAY 8/14

We'll kick off the Festival with the **Nightlife Social**, 5:00pm to 7:30pm in the Cactus Ballroom. This fun mixer offers registered participants a great chance to meet the trip leaders and other festival attendees! We'll also be revealing the results of the 5th annual Sky Islands Birding Cup Big Day competition held on August 12. The Nature Expo will be open.

FRIDAY 8/15

There will be an informal **Social Hour** open to the public (no-host bar) in the Lobby from 5:00pm to 6:30pm.

Pre-registration is required for the **Evening Program**, which will begin at 5:00pm. A social hour from 5:00pm – 6:00pm includes one drink ticket, entry to a heavy Hors D Oeuvres buffet, and a seat at **Rick Wright's Keynote Presentation** from 6:00-7:30pm in the Cactus Ballroom.

SATURDAY 8/16

There will be an informal **Social Hour** open to the public (no-host bar) in the Lobby from 5:00pm to 6:30pm.

Pre-registration is required for the **Evening Program**, which will begin at 5:00pm. A social hour from 5:00pm – 6:00pm includes one drink ticket, entry to a heavy Hors D Oeuvres buffet, and a seat at **Paul Baicich's Keynote Presentation** from 6:00-7:30pm in the Cactus Ballroom.

As mentioned above, the Terrace Café at the Riverpark Inn will be open for those who would like dinner after the presentations.

NATURE EXPO:

Stop by the Riverpark Ballroom to explore educational exhibits, and peruse nature-related vendor booths from 10am to 6pm on Friday & Saturday, and 10am to 2pm on Sunday! Enjoy Natural History talks in the Cactus Ballroom. More details are available online at: <http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/expo>

FREE KIDS' ACTIVITIES:

SATURDAY & SUNDAY

GO WILD! FAMILY DAY: 10am—3pm. More details available online.

SUNDAY

FREE YOUTH BIRDING FIELD TRIP (Ages 8-18): Click [here](#) to sign up.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FESTIVAL SPONSORS & PARTNERS!

