



Visitors at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge may glimpse McAllen's official bird, the green jay (below).

ROAD TRIP

McAllen, Texas

Bird lovers flock to this verdant paradise.

DEEP IN THE SOUTHERN tip of the Lone Star State, along the twisting Rio Grande, there lies a 120-mile ribbon of lush, semi-tropical habitat that is home to a delightfully diverse number of birds and butterflies. Situated right in the heart of this natural paradise is McAllen, the region's largest city and the perfect base for a visit to the Rio Grande Valley.

Chief among McAllen attractions is the urban sanctuary of Quinta Mazatlan, a historic, Spanish Revival-style adobe hacienda with 20 acres of butterfly and bird habitat. Stroll under the shade of native plants as you admire buff-bellied hummingbirds, great kiskadees, green jays and Altamira orioles.

If you have a checklist of species to spot, stop at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, the Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center, and

the Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park. And be sure to add Estero Llano Grande State Park to your itinerary. Congregating there in the shallow waters are hundreds of wading and shorebirds, such as spoonbills and ibis.

One of the region's biggest events is the five-day Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, held every November. With some 500 documented bird species in the four-county area, this is a bird lover's bonanza.

In addition to birding, this Texas town, which began as a farming community, is esteemed for its museums, dining and shopping. You're sure to find something for everyone among McAllen's many art galleries, or in the restaurants and shops of Main Street.

SCOTT SCHILLER
Art Director



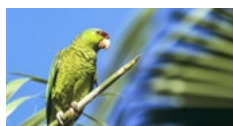
There's More to Explore in McAllen

Go to visitmcallen.com to find trip ideas and begin building an itinerary. Here are a few of our favorite, must-see spots to help you get started.

MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS HISTORY
mosthistory.org

NUEVO SANTANDER GALLERY
nuevosantander.com

NATIONAL BUTTERFLY CENTER
nationalbutterflycenter.org



Did you know?

The Rio Grande Valley boasts 39 bird species found nowhere else in the United States. It is also home to green parakeets and red-crowned parrots. Visit theworldbirdingcenter.com for details.