

Tucson Birding Trail Map

Over 350 species of birds have been seen in the Tucson metropolitan area. This map shows 45 birding sites in the greater metropolitan Tucson area and includes sites located in the City of Tucson, Town of Marana, Town of Oro Valley, unincorporated Pima County, City parks, a State Park, a National Park, and a National Forest.

Site descriptions are in alphabetical order and correspond to the numbers on the map. Below the map are suggested routes for a full day, or a half day, of birding. For large, complex birding areas like the Santa Catalina Mountains, or if you are birding outside the metro Tucson area, please consult Tucson Audubon's book *Finding Birds in Southeast Arizona*.

An online version of this map can be found at www.tucsonaudubon.org/tucsonbirdtrail

Icons that stand for amenities found at each location accompany each site description. None of the sites are fully wheelchair accessible, this icon  refers to partial accessibility.

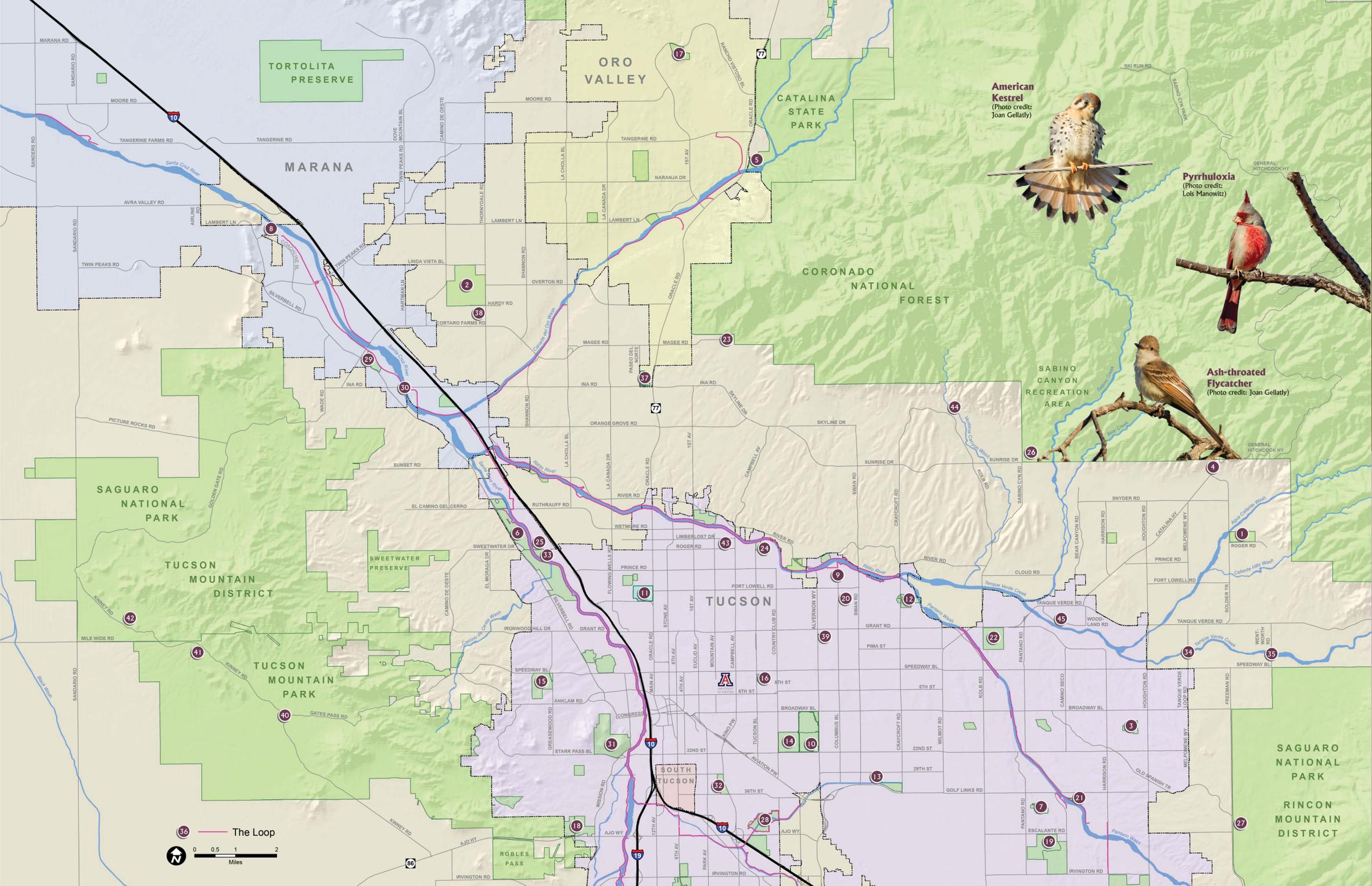
American Kestrel
(Photo credit: Joan Gellatly)



Pyrrhuloxia
(Photo credit: Lois Manowitz)



Ash-throated Flycatcher
(Photo credit: Joan Gellatly)



This map was produced by Tucson Audubon Society and Tucson Parks and Recreation Department with a grant from the Arizona Game and Fish Department Heritage Fund and Parks and Recreation Department.



For more information about traveling to southeast Arizona go to www.visitucson.org. For more information about birding in the region go to www.tucsonaudubon.org.



Habitat for the Mexican Jay
(Photo credit: Joan Gellatly)

They are found in various oak woodlands, including those mixed with pines, in canyons and lower slopes of mountains.



Habitat for the Lesser Goldfinch
(Photo credit: Joan Gellatly)

Found to feed in weedy fields, budding treetops, the brush of open areas and stream edges.

Birding Ethics

Approach birding with the health and safety of nesting birds and bird populations as your first priority. For more information on how to protect birds while birding, see the American Birding Association's statement of birding ethics at www.aba.org/about/ethics.html.

Reporting Birds

We strongly encourage birders to track their sightings in eBird (www.ebird.org). eBird facilitates listing the species you have seen and also makes the data available to scientists and other birders. Records of bird sightings are available on eBird for each of the sites described below (except The Loop), even if you don't have a free eBird account. If you see an unusual species, or one you think may be unusual, report it to the Rare Bird Alert at 520-629-0510 x3 or rarebirdalert@tucsonaudubon.org. For highly unusual sightings, gather enough information for evaluation by the Arizona Bird Committee (abc.azfo.org).

Health and Safety

Remember that you are in a desert. In addition to your binoculars and field guide, always take water and a hat and wear shoes that protect your feet. In this arid climate, dehydration can happen much faster than you'd expect, even when temperatures are not extreme. Carry and drink more water than you think you need. Since your body will lose electrolytes surprisingly fast in the desert air, also drink liquids formulated to restore electrolytes. Effects of dehydration and related loss of electrolytes can come on quickly, with disorientation and confusion being warning signs to heed. Long pants and long sleeves are recommended to protect from sunburn, thorny plants, and, during the summer monsoon, mosquitoes that may carry West Nile Virus. Be aware that your surroundings could contain rattlesnakes, Gila monsters, javelinas, coyotes, scorpions, and other animals that should not be approached. Watch where you step, reach, or sit. In the summer, be aware that rain can cause flash floods in usually-dry drainages, even if it is not raining at your location. Please stay on established roads and trails and always respect private property.



Habitat for the Bell's Vireo
(Photo credit: Lois Manowitz)

They are found in dense, low, shrubby vegetation, brushy fields, scrub oak, and mesquite brushlands, often near water.



Habitat for the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher
(Photo credit: Lois Manowitz)

They are found in and along dry washes, desert scrub vegetation and mesquite bosques. They like native thorny trees and shrubs.

Good Routes for Day Trips

birding sites may be combined to provide a great morning, or full day, of birding. Choose your own route or try one of the suggested routes listed.

Northeast Metro Tucson

Any time of year, but especially when the weather is warm, excellent birding can be found by going to lowland sites on the northeast side early in the morning and then up the Catalina/General Hitchcock Highway to Mt. Lemmon later. Start at any of the lowland sites along drainages (Woodland Road, Tanque Verde Loop Road, Wentworth Road, or Agua Caliente Park). Then drive up the General Hitchcock Highway stopping at places like Molino Basin, Bear Canyon, Rose Canyon, any trailhead parking areas (the Hummingbird Trail is a beautiful example), or the village of Summerhaven. Check out the ski area above Summerhaven and, when the gate is open seasonally, drive to the top of Mt. Lemmon.

Northwest Metro Tucson

Classic desert birding is found on the northwest side of Tucson. Take an early morning hike in either Honeybee Canyon or Catalina State Park (a large area that could easily be a full day in itself). Check the pond at Arthur Pack Park for wintering waterfowl and then finish the morning with a visit to the feeders at Tucson Audubon's Mason Center.

Santa Cruz River and Sweetwater Wetlands

The Santa Cruz River provides a fruitful day of birding in any season, though in the humid part of summer plan to start very early and finish early. In cooler weather a good combination would be to start with a walk along the river at Crossroads at Silverbell District Park in Marana then the Ina Road Bridge. Spend the rest of the morning at Sweetwater Wetlands. This trip can be done by bicycle as well as by car. In summer, birding at Sweetwater alone might use up all your birding time.

Central Tucson

Over-wintering rarities and spring migrants sometimes can be found at parks and cemeteries in central Tucson. You might start at Evergreen Cemetery looking on the lawns and in the mature trees for juncos, irrupting mountain birds like nuthatches and creepers, or rare eastern warblers. Work your way east through places such as Reid Park, Rio Vista Natural Resource Park, and Fort Lowell Park.

The Columbus Weed Patch and Fort Lowell Park

Visit the Weed Patch and the Rillito River at Swan Wetlands Ecosystem Restoration Project early in the day because there is little shade there. Then go on to Fort Lowell Park to visit the pond and walk around the shady areas of the park. Be sure to catch the view from the east parking lot in late March and early April around 8:30 a.m. for the Turkey Vulture liftoff. You can hit McCormick Park in between these two sites if you have time.

South Metro Tucson

Start at Kennedy Park for a scan of the lake. Then proceed east on Ajo Way to Sam Lena Park and Kino Environmental Restoration Project (KERP). Walk through Sam Lena Park looking north into the restoration area and then walk around the KERP to the southwest of the park to look for waterfowl and raptors. Finish your trip by going to Silverlake Park. The low-lying riparian area toward the north end of the park may be good in winter and in migration.

Gambel's Quail
(Photo credit: Joan Gellatly)

TUCSON BIRDING TRAIL

Promoting Wildlife Watching and Conservation in Greater Tucson

