

Bosque Del Apache



A celebration of Sandhills along the Rio Grande River in New Mexico

Every fall the Sandhill Cranes return to their wintering areas along the middle Rio Grande River in central New Mexico. They begin to arrive in early November in groups; their beautiful rolling call grows faintly in the frosty morning air as they approach. The 3,800 acre Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge has gained world-wide notoriety for the sheer abundance of Sandhills and Snowgeese that spend their winters here.

By late November over 10,000 Sandhills and 40,000 Snowgeese have all taken residence in the many ponds, sloughs and marshes that are protected within the reserve. They share the reserve with over 360 species of birds including the rare Aplomado Falcon, Northern Harriers, Ross's Geese, Herons, Eagles, Kites and Kestrels. In the drier habitat surrounding the reserve birds that characterize the Chihuahuan Desert are easily found; specialties like Crissal Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia and Ladder Backed Woodpecker can be found and photographed. In the upland grasslands habitats along the benches of the Rio Grande Pronghorn Antelope share the grasslands with Canyon Towhees and horned larks. In the waterways that twist down from the nearby mountains, ravines forested with Oak, Pine and Juniper support Spotted Owls, Acorn Woodpeckers, jays and many other southwest 'sky-island' specialties. There are so many opportunities to see and photograph wildlife that our days will be filled with amazing moments in this desert oasis.

Throughout the tour you'll be exposed to instruction, through workshops and hands-on experience, to apply and practice many different photographic techniques. We'll practice 'in-flights' and 'statics' and learn techniques for hand-holding, fill flash, macro-photography, composition, bracketing and shot-setup. In addition to access to unlimited photographic instruction we'll also be able to share an abundance of information about the local flora and fauna in the areas we explore. Jared is an experienced biologist and is very familiar with the ecology of the southwest; he's an expert at finding and working around the wildlife of this region... We hope you'll join us for a photographic experience that you'll remember for a lifetime!

Itinerary

The following schedule details each day's activities however the sequence and activities may be adjusted to suit group preferences and, of course, the inevitable shifts in weather.

Day One	Arrive in Albuquerque New Mexico and head south for Socorro. After settling in we'll head into the refuge for an afternoon shoot. Then back to the hotel for a night-time slideshow and workshop on nature photography .
Day Two	Dawn will be spent shooting Sandhills and Snowgeese in the refuge with an introduction to shooting images of birds in flight. The mid-day light is still beautiful as the air is crisp and clear and the sun stays low on the horizon. We'll spend time practicing composition and technique. Dusk will be spent catching 'in-flights' at the south end of the refuge.
Day Three	Begins with a dawn shoot on Sandhills and Snowgeese. After the dawn 'in-flight' session we'll head to the desert to find and photograph some desert specialties before returning to the refuge at dusk for some more in-flight practice.
Day Four	Practice, practice, practice – more in-flight opportunities each dawn and dusk....are you seeing the pattern? ;-). During the day we'll head up to the grasslands on the bench of the Rio Grande for pronghorns and then into the magical oak ravines of Box Canyon.
Day Five	Back to the refuge, and the surrounding desert areas, to try for Harriers, Kestrels, Kites, Falcons and anything else we can find. Dawn and dusk will again be spent practicing in-flights-by now you'll be getting some amazing shots as practice turns to perfection!
Day Six	Back to the refuge for our last full day on the reserve. We'll finish up targeting images (clients choice) that we are still after.
Day Seven	The dawn shoot will be our last chance to get magical in-flight shots of Sandhills and Snowgeese. Then back to Socorro to pack up, check out, get lunch and drive north to Albuquerque.
Day Eight	Head to the airport for our short flight home

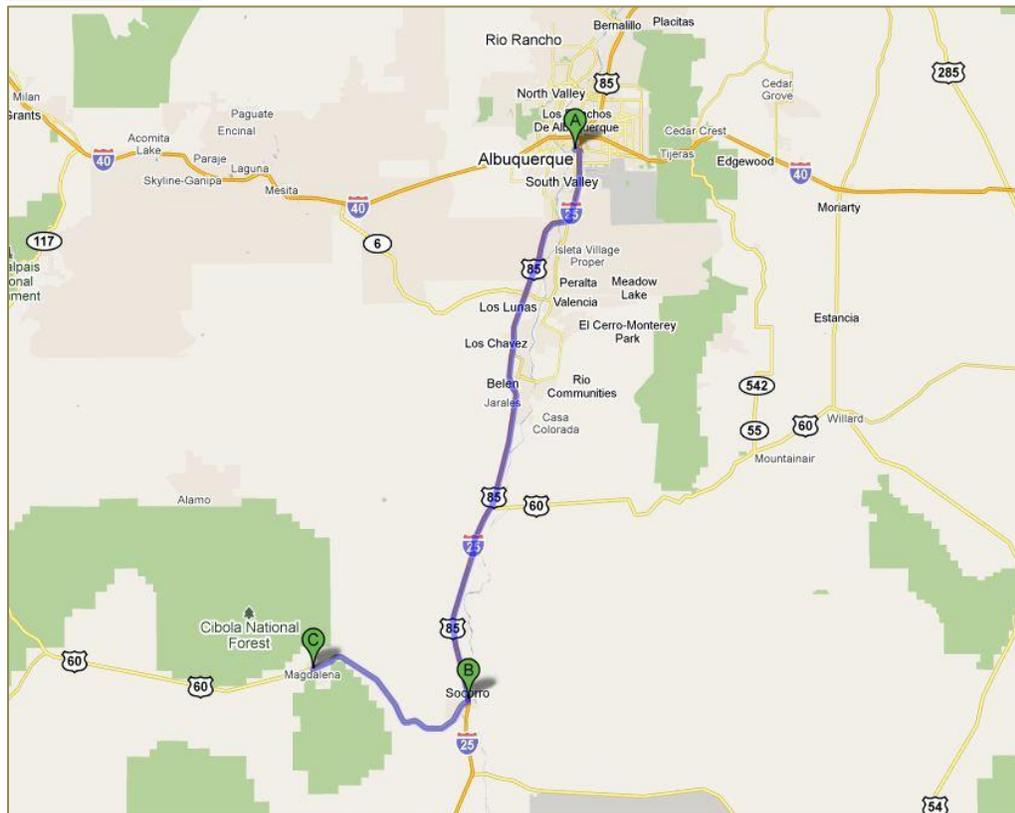
For a sample of the opportunities you'll be exposed to check out our online New Mexico 2010 and 2011 galleries:

2010: <http://www.hobbsphotos.com/index.php/galleries/view/71/>

2011: <http://www.hobbsphotos.com/index.php/galleries/view/89/>



Route Map



What to Bring

Deciding what gear to bring on a trip is a personal and subjective decision. You should consider cost (and budget), portability (although most of our photo-shoot locations are relatively close to a vehicle so weight and size of lenses is not a huge consideration) and versatility:

- Since wildlife photography is our prime objective, we recommend a telephoto lens ranging in size from 300 to 500mm, plus a 1.4x and/or 2.0 x tele-converters.
- For the macro workshop on our tour a macro lens is useful.
- To capture amazing desert scenic images be sure to bring wide-angle, "normal," and medium telephoto lenses to allow you to take advantage of a wide variety of subjects.
- A portable storage device to store and backup your amazing images!

Most of your lens needs can be fulfilled by high quality zoom lenses produced by the brand name camera manufacturers. A versatile camera bag might contain a 10-22mm zoom, 200-400mm zoom (or a straight 300mm telephoto) plus a 500mm F4 telephoto and a 1.4 and/or 2.0 extender.

Finally, since we won't be near any camera stores remember to bring spare batteries, charging devices, storage devices, polarizing filters and your flash unit. If possible, it's wise to bring an extra camera body in case your primary body malfunctions. It is extremely important to bring a tripod.

*The trip is ideally suited for 35mm digital photography but all formats are welcome.

Considerations

Proposed Tour Dates:

See website for next available tour dates.

Tour Cost:

Trip costs are updated on our website and are based on single occupancy rates. We will meet in Albuquerque on the scheduled tour start date. During the tour all meals, accommodation, transport and refuge entrance fees are included in the tour price.

Personal expenses not included in tour cost:

- Airfare to/from Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Alcoholic beverages
- Trip insurance or Medical expenses

Payment Terms:

- A **\$1,000.00** non-refundable deposit is required to reserve a space on this tour. The balance of the payment is due at least four weeks prior to the tour start date. For cancellations within 30 days of the tour start date all payments are non-refundable.

