2019 Davis Mountains Hummingbird Celebration Field Trip Descriptions

Evening with Victor Emanuel
DAY: Wednesday – August 21st
DESCRIPTION: Learn about Texas’ astronomy and history from University of Texas McDonald Observatory experts; gaze in awe at the Chihuahuan Desert Sky Islands from atop Mount Locke; understand the geology of the surrounding landscape; see hummingbirds and spend time with one of the world’s most noted ecotourism leaders, Victor Emanuel. Before the evening ends, we will learn about the observatory’s Dark Sky Initiative, which is very important to bird migration. Up to twenty people will be guests of Craig Nance, McDonald Observatory’s Superintendent and feast on a delicious dinner while enjoying evening twilight.
HIKING DIFFICULTY: EASY – ADA ACCESSIBLE
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: EASY
PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 20 Guests
TRIP TIME: 5:00 – 9:00 PM
PRICE: $125

Exceptional Hummingbirds & Breakfast
DAY: Thursday (2T), Friday (2F) & Sunday (2SU)
TRIP TIME: 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM
PARTICIPATION LIMIT: Friday (1 GROUP of 12) & Thursday & Sunday (2 GROUPS OF 12)
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: MODERATE TO ROUGH
PRICE: $65
DESCRIPTION: This is the 2019 Celebration’s “Hummingbird Nirvana.” Guests will enjoy a boxed breakfast on the way to Point of Rocks a geologic treasure on the Scenic Loop. The group will ascend to a much higher elevation (5,800 feet) into the Pine-Oak Woodlands ecology for viewing the area’s most diverse array of hummingbird species with potentially 8 species possible. Sit in comfort at a private residence and enjoy the sights and sounds of hummingbirds zipping all around you.
TARGET BIRDS: Rivoli’s, Lucifer, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Calliope, Broad-tailed and Rufous hummingbirds; Acorn Woodpecker, Black-headed Grosbeak, Hepatic and Western Tanagers. Anything can show up!

Simply Smart Hummingbird Photography
DAYS: Thursday (3T) & Sunday (3SU)
HIKING DIFFICULTY: SHORT UPHILL WALK AND ADA ACCESSIBLE
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: EASY
DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 12
TIME: 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM
PRICE: $175
WHAT TO BRING: Camera, Lenses, Tripod, Flash (optional), Spare Batteries, Spare Memory Cards
DESCRIPTION: Bring your camera gear. Join notable photographer and field guide, Lee Hoy of Big Bend Photo and Nature Tours, for the best little workshop showing smart and
simplified ways to get that best close-up shot of your favorite hummingbird. The group will carpool to the University of Texas McDonald Observatory for a morning of hummingbirds at a feeding station located at the observatory’s residential park. The group will return to Fort Davis around noon.

TARGET BIRDS: Rivoli’s, Lucifer, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Anna’s, Calliope, Broad-tailed, Rufous and Allen’s Hummingbirds. Anything could turn up!

Hummingbirds Extraordinaire & Lunch with Victor Emanuel

DAYS: Thursday (4T) & Friday (4F)
HIKING DIFFICULTY: Moderate
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: Rough
DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 10
TIME: 7:30 AM to 1:00 PM
PRICE: $100

This special field trip fee covers a delicious lunch and exceptional hummingbird viewing on private property in the Davis Mountains with Victor Emanuel.

TARGET BIRDS: Rivoli’s, Blue-throated, Broad-tailed, Calliope, Rufous, Lucifer’s, Black-chinned, Ruby-throated, Broad-billed Hummingbirds and other birds of higher elevations.

Hummingbird Gardens in the Mountains

DAYS: Friday (6F) & Saturday (6SA)
HIKING DIFFICULTY: EASY
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: EASY
DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 2 Groups of 12
TRIP TIME: 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM
PRICE: $35
DESCRIPTION: Enjoy a one-of-a-kind hummingbird experience. Feast your eyes on a variety of hummingbird species in beautiful high mountain settings. We will provide transportation and visit three lovely and different gardens at private ranch residences high in the Davis Mountains. Traveling to the Glover, Davis/Holmes, and Caldwell Ranches you will experience: 1) A charming ranch garden with loads of hummingbirds, 2) A stunning off-the-grid modern home featuring native plants, birds and a spectacular view of the Davis Mountains, and 3) A grand garden designed for wildlife and the owner’s love of sustainable living, conservation and fine art are features of their ranch. The two groups will be back in Fort Davis in time for lunch

TARGET BIRDS: Rivoli’s, Lucifer, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Anna’s, Calliope, Broad-tailed, Rufous and Allen’s Hummingbirds. Anything could turn up!

Birding Cibolo Creek Ranch with Victor Emanuel & Lunch

DATE: Saturday, August 24th
HIKING DIFFICULTY: EASY
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: EASY
PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 12 Guests  
TRIP TIME: 6:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
PRICE: $100  
DESCRIPTION: Enjoy the beauty and rich history of Cibolo Creek Ranch. Located 30 miles SSW of Marfa on US Hwy 67. This gorgeous ranch is not only visited by wonderful birds, but by famous stars and well-known personalities. Cibolo Creek Ranch is one of the oldest ranches in Texas. In 1857 Milton Faver, built his first fort, El Fortin del Cibolo, “Fort of the Buffalo,” as a trading and agriculture site along Cibolo Creek. While you’re here, you will traverse some of the ranches’ breathtaking 30,000 acres and explore the historic forts while birding along the way. Enjoy a delectable lunch prepared by the ranch chef and staff.

Digiscoping Hummingbirds  
DAYS: Friday  
HIKING DIFFICULTY: EASY  
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: EASY  
DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 10  
TIME: 8:30 to 11:00 AM  
DESCRIPTION: This field trip will travel to Cerro Colibri where Lonnie Wege, of Celestron, will demonstrate the NexYZ. This new adapter features three directional knobs (X, Y and Z axes) that perfectly align your phone’s camera with a scope eyepiece in seconds. It also includes tension adjustments to capture close-up images while in landscape mode with features preventing vignetting. The exciting NexYZ was recently highlighted in Bird Watcher magazine. This easy-to-use adapter will be available at a special price during the trade show. Celestron’s Hummingbird Scope will also be available at the Trade Show and one will be up “for bid” in the Celebration’s Silent Auction.

Hummingbird Feeding Frenzy  
DAYS: Thursday, Friday & Saturday  
HIKING DIFFICULTY: SHORT UPHILL WALK AND ADA ACCESSIBLE  
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: EASY  
DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 20  
TIME: Thursday (3:00 to 5:00 PM), Friday (3:30 to 5:30 PM), Saturday (8:30 to 11:00 AM)  
WHAT TO BRING: PORTABLE CHAIR  
DESCRIPTION: Visit two local residences and the beautiful gardens at each. Watch hummingbirds buzzing around feeders from the porch where leaders will help with bird identification. Five species of hummingbirds are usual during migration. TARGET BIRDS: Lucifer, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Calliope, Broad-tailed and Rufous Hummingbirds; Scaled Quail, Curve-billed Thrasher, Black-throated Sparrow, Scott’s Oriole, Summer Tanager, Black-headed and Blue Grosbeak are usually seen. Expect to see even more exciting birds!

Lucifer Madness -Christmas Mountains Oasis  
DAYS: FRIDAY & SATURDAY  
HIKING DIFFICULTY: EASY – Will work for ADA  
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: HIGH-CLEARANCE VEHICLE REQUIRED  
DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 20
**TIME:** 6:00 AM TO 1:00 PM  
**TRIP DESCRIPTION:** This is your chance to get great views of the fantastic Lucifer Hummingbird in its wild breeding environment in the Christmas Mountains. This trip is not for the “Faint of Heart.” We will drive 75+ miles south through Alpine on Hwy. 118 to a turn-off, then 30-minutes on very rough desert roads. If rain is predicted, come prepared – the roads are muddy. This location is a guaranteed spot for Lucifer Hummingbirds!  
**TARGET BIRDS:** Lucifer, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Anna’s, Calliope, Broad-tailed, Rufous Hummingbirds plus Varied Bunting, Willow Flycatcher, Scott’s Oriole, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher and maybe an Elf Owl.

### Hummingbird Banding Demonstrations - McDonald Observatory & TNC Preserve  
**DAYS:** FRIDAY and SATURDAY  
**HIKING DIFFICULTY:** EASY – ADA ACCESSIBLE  
**DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 20-40  
**TRIP TIME:** 8:00 AM-NOON  
**WHAT TO BRING:** PORTABLE CHAIR  
**DESCRIPTION:** Join Kelly Bryan and or Charles Floyd for the morning and learn fascinating information about hummingbirds in migration from perhaps the most knowledgeable hummingbird biologist in North America. Kelly Bryan has banded 20,000 hummingbirds and confirmed eighteen hummingbird species in the Trans-Pecos. Charles Floyd is President of West Texas Avian Research, Inc. He has banded over 20,000 Black-chinned Hummingbirds and recaptured the oldest known banded Black-chinned Hummingbird on record at 11 years of age. See the tiny birds up-close!  
**TARGET BIRDS:** Rivoli’s, Lucifer, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Anna’s, Calliope, Broad-tailed, Rufous and Allen’s Hummingbirds. Anything could turn up!

### Hummers & Cacti at CDRI  
**DAYS:** Thursday, Friday & Saturday  
**HIKING DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 16  
**TRIP TIME:** Thursday & Friday: 3:00 PM TO 5:00 PM Saturday: 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM  
**DESCRIPTION:** This is an easy 4-mile drive from Fort Davis south on Hwy 118 to the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center. (Please bring $4 cash and deliver to your tour leader.) CDRI is a great place to learn about the area’s unique plants and exciting desert/grassland birds. Your tour will include hummingbird watching on the beautiful deck of the Nature Center, followed by a stroll through the botanical garden, and a visit to the Cactus Greenhouse where staff biologists explain the propagation techniques of rare and threatened cacti of the Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem (all the while birding of course)!

### Lawn Chair Birding  
**DAYS:** Friday & Saturday  
**HIKING DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 16
### TRIP TIME:
- Friday 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM @ Francell Garden
- Friday 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM @ Sleeping Lion B&B
- Saturday 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM @ Limpia Crossing

### DESCRIPTION:
Take it easy! Grab your lawn chairs and bird in comfort at some of Fort Davis’ most beautiful homes and gardens. Each of the three trips will be to a different stunning location. Watch hummingbirds buzzing around feeders from the porch or yard where leaders will help with bird identification. Five species of hummingbirds are usual during migration.

### Elephant Mountain WMA
- **DAYS:** Friday, Saturday & Sunday
- **DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 10
- **HIKING DIFFICULTY:** EASY
- **TIME:** 6:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- **DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** EASY
- **DESCRIPTION:** Elephant Mountain WMA consists of 23,147 acres within the Trans-Pecos Ecological Region of West Texas. The most prominent feature of the area is Elephant Mountain (6,225 elevation) which extends from the northern to the southern property boundaries. The large flat-topped mountain of igneous origin rises nearly 2,000 feet above the surrounding tableland. The top of the mountain covers over 2,200 acres and is not open to the public to prevent disturbing the desert bighorn herd. Vegetation on Elephant Mountain WMA lies within a transition zone between the arid Chihuahuan Desert scrub to the south and high desert grasslands to the north.
- **TARGET BIRDS:** Eastern and Western Neotropical migrants in the riparian zone and grassland birds.

### Post Park & Gage Gardens
- **DAYS:** Saturday & Sunday
- **HIKING DIFFICULTY:** EASY
- **DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** EASY
- **DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 16
- **TRIP TIME:** 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM
- **SPECIAL NOTES:** RESTROOMS AVAILABLE; LUNCH AVAILABLE IN MARATHON
- **DESCRIPTION:** Birds Galore! Carpool to one of the regions’ best county parks and add birds to your southwestern lists. This is sure to be a great birding morning in search of desert and riparian birds near Marathon. We will focus on three areas in Brewster County that often produce some wonderful birds. The first stop is Post Park. The road to the park traverses scrubland and open habitat with a few livestock watering stations that attract birds. Once we arrive at the park, we’ll bird in the shade of giant trees along the banks of historic Peña Colorado Springs. Take easy birding walks in the park or sit and watch from a shady picnic table. This is a great migrant trap so just about anything is possible! The second location is at the beautiful Gage Gardens which provides a great stopover for migrants and a breeding location for resident birds. Our final stop is the Marathon Prairie Dog Town which is a fabulous area for grassland and open-habitat birds.
TARGET BIRDS: Scaled Quail, Greater Roadrunner, Swainson’s Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Horned Lark; Clay-colored, Brewer’s, and Cassin’s Sparrows; Say’s and Black Phoebes; Vermilion Flycatcher, Bronzed Cowbird and migrants.

Sandia Wetlands & Geology
DAYS: Saturday & Sunday
DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 16
HIKING DIFFICULTY: EASY
TIME: 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: EASY
DESCRIPTION: This is the only wetland tour and a chance to see shorebirds in the desert and the regions superb geology. It is one of the easier driving and walking trips on the Celebration schedule. (1+ hour drive to Balmorhea and the Sandia Wetlands). The drive is about 45 miles (one way) and traverses some of the most rugged, beautiful and impressive geology in Texas. During the return trip, depending on time, we will stop at notable geologic features such as Wild Rose Pass and Star Mountain where an interpretive geologist will help us better understand the unusual land formations. We will arrive early morning for shorebirds, sparrows and waterfowl at a private re-constructed desert wetland (or ciénega) open to the public and made possible by landowners Don and Ellen Weinacht. A historic and very large desert wetland would have occupied the area surrounding the San Solomon Springs site where Balmorhea State Park (with a spring-fed swimming pool) and Balmorhea Lake were built. The Sandia Wetlands help replicate habitat that is no longer available for shorebirds and wetland species. Helping with the restoration project at Sandia are The Nature Conservancy, Tierra Grande Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists with grants from the Ed Rachal Foundation and Duck’s Unlimited, and the SRSU Borderlands Institute.
TARGET BIRDS: A variety of shorebirds and waterfowl including Wilson’s Phalarope, Cinnamon Teal and White-faced Ibis.

Davis Mountains State Park
DAYS: Friday, Saturday & Sunday
HIKING DIFFICULTY: EASY – ADA Accessible
DRIVE DIFFICULTY: EASY
SPECIAL FEE: $3 PARK ENTRANCE
DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT: 12
TIME: Friday: 8:00 AM to Noon, Saturday: 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, Sunday: 8:00 – 11:00 AM
DESCRIPTION: This is an easy 6-mile drive to Davis Mountains State Park, a great place to see birds. (Bring $3 cash and deliver to the trip leader.) Check out the neat photo blinds with wonderful water features and feeding stations for hummingbirds and other wildlife. Enjoy the easy walk between the two blinds. Davis Mountains State Park is well known as a birding “Hot Spot.” The normal entrance fee of $5 per visit has been reduced to $3 throughout the Celebration event.
TARGET BIRDS: Ruby-throated, Black-chinned and Rufous Hummingbirds; Montezuma Quail, Wild Turkey, Zone-tailed Hawk, Acorn Woodpecker and migrants.
**Balmorhea Lake**

**DAYS:** SUNDAY  
**HIKING DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 10  
**TRIP TIME:** 6:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
**FEE:** $5 PER PERSON  

**DESCRIPTION:** Balmorhea Lake is located about 2 miles east of the town of Balmorhea – a mere 37 miles from Fort Davis. This spring-fed lake is one of the largest bodies of water in the Trans-Pecos. As a result, large numbers of birds congregate here. The lake functions as a storage facility for irrigation and the water level fluctuates greatly. In dry years the lake can be very low by mid-summer, while in wet years the lake may overflow into several areas. One of those areas is located on the west side of the lake at the base of an earthen dike. This pond is part of an extensive marsh and offers good birding opportunities. The southern edge of the lake is excellent for shorebirds in dry years when water levels are low. The east end of the lake is where the dam is located. Loons, diving ducks and Clark’s and Western Grebes favor this end of the lake in fall and winter. Below the dam is an area of sedges, reeds and salt cedar attracting its own array of unique birds. This trip is a must for those wishing to build an impressive county or even a Texas Big Year list.

**Alamito Creek Preserve - Dixon Water Foundation**

**DAYS:** Friday, Saturday & Sunday  
**DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 12  
**HIKING DIFFICULTY:** MODERATE  
**TIME:** 6:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
**DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** EASY  

**DESCRIPTION:** The Alamito Creek Preserve is in a lush riparian zone that is a major north/south bird migration corridor located in southern Presidio County. Whereas many other creeks in far West Texas have lost their bank-side tree canopy, this beautiful stretch of Alamito (Spanish for “little cottonwood”) is still lined by a thriving cottonwood community.  

**TARGET BIRDS:** Both eastern and western Neotropical migrants

**TNC Davis Mountains Preserve**

**DAYS:** Friday, Saturday & Sunday  
**DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 12  
**HIKING DIFFICULTY:** MODERATE TO HARD  
**TIME:** 7:00 AM TO 12:00 PM  
**DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** 4 WD OR HIGH-CLEARANCE VEHICLE REQUIRED  
**EXTRAS TO BRING:** STURDY HIKING SHOES  

**DESCRIPTION:** A Sky Island Adventure! This trip will focus on the pine and pinyon-juniper woodlands along Madera Creek on The Nature Conservancy’s Davis Mountains Preserve. We will drive up Madera Canyon Road to Wolf Den Canyon or Road Canyon, where we will bird some of the lower elevation pine stands. We may also swing by 48 Tank to check for water birds. There will be short hikes along the road and trails, all of which are relatively flat.
**TARGET BIRDS:** 'Mexican' Mallard, Montezuma Quail, Common Black Hawk (rare), Zone-tailed Hawk, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Acorn Woodpecker, Gray Flycatcher, Hutton’s Vireo, Plumbeous Vireo, Violet-green Swallow, Western Bluebird, Grace’s Warbler, Hepatic Tanager, Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak. Numerous other breeding species and migrants (flycatchers, warblers, etc.) should also be seen. Be prepared for several miles of hiking.

**Miller Ranch**

**DAYS:** Friday & Saturday  
**DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 12  
**HIKING DIFFICULTY:** Easy to Moderate  
**TRIP TIME:** 6:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
**DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DESCRIPTION:** Carpool for a 1-hr 10-minute drive to the historic C.E. Miller Ranch and Camp Holland – 52 miles. We drive paved roads from the Chamber to Valentine, then unpaved roads (If raining, the road is muddy and may be slippery.) to the ranch Hdqs where restrooms are available. We will arrive there early morning to see Gambel’s and Scaled Quail feeding. Then we will transfer to high-clearance ranch vehicles for a drive into the canyon for birding, a moderate hike and a tour of Camp Holland built by the U.S. Army in 1918 in response to Mexican bandit raids. The adventure really begins as we traverse the rugged canyon terrain of the Sierra Vieja Mountains in search of our  
**TARGET BIRDS:** Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, and Rufous Hummingbirds; Gambel’s and Scaled Quail; Golden Eagle, Phainopepla, Peregrine Falcon, Verdin, Canyon Wren and many more Neotropical species.

**Cibolo Creek Ranch – New for 2019**

**DAYS:** FRIDAY & SUNDAY  
**HIKING DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DRIVE DIFFICULTY:** EASY  
**DAILY PARTICIPATION LIMIT:** 10  
**TRIP TIME:** 6:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
**DESCRIPTION:** Enjoy the beauty and rich history of Cibolo Creek Ranch. Located 30 miles SSW of Marfa on US Hwy 67. This gorgeous ranch is not only visited by wonderful birds, but by famous stars and well-known personalities too! Cibolo Creek Ranch is one of the oldest ranches in Texas. In 1857 Milton Faver, built his first fort, El Fortin del Cibolo, “Fort of the Buffalo,” as a trading and agriculture site along Cibolo Creek. While you're here, you will traverse some of the breathtaking 30,000 acres and explore the historic forts while birding along the way.