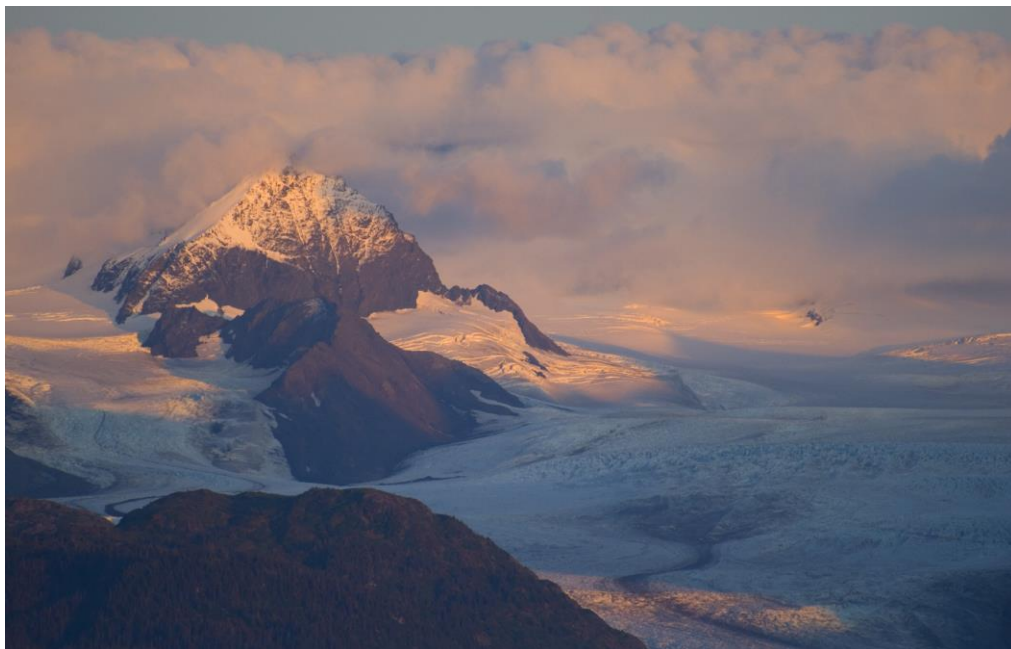


**Seven Ponds Nature Center's  
Amazing Alaska  
A Natural History Tour with Wilderness Birding  
Adventures  
August 17-28, 2020**



From the noisy seabird cliffs and whales of Kenai Fjords National Park, to the tundra wildflowers and large mammals of Denali National Park, we'll explore Alaska's various natural habitats on this 12-day road-based tour. By planes, trains, and automobiles we will experience the highlights of south central and south coastal Alaska; from Homer and Seward on the Kenai Peninsula to

Denali National Park. Plan on an adventure of a lifetime as we explore the tallest mountain in North America, travel by train through vast wilderness, encounter some of the largest sea mammals residing in the oceans, raft the Kenai River, hike glaciers, and experience what makes Alaska so wild. This trip is a wildlife purist's dream, and should be marked off everyone's bucket list!

**ITINERARY:**

**Day 1: Monday, August 17: Arrival Day**

Guests arrive in Anchorage, Alaska throughout the day. After collecting your luggage at the Anchorage Airport, call a shuttle from the Coast International Inn (907) 243-2233 for a very short transfer to your hotel.

Plan on meeting your trip leaders, Carrie Spencer and Nan Eagleson, in the lobby at 6:30 for a welcome dinner. Restaurant TBA.

Accommodations: Coast International Hotel, 3450 Aviation Ave, Anchorage (907) 243-2233.

Included meals: Dinner.

**Day 2: Tuesday, August 18: Anchorage to Denali (235 miles)**

We'll travel from Anchorage to our accommodations near the park entrance at Denali National Park where we'll spend three nights. The driving time today is about four hours. We'll break up the drive with scenic stops along the way, which may include a short walk at the Eagle River Nature Center. If skies are clear, there are multiple opportunities to view Denali along the road today.

Accommodations: McKinley Creekside Cabins.

Included meals: Breakfast at the hotel, picnic lunch.

### **Day 3: Wednesday, August 19: The Denali Area**

Today Nan will show us a few of her favorite spots around the park area. Nan has lived year-round at Denali Park for more than 25 years. It is literally her back and her front yard. Today will be a relaxing day checking out the forests and tundra in the area with at least one short hike.

Accommodations: McKinley Creekside Cabins.

Included meals: Breakfast at the hotel, picnic lunch.

### **Day 4: Thursday, August 20: Denali National Park Shuttle Bus Tour**

Today you'll explore Denali National Park via their shuttle bus system. Denali is perhaps the most popular destination in Alaska and the park manages the huge influx of visitors each summer by limiting vehicle traffic along the park road. Private vehicle traffic is restricted in the park; shuttle buses and tour buses are the primary way to travel the 90-mile park road and are the only vehicles allowed past the first 12 miles of the park road. Your bus trip into the park today makes frequent stops along the way to observe the rich diversity of large mammals that make the park famous. Wildlife viewing opportunities along the park road are great and on this trip, there is a good chance to see

grizzly bears, caribou, moose, Dall sheep, and, with luck, a wolf. If the skies are clear, we will hope to see Denali, the highest mountain in North America at 20,320 feet.

Accommodations: McKinley Creekside Cabins.

Included meals: Breakfast at the hotel, catered box lunch.



### **Day 5: Friday, August 21: Denali to Girdwood (274 miles)**

Today we'll have a leisurely morning before our drive to Girdwood, a small forested town about 45 minutes south of

Anchorage. At just under five hours, today is our longest drive of the trip. We'll make stops along the way, including a picnic lunch, to break up the drive.

Accommodations: Alyeska Hotel, Girdwood.

Included meals: Breakfast at the hotel, picnic lunch.

### **Day 6: Saturday, August 22: Girdwood to Seward (90 miles)**

We'll have an early departure from the hotel this morning so we can catch the 8:05 AM train to Seward. This scenic three-hour train ride cruises along the historic Alaska Railroad, which was completed in 1923. Breakfast is served on board.

Carrie, Nan, and the vans will be in Seward to meet the 11:00 AM arrival of the train. After checking in to the hotel, you'll have the rest of the afternoon to explore Seward. This may include a visit to the Alaska SeaLife Center, a hike to Exit Glacier, or free time to wander through downtown Seward.

Accommodations: Best Western, Edgewater, Seward.

Included meals: Breakfast on the train, picnic lunch.

### **Day 7: Sunday, August 23: Boat trip to Kenai Fjords National Park**

Leaving from the harbor in Seward we'll take an all-day boat trip out to Kenai Fjords National Park. This is a perhaps the most spectacular boat trip in Alaska. It's an excellent trip for encountering marine mammals including killer and humpback whales, harbor seals and Steller sea lions. On our

route, we'll pass active seabird colonies swarming with a variety of birds busily raising young during Alaska's brief summer. We'll also get up close and personal with the stunning scenery of coastal Alaska. We'll cruise by rocky coastlines where waterfalls crash to the sea, pass several glaciers, and approach at least one glacier where we may experience active calving of ice.



Most boat trips out of Seward are small ships catering to 100-150



passengers. On this all-day trip, we'll charter 43 foot, 15 passenger boat. This small boat experience allows for a more intimate experience with the incredible scenery and wildlife

and gives us greater flexibility over our route on the water. Caveat: this trip can be canceled or shortened, depending upon the weather and seas that day.

Back in Seward, we'll have dinner at a local restaurant. Our hotel is located in downtown Seward near the waterfront. For those interested, there are a number of shops nearby and a scenic walk along the waterfront.

Accommodations: Best Western, Edgewater, Seward.

Included meals: Breakfast at the hotel, lunch on-board the boat.

### **Day 8: Monday, August 24: Seward to Cooper Landing (57 miles)**

We'll have the morning to visit the Alaska SeaLife Center or a hike to Exit Glacier before our short drive to Cooper Landing on the very scenic Kenai River. This small river town is set along the beautiful glacial blue waters of the Kenai River. These waters are an important highway for migrating salmon which attract scores of fisherman each summer as well as brown and black bears, and bald eagles.

Accommodations: Kenai Riverside Lodge, Cooper Landing.

Included meals: Breakfast at the hotel, picnic lunch.

### **Day 9: Tuesday, August 25: Raft the Kenai River and then drive to Homer (120 miles)**

After breakfast at the lodge, we'll take about a two-hour rafting trip down the Kenai River. This relaxing (Class I and II) stretch of water is a great way to see the true beauty of the river as it winds through the forests of the Chugach National Forest. The rafts are rowed by an oarsman so you'll be able to enjoy the scenery, watch for wildlife, and photograph your trip. Black bears, brown bears, and moose are sometimes seen along the quiet bends in the river.

After taking out at Jim's Landing we'll get in the vans and drive to coastal town of Homer, set on the north side of Kachemak Bay. Ecologically, Kachemak Bay is fascinating because the line separating the wetter east side of the Kenai Peninsula from the drier west goes right through the bay and Homer is a transition zone between the rainforest and the boreal. Aesthetically, Homer is one of the most picturesque towns in Alaska and abounds with

opportunities to explore and experience the nature of south coastal Alaska. We'll base in Homer for three nights.

Accommodations: Homer area hotel.

Included meals: Breakfast at the lodge, Picnic lunch.

### **Day 10: Wednesday, August 26: Homer Area**

We'll spend the day exploring the natural areas of Homer,



including its expansive beaches and the famous Homer Spit. In the morning, we'll check out the forests above Homer at the Wynn Nature Center. The well maintained trails are an excellent way to check out the spruce and birch woodlands about 1000 feet above Kachemak Bay. From this height, views of the bay and the mountains to the south are superb. After a picnic lunch we'll visit the small but excellent Pratt Museum.

Accommodations: Homer area hotel.

Included meals: breakfast, picnic lunch.

### **Day 11: Thursday, August 27: Kachemak Bay Natural History Tour**

Today we'll take another small boat trip, this time in the relatively protected waters of Kachemak Bay. This four-hour trip will focus on the birds and marine mammals of the bay and get us up close and personal views of the fantastic seabird colonies at Gull Island. Photographic opportunities today will be excellent. We'll have lunch back on dry land on the famous Homer Spit. We'll leave the afternoon open for free time in Homer and on the Homer Spit. Accommodations: Homer area hotel. Included meals: breakfast, picnic lunch.



### **Day 12: Friday, August 28: Flight to Anchorage, then Home**

This morning we'll take a short 35 minute flight back to Anchorage to connect with your flight back home.

## **Tour Leaders:**

**Carrie Spencer** is the Chief Naturalist at Seven Ponds Nature Center, and enjoys sharing her knowledge and love of the natural world with others. She has led trips for the last 13 years, and is excited to explore Alaska with each and every one of you.

**Nan Eagleson** is our WBA tour guide. Nan is the head naturalist and instructor for the Denali Education Center. She has led WBA trips since 2002 with her remarkable breadth of knowledge, unbounded enthusiasm, and what seems like several lifetimes of experience.

## **Tour Fee:**

**\$7,000.00 and includes** Seven Ponds' Naturalist, WBA guide(s); lodging for 11 nights (double occupancy; airport transfers on day 1 and day 12; a welcome dinner on the first night; breakfasts and picnic lunches throughout; all ground transportation and water taxis; entrance fees at the Alaska SeaLife Center, Pratt Museum, Denali National Park, and Wynn and Eagle River Nature Centers; boat trip in Kenai Fjords National Park; boat trip in Kachemak Bay; rafting on the Kenai River; entrance fee and shuttle bus in Denali National Park; ticket on the Alaska Railroad from Girdwood to Seward on day 6; and flight from Homer to Anchorage on day 12.

**Participants who would like a single room may pay a single supplement of \$1,250.00 (subject to availability)**

**Not included in tour price:** airfare from home city to/from Anchorage; dinners (except for the welcome dinner); alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, and other items of personal nature. Additional costs incurred due to factors beyond the control of Seven Ponds Nature Center or Wilderness Birding Adventures will be the participants' responsibility (e.g. lodging, meals, etc. associated with weather delays, sickness, strikes, evacuations, political crises, etc.).

**To sign up for this trip please send your name, address, phone number, email, and a \$1000.00 deposit to Seven Ponds Nature Center, 3854 Crawford Road, Dryden, Michigan 48428. Full payment is due June 17, 2020.**

### **Cancellation Policy:**

In the event of cancellation, refunds will be made according to the following schedule. If a cancellation occurs before April 17<sup>th</sup>, a full refund including deposit (minus a \$100.00 administrative fee) will be made. If cancellation occurs after April 17<sup>th</sup>, we will only be able to provide a refund for the portion of the trip fee that is recoverable by Seven Ponds.

