

WESTERN WASHINGTON BIRDING TOUR

Birding the Scenic Pacific Northwest

September 3-12, 2021

A birding tour organized by *Seven Ponds Nature Center & Sea Quest Expeditions*

Join us as we explore the glaciated slopes and temperate rain forests of Olympic National Park, the scenic Cascade Range, the sage-steppe and prairie east of the Cascades, the rugged shoreline of the northwest coast, and the deep water canyons of the Pacific Ocean. Oh, the birds we'll see!



While our focus will be on birds, the magnificent scenery of the Pacific Northwest will provide a stunning backdrop for this tour as we explore the western Washington's Cascade Range, Olympic Peninsula, and coastal region. Late summer is an ideal time for birding this area as a wide diversity of waterbirds move southward along the coast, resident and migrating passerines are gathering in the woodlands, and the pelagic birds offshore are present in large numbers. The state of Washington has the seventh largest bird checklist of all the Lower 48 states, a testament to the diversity of habitat from border to border. During our tour we will explore many of these habitats, providing us with a chance to see an incredible variety of birds, from hummingbirds to albatrosses.

TOUR ITINERARY

Our daily activities will be flexible based on species we've seen to date and recent bird reports, but the following outline provides a preliminary plan of how we will spend our days. Plans are subject to change due to weather conditions and/or road and park closures. Note: the birds mentioned are not intended to be an exhaustive list – just a sampling of what may be found at each location.

Day 1 – Friday, September 3 - ARRIVAL DAY: Plan to arrive in Seattle no later than 12:30 PM. We plan to meet at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and drive north, then east, through the scenic north Cascades. This way we will be in a prime position for our first full day of birding on the east slope. Depending on how quickly we can leave Seattle, short stops are planned en route, including the **Mt. Hardy Burn** and possibly both **Rainy Pass** and **Washington Pass**. These stops may yield our first target birds of the tour, such as Sooty Grouse, Band-tailed Pigeon, Black Swift, Lewis's Woodpecker, and Varied Thrush, just to list a few. *Night in Winthrop.*



Day 2 – Saturday, September 4 - CASCADES EAST-SLOPE

BIRDING: Before first light we will seek Western Screech-Owl and Northern Pygmy-Owl in the vicinity of Winthrop. After a quick breakfast back at the hotel, we'll check out and begin our early morning quest, checking one or two **Winthrop parks** and possibly **Sun Mountain Lodge** and the **Patterson Lake area**, looking for California Quail, Dusky Grouse, Western Wood-Pewee, Hammond's Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, MacGillivray's Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, and others. Pastureland in the area will provide opportunities for both Mountain and Western bluebird as well as Western Meadowlark. By mid-morning we'll hook up with a portion of the **Pacific Crest Trail**. We'll hike 2.5-3 miles up the trail before turning back, hoping to find

many upper-elevation species including Canada Jay, Steller's Jay, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Chickadee, Townsend's Solitaire, Western Tanager, and Black-headed Grosbeak, among others. After our trail hike we'll begin the drive west to Whidbey Island and the town of Keystone, where we'll catch the car ferry to Port Townsend. While crossing the Puget Sound, we'll be on the lookout for water birds including scoters, grebes, phalaropes, Brandt's and Pelegic cormorants, and up to six alcid species, including possible Cassin's Auklet. Gulls could include Heerman's, California, Mew, and Glaucous-winged. *Night in Sequim.*

Day 3 – Sunday, September 5 - OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK & DUNGENESS RECREATION AREA:

We'll begin the day with another owling session, this time in search of pre-dawn Barn Owls. After breakfast back at the hotel, we'll depart for Olympic National Park, where we will spend the bulk of our day. In the lowland area of **Heart of the Hills Campground** our target birds include Pacific Wren, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Vaux's Swift, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. At **Hurricane Ridge** (5,200') we'll watch for Sooty Grouse, Violet-green Swallow, Red Crossbill, and other higher-elevation birds. We'll hike a few miles on the **Hurricane Hill trail**, where we may encounter raptors, mammals, wildflowers, and butterflies. Besides raptors, birds are sparse along the trail but could include Black Swift and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch. The scenery along



the trail promises to be memorable, with spectacular views possible far down below to Port Angeles, as far north as Vancouver Island, the San Juan Islands, and as far east as Mt. Baker in the North Cascades.

After our descent back down to sea level we'll spend the rest of our day birding the **Dungeness Recreation Area**, where we'll be looking for lowland birds such as California Quail, Anna's Hummingbird, Bushtit, Bewick's Wren, and Spotted Towhee. Golden-crowned Sparrows typically return by this day from Alaska, and in the coming days they should become abundant in many edge habitats. *Night in Sequim.*

Day 4 – Monday, September 6 - OLYMPIC PENINSULA SHORELINE & RAIN FOREST:

Owling this morning will find us in the **northeast Olympic foothills** for another shot at Northern Pygmy-Owl, as well as Varied Thrush and Sooty Grouse, both of which can be active in the pre-dawn forest. After breakfast back at the hotel, we'll check-out and begin a full day of coastal birding. Stops may include **Marilyn Nelson County Park, Graymarsh, Three Crabs**, and the **Oyster House** where our targets will include Surf Scoter, Red-necked, Eared, and Western grebes, Pacific Golden-Plover, Bar-tailed (rare) and Marbled godwits, Western Sandpiper, Pigeon Guillemot, Rhinoceros Auklet, plus gulls, loons, and cormorants. A walk up the **Dungeness River Hatchery** trail may turn up American Dipper, as well as additional chances for Red-breasted Sapsucker, Pacific Wren, and Varied Thrush among others. The jetty and open saltwater at **Ediz Hook** in Port Angeles provides an opportunity for Harlequin Duck, Pacific and Red-throated loons, scoters, grebes, cormorants, jaegers, as well as possible shorebirds including Black Turnstone. This is another good location for alcids, with seven possible but Common Murre, Rhinoceros Auklet, Pigeon Guillemot, and Marbled Murrelet most likely.



At the **Hoh Rain Forest** we'll search for lowland birds we've missed to this point. A couple hours at this location will give us time to study the site, which hosts some of the tallest and thickest-trunked trees on the planet and a dense forest lush with ferns, where moss may be a foot thick in some places and mushrooms of enormous variety occur. Brief beach stops on the way south may produce Brown Pelican, Black Oystercatcher, Wandering Tattler, Black Turnstone, and Surfbird. *Night in Ocean Shores.*

At the **Hoh Rain Forest** we'll search for lowland birds we've missed to this point. A couple hours at this location will give us time to study the site, which hosts some of the tallest and thickest-trunked trees on the planet and a dense forest lush with ferns, where moss may be a foot thick in some places and mushrooms of enormous variety occur. Brief beach stops on the way south may produce Brown Pelican, Black Oystercatcher, Wandering Tattler, Black Turnstone, and Surfbird. *Night in Ocean Shores.*



Day 5 – Tuesday, September 7 - OCEAN SHORES & GRAYS

HARBOR: We'll start the day with an early morning stop at **Ocean Shores Game Range**, a perennial favorite among birders that has turned up a long list of exciting rarities over the years. Here we'll try again for Pacific Golden-Plover as well as other key shorebirds. Rarities such as Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Ruff are nearly annual, though we may be just a bit early. At the **Brown Point Jetty** we'll search for Wandering Tattler, Black Turnstone, Black Oystercatcher, and Red-necked Phalarope along with myriad scoters, gulls, loons, alcids, and jaegers; Pelagic and Brandt's cormorants, Brown Pelican, and Sooty Shearwater are all likely. After lunch we'll check **Damon Point** for local Snowy Plover. By mid-afternoon we'll begin heading

around Grays Harbor to Westport, with a possible stop at **Bottle Beach** along the way, where shorebirds could be abundant if the tide is favorable. Time permitting we may make other stops en route to Westport for shorebirds or passerines missed to this point. *Night in Westport.*

Day 6 – Wednesday, September 8 - WESTPORT SEABIRDS PELAGIC: We'll rise early today so we can be dockside by 5:30 AM, where we'll board the Monte Carlo with *Westport Seabirds* for a 30-40 mile trip offshore to the deepwater canyons at the edge of the continental shelf.

On the way out to the Japanese Current we'll look for scoters, grebes, Brown Pelican, Common Murre, and possible Tufted Puffin and Cassin's Auklet. Heerman's, California, Glaucous-winged, and Western gulls could be present in large numbers.

In the pelagic zone we'll be looking for the amazing birds that call the open water their home. Some of the birds we hope to find this time of year include Red and Red-necked phalaropes, Parasitic and Pomarine jaegers, South Polar Skua, Sabine's Gull, Arctic Tern, Fork-tailed and (sometimes) Leach's storm-petrels, Northern Fulmar, Sooty, Buller's, and Pink-footed shearwaters, and Black-footed Albatross. Less-likely but also possible are Flesh-footed Shearwater, Manx Shearwater, and Short-tailed Shearwater, along with many other possible rarities.



A variety of marine mammals are also possible, including Humpback Whale, California Gray Whale, Harbor Porpoise, Dall's Porpoise, Pacific White-sided Dolphin, California and Stellar's Sea Lions, Northern Fur Seal, and Harbor Seal. Sharks possible include Blue, Basking, Pacific Thresher, and even Great White. Other possibilities include jellyfish and Ocean Sunfish (*Mola Mola*). After we return from sea midafternoon, we'll gather for dinner before making the drive south to Long Beach. *Night in Long Beach.*



Day 7 – Thursday, September 9 - NORTH JETTY & LEADBETTER

POINT: The rocky habitat of the **North Jetty of the Columbia River** provides yet another opportunity to add shorebirds we have missed to this point in the tour, as well as the full slate of jaegers, cormorants, loons, scoters, and alcids. Adjacent **Ft. Canby State Park** has proven very good for migrant songbirds, and the occasional Northern Pygmy-Owl can show up mid-day. After lunch we'll arrive at **Leadbetter Point**. Here we'll hike the beach for a few miles, enjoying the ocean views and on the lookout for the numerous shorebirds that should be present. After dinner we'll make a long drive to Belfair. *Night in Belfair.*

Day 8 – Friday, September 10 - BELFAIR AREA &

WHITE PASS TO YAKIMA: Our prime target this morning is Mountain Quail. We'll search at a local private residence where these birds are regular, with several additional spots as back-ups if needed. Near the **Port Orchard Airport** we may make a quick stop for any lowland species we have yet to see. We'll skirt south of Mt. Rainier, with a stop at **White Pass** (4800') for another shot at American Three-toed Woodpecker, possible Barrow's Goldeneye, and additional high-altitude birds. In the **Naches area** on the east slope of the Cascades we have our best shot at Lewis's Woodpecker along with Mountain and Western bluebirds. Near Puyallup, east of Yakima, we can look for Lesser Goldfinch. *Night in Yakima.*





Day 9 – Saturday, September 11 - DESERT, SAGE-STEPPE, PRAIRIE: We'll spend our final day of birding exploring the open country east of the Cascades. This drier habitat will give us a shot at birds we haven't seen yet, including Swainson's Hawk, dabbling ducks including Cinnamon Teal, Sage Thrasher, Lazuli Bunting, Say's Phoebe, Rock Wren, Prairie Falcon, and others. By late afternoon we'll make the return drive to Seattle, where we'll enjoy our final dinner together and recount the birds and adventures of this trip of a lifetime. *Night in Seattle.*

Day 10 – Sunday, September 12 - DEPARTURE DAY: Plan your departure for any time today. Continental breakfast at the hotel. Take the complimentary hotel shuttle to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Hotel checkout is 12:00 PM.



TOUR LEADERS

Scott Atkinson of *Sea Quest Expeditions* is a highly skilled birder who has spent many years studying the birds and plants of Washington, developing an encyclopedic knowledge of Washington birds. Scott is the author of *Wild Plants of the San Juan Islands*, which details the plants of these unique northwest Washington islands. Having taken 40 business trips to Russia, birds of the Russian Far East are also of particular interest to Scott (he is the top eBirder in Russia with 471 birds on his Russian eBird list). His notable sightings are included in several rare bird articles and his expertise, particularly on Russian reed and bush warblers, is cited in additional publications. He has been the compiler for the Everett-Marysville CBC since 2002 and formerly compiled the Sequim-Dungeness CBC. Scott enjoys teaching and has been an instructor in bird identification and field ornithology. Scott promises us a "trip of a lifetime" in his beloved home state of Washington.

Daryl Bernard is a long-time birder and nature enthusiast who loves being outdoors and embraces every opportunity to share nature with others. He enjoys organizing trips and tours, and strives to ensure that every participant has a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Daryl has organized and led numerous birding field tours throughout North America, many local birding trips in Michigan, and bird walks for Seven Ponds as well as birding festivals. Daryl is the Executive Director at Seven Ponds Nature Center in southeast Michigan, and regularly presents birding programs at Audubon clubs, libraries, and birding festivals.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging for this tour will be in several different locations as we move through northwest Washington. Due to the remoteness of some of our destinations, lodging options vary from modern hotels to quaint basic motels. Reservations have been made at the following establishments:

Day 1 – **Abby Creek Inn** · 1006 Hwy 20, Winthrop WA · 509-996-3100

Day 2/3 – **Quality Inn & Suites at Olympic National Park** · 134 River Road, Sequim WA · 360-683-2800

Day 4 – **Comfort Inn & Suites** · 829 Ocean Shore Blvd N W, Ocean Shores WA · 360-289-9000

Day 5 – **Mariner's Cove Inn** · 303 W Ocean Avenue #9740, Wastport WA · 360-268-6000

Day 6 – **Adrift Hotel** · 4096 Sid Snyder Dr, Long Beach WA · 360-642-2311

Day 7 – **Belfair Motel** · 23322 WA-3, Belfair WA · 360-275-4485

Day 8 – **Fairfield Inn & Suites** · 137 N. Fair Ave, Yakima WA · 509-452-3100

Day 9 – **Hampton Inn & Suites Seattle Airport/28th Ave** · 18850 28th Avenue Sout, SeaTac WA · 206-244-5044

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

We will travel in a single 15-passenger van. Keeping the group together in one van allows everybody to get on the same birds while on the road, and helps develop group camaraderie. Since we will be packing up several times during the tour, we ask that you travel as lightly as is practical. This will help maximize space in the van.

MEALS

All meals are included in this tour, from dinner on Day 1 (arrival day) to breakfast on Day 10. Some breakfasts will be provided by our hotels, continental style, while others will be provided by the trip leader. Lunches will be mostly in the field, picnic-style. Restaurant stops for breakfast and lunch simply cut into our birding time too much. For dinner each evening we will enjoy a local restaurant. We will keep the van stocked with various snacks to tide you over between meals. As with the lodging, due to the remote nature of many of our destinations, restaurant options may be limited at times. Rest assured, you will not go hungry on this tour!

FEE and REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- Tour Fee: \$2950 per person in double occupancy from Seattle, Washington
- Single supplement (if available): \$675
- Deposit: \$300 (due within three weeks of registration)
- Final Payment Due: August 1, 2021
- Group size is limited to **8 individuals** and early registration is encouraged

WHAT THE TOUR FEE INCLUDES:

- guide service for nine days of birding – Scott will be with us every step of the way
- Full day of pelagic birding aboard the Monte Carlo with *Westport Seabirds*
- lodging for nine nights in double occupancy
- all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 10
- local ground transportation in a single, 15-passenger van
- all park entrance fees, parking fees, ferry fees, bridge and highway tolls, etc.
- airport-hotel shuttle on our final day
- small tour group size (8), ensuring a high-quality experience for everybody
- pre-trip information and a post-trip mailing with an annotated list of all birds observed by the group
- eBird checklist sharing (for participants who use eBird)

WHAT THE TOUR FEE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- your airfare to and from Seattle, Washington
- personal snacks, additional drinks, and alcoholic beverages
- laundry
- other items of a personal nature
- gratuity (optional) for our expert birding guide, Scott Atkinson

COVID-19

We are confident we can make this trip happen, but there may be some considerations due to ongoing COVID-19 measures. It is expected that all participants on the tour will have received their vaccination prior to departure. At this time it is difficult to say what airlines, restaurants, and other public facilities will be requiring. We will need to remain flexible in our planning to account for such requirements. Be sure to bring at least two face coverings for times when those are necessary.

**PHONE/ON-SITE REGISTRATION WILL OPEN ON
TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2021 at 9:00 AM for Seven Ponds MEMBERS
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021 at 9:00 AM for NON-MEMBERS (if space remains)**

Registered participants will be mailed a registration form to return with their tour deposit.

To register for this tour, please call SEVEN PONDS NATURE CENTER at (810) 796-3200 or visit the nature center in person. These field tours often fill quickly. For more information, contact Daryl Bernard at (810) 796-3200 or (989) 513-5195 (cell) or via e-mail at dbernard@sevenponds.org.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF:

Black-footed Albatross p.1 – Ryan Shaw

Lewis's Woodpecker p.2 – Christian Hagenlacher

American Three-toed Woodpecker p.2 – Ron Knight

Red-breasted Sapsucker p.2 – Linda Tanner

Varied Thrush p.3 – Alan Wilson

Black Oystercatcher p.3 – Dick Daniels

Cassin's Auklet p.4 – Caleb Putnam

Surfbird p.4 – Dick Daniels

Mountain Quail p.4 – Alan Schmierer

Sage Thrasher p.4 – Dominic Sherony

Sooty Grouse p.7 – Greg Schechter

Golden-crowned Sparrow p.7 – VJ Anderson

Pink-footed Shearwater p.7 – Eleanor Briccetti

