

MOUNTAIN WEST MOST WANTED!

**Adventure Birding in Utah, Wyoming, Nevada, and Idaho
July 13-20, 2025**

A birding tour organized by Seven Ponds Nature Center and Pitta Nature Tours

This tour will provide opportunities to track down some of the most wanted targets of the Mountain West, including Himalayan Snowcock, Cassia Crossbill, Flammulated Owl, Black Swift, Gray Vireo, Gray Partridge, Chukar, Sagebrush Sparrow, Calliope Hummingbird, and Lewis's Woodpecker – just to name a few! We can expect to see around 150 species of birds during this tour, plus more than 10 species of mammals. With a backdrop that includes the scenic Wasatch Mountain Range, Nevada's Ruby Mountains, sage and juniper habitat, lodgepole pine forests, and the Great Salt Lake, this tour offers not only amazing birds but also the incredible scenery of the Mountain West.



Wasatch Mountains, Utah

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 – Sunday, July 13 – Arrival in SLC; Light Evening Birding plus Owling Plan your arrival in Salt Lake City by 3:00 PM and arrange a ride to our hotel. Around 5:00 we'll have a catered dinner and have a short introduction regarding the birding we'll be doing over the following week. After dinner we'll head out for some birding, checking some local feeders for **Lesser Goldfinch**, **Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay**, and **California Quail**. As dusk settles on the Wasatch Mountains, we'll turn our efforts to **Flammulated Owl** before heading back to our hotel. *Night in Cottonwood Heights, Utah.*



DAY 2 – Monday, July 14 – The Uinta Mountains and Southwest Wyoming Today will be an all-around big day of birding. We'll plan on being at our first site around sunrise to look for some mid-elevation riparian specialists like **Willow Flycatcher** (northwestern subspecies), **Fox Sparrow** (slate-colored subspecies), **Lazuli Bunting**, and **Green-tailed Towhee**. Continuing east we'll visit a montane agricultural area where **Bobolink**, **Sandhill Crane**, **Wilson's Snipe**, and **Savannah Sparrow** breed. Making our way up in elevation we'll bird along the Provo River and be on the lookout for **Western Tanager**, **American Dipper**, **Hammond's Flycatcher**, **Western Wood-Pewee**, **Red-naped Sapsucker**, and more. We'll focus on finches here and hope to track down **Cassin's Finch**, **Pine Grosbeak**, and **Red Crossbill** and enjoy a picnic lunch. Descending into Wyoming we'll do a little birding at a couple reservoirs and may try to visit the Bear River where it cuts back into Utah before making our way back to Salt Lake City. With a long day of birding behind us, we will have a relaxed sit-down dinner at a distillery near our hotel and let everyone get to bed a little early. *Night in Cottonwood Heights, Utah.*

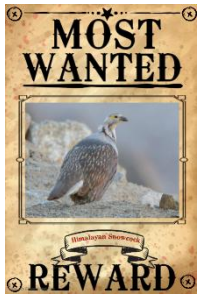


DAY 3 – Tuesday, July 15 – Sage and Juniper Specialists We'll rise early today to arrive at our location 60-minutes from Salt Lake City shortly after sunrise. The sage and juniper habitat provides a great chance to see a number of specialty species like **Gray Vireo**, **Gray Flycatcher**, **Sagebrush Sparrow**, and **Juniper Titmouse**. Other birds we may see include

Bewick's Wren, **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Brewer's Sparrow**, **Black-throated Sparrow**, **Lark Sparrow**, **Bushtit**, **Loggerhead Shrike**, and **Say's Phoebe**. Making a loop through agricultural land and more desert, we'll focus our efforts on raptors, hoping to spot **Swainson's Hawk**, **Golden Eagle**, and **Ferruginous Hawk**. We'll wrap up the morning trying to pick up a few marsh and wetland species on our way back to Salt Lake City. After lunch, the afternoon is yours to relax, take a nap, go swimming, etc. We'll grab dinner after our afternoon break, then head out to look for **Black Swift** plus a follow-up effort for **Flammulated Owl** and **Common Poorwill**. *Night in Cottonwood Heights, Utah.*



DAY 4 – Wednesday, July 16 – Wasatch Mountains & Transfer to Nevada After the long day yesterday we'll have a slower pace today. Just 25 minutes from the hotel we'll visit Brighton and the mid-elevation mixed forest. Here the focus will be on a variety of species that frequent the area, including **MacGillivray's Warbler**, **Orange-crowned Warbler**, **Western Flycatcher**, and **Stellar's Jay**, among other possibilities. We'll take a mile hike through the forest to a nearby lake to see what we can turn up. With some focus we might get to see Pika, Mule Deer, and Snowshoe Hare in addition to the birds. Heading back to the hotel, we'll pack up and have a nice lunch before departing for Nevada. The birding along the way is limited as we are crossing the Great Basin during the hottest part of the hottest days of summer. We will check out the incredible Bonneville Salt Flats and perhaps make a birding stop on the way. After we check in to our hotel in Elko, we'll have dinner and then do a little birding before dark at a nearby reservoir. With sunset around 8:00 PM in Elko this time of year we'll be back at the hotel by 8:30 – and hope everyone gets 5-6 hours of sleep! *Night in Elko, Nevada.*



DAY 5 – Thursday, July 17 – Himalayan Snowcock Expedition & Transfer to Twin Falls

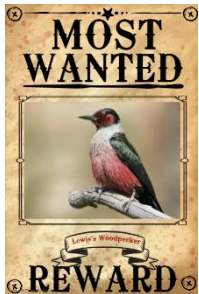
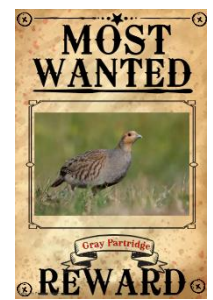
It will be a very early morning—departing by 3:00 AM for the 45-minute drive to the trailhead. The trek to the valley where we'll search for **Himalayan Snowcock** takes about 90-120 minutes at a slow to moderate pace. The climb starts at 9,000 feet and goes up ten switchbacks over two miles to just over 10,000 feet. We give ourselves two hours to make sure we are in place by 6:00 AM at an ideal viewing location. Then comes the hard work of scanning rugged terrain and slopes for our target. It's not uncommon for **Black Rosy-Finch** and **Clark's Nutcracker** to grace us with their presence while we search. We'll spend several hours in search of the snowcock, then return down the trail and to the hotel for a shower

before checking out. We'll have lunch in town before departing. At this point you can relax while our guides drive us north through the desert to southern Idaho. We'll check into our hotel and allow everyone a chance to stretch out and recover before having dinner – and an early night to bed! *Night in Twin Falls, Idaho.*

DAY 6 – Friday, July 18 – Birding the South Hills & Backup Owling Today we'll have a quick breakfast at the hotel before heading out into the fields south of town to look for **Gray Partridge**. We might also see **Ring-necked Pheasant** or **California Quail** and should have no shortage of birds of prey such as Swainson's Hawk, Northern Harrier, and American Kestrel.



We hope to track down a **Barn Owl** this morning and possibly **Short-eared Owl**. After a few hours we will ascend into the South Hills for Idaho's marquee species – the endemic **Cassia Crossbill**. We'll spend most of the morning focusing on this bird and trying to get good looks and hear its mechanical-sounding call that helps separate it from other Red Crossbills. While the crossbills are the focus, we will work on several species like **Brown Creeper**, **Hammond's Flycatcher**, **Williamson's Sapsucker**, **Western Tanager**, and **Golden-crowned Kinglet**. Today we'll have a picnic lunch in the hills as we search for other goodies like **Calliope Hummingbird** and **Lewis's Woodpecker**. As the day warms, we'll descend back to Twin Falls by mid-afternoon for a short break before dinner. Afterwards we'll return to the southern fields to tour our luck at the agricultural areas and the targets from this morning one more time. If for some reason we missed **Flammulated Owl** earlier in the tour, tonight is a backup in the South Hills.



Night in Twin Falls, Idaho.



DAY 7 – Saturday, July 19 – Southern Idaho Wrap & The Great Salt Lake After checking out of our hotel, we'll visit Shoshone Falls at sunrise for a few specialty birds like **Canyon Wren**, **Rock Wren**, and **Yellow-breasted Chat**.

Returning to Utah, we'll have an early lunch before exploring Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Large numbers of **Western Grebes** and **Clark's Grebes** breed here, as well as **American White Pelican**, **Caspian Tern**, and **Franklin's Gull**. This time of year, some early shorebird migrants might be present, and one never knows what might show up! After checking into our hotel and taking a short break, we'll have dinner before visiting Antelope Island State Park to take in the incredible phalarope migration at sunset. *Night in Layton, Utah.*

DAY 8 – Sunday, July 20 – Morning at Great Salt Lake We'll visit Antelope Island again this morning, making sure we arrive at first light for our best chance to track down the elusive **Chukar**.

We should also see **Rock Wren**, **Sage Thrasher**, **Burrowing Owl**, and a few other birds during our search. We'll spend some time on the causeway to see what other shorebirds are hanging out with the phalaropes. **Long-billed Curlew**, **Willet** (western subspecies), **Western Sandpiper**, and **Baird's Sandpiper** are often present this time of year. We'll visit one last freshwater wildlife management area on the southeast shore of the Great Salt Lake. This stop should help us pick up any remaining wetlands species we might not yet have, such as **Sora**, **Virginia Rail**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, and **Neotropic Cormorant**.



Lunch & Afternoon Airport/Hotel Drop-off We'll have a late lunch at a local favorite Mexican restaurant before dropping everyone off at nearby hotels or the airport no later than 4:00 PM. We'll try to have a 2:30-4:00 window to take care of drop-offs and give everyone enough time to catch flights or check-in to their room if they're staying on. *Airport/hotel drop off 4:00 PM.*

TOUR LEADERS



Tim Avery's interest in birds came at an early age flipping through *Golden Guide to Birds* in his dad's pickup truck. His family fished, hunted, hiked, and spent a great deal of time in the outdoors, exposing him to all the wonders of the Mountain West. In Tim's words, "My dad wasn't a birder, but could tell me what a heron, osprey, or kingfisher was." From 2003-2005 Tim was a field biologist at Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, working on their Monitoring Wyoming Birds project, honing his birding by ear skills and learning the habitat-based distribution of western birds. On July 9, 2005, Tim was part of a group that discovered the first Flammulated Owl nest in Wyoming and Tim took the first photo of a Flammie in the state. In 2007 Tim was asked by a group of visiting birders if he could help them find a Flammulated Owl – and just like that he entered the world of guiding. In 2008, Tim founded ***Mountain West Birding Company***, which evolved into ***Pitta***

Nature Tours as the focus expanded beyond the mountain west. Tim currently holds the two biggest year records for Utah with 358 in 2016, and 355 in 2007. Tim also holds the Utah Big Day record with 205 species, which he set with friends Kenny Frisch and Colby Neuman in 2014. When not birding or guiding Tim works in the software industry helping companies design better products for their customers. He is happily married, with a son who Tim knows will give him a run for his money one day as a birder!

Quinn Diaz was just as obsessed with wildlife as a kid as he is now but found that interest reinvigorated after stumbling upon a nesting colony of White-throated Swifts. After he started using the increasingly popular eBird it didn't take long to fall headlong into listing and chasing! The thrill of finding great birds for clients is a whole other level of excitement. When you find a rare bird on your own there's a sense of satisfaction, but to share that with a group of people is even more rewarding. When you live in a place for a while and become well-acquainted with the bird life there, it becomes far too easy to forget how special some birds really are. Seeing the face of a client light up when they get their eyes on a Clark's Nutcracker for the very first time or witness the world-famous phalarope spectacle on Antelope Island reminds him what it's really all about.



Daryl Bernard is a long-time birder and amateur naturalist 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 memorable experience. Daryl has 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 birding clubs, garden clubs, libraries, and birding festivals.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

We will be birding at elevations between 4,200 and 12,000 feet with hikes up to two miles each way possible.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging for this tour will be in four different locations along our tour route. This means we will need to pack up our gear multiple times during the tour, so please pack accordingly. Packing recommendations will be sent prior to our departure.

FEE and REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- Tour Fee: \$2999 per person in double occupancy from Salt Lake City, Utah
- Deposit: \$300 due upon online registration
- Single supplement, pending availability: \$700 due June 1, 2025
- Final Payment: \$2699 due June 1, 2025
- Group size is limited to **13 individuals** and early registration is encouraged

WHAT THE TOUR FEE INCLUDES:

- Guide service (two professional birding guides) for six full days and two half days of birding
- Hotel accommodations for seven nights
- All meals from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8
- Van transportation in two large 12-passenger vans
- All park entrance fees, parking fees, and highway tolls
- Pre-trip information and a post-trip mailing with a list of all species observed by the group
- At least two nights of owling
- Reusable water bottle and access to cold water throughout the tour
- Pitta Nature Tours "Mountain West Most Wanted" tour book with checklist and daily itinerary and highlights
- eBird checklist sharing (for those using eBird)

WHAT THE TOUR FEE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Your airfare to and from Salt Lake City
- Ground transportation between Salt Lake City International Airport and our first night's lodging at Cottonwood Heights, Utah
- Alcoholic beverages
- Laundry
- Other items of a personal nature
- Gratuity for birding guide services (optional)

**ONLINE REGISTRATION WILL OPEN FOR SEVEN PONDS MEMBERS ON
TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2025 at 9:00 AM**

**ONLINE REGISTRATION WILL OPEN FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON
TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025 at 9:00 AM (if space remains)**

Registration for this tour will take place online at www.sevenponds.org with a \$500 deposit due at the time of registration. At the Seven Ponds home page, go to Programs then Seven Ponds Field Tours and select the Utah Birding Field Tour registration button. You should receive an email confirmation upon successfully completing your online registration. Participants will be mailed a registration form to return.

For more information, contact Daryl Bernard at (810) 796-3200 or (989) 513-5195 (cell)
or via e-mail at dbernard@sevenponds.org



Shoshone Falls, Idaho

Target Birds: Utah, Wyoming, Nevada, Idaho

Cinnamon Teal	Western Cattle Egret	Juniper Titmouse
California Quail	White-faced Ibis	Violet-green Swallow
Dusky Grouse	Golden Eagle	Bushtit
Gray Partridge	Swainson's Hawk	Rock Wren
Chukar	Ferruginous Hawk	Canyon Wren
Himalayan Snowcock	Barn Owl	Bewick's Wren
Eared Grebe	Burrowing Owl	American Dipper
Western Grebe	Flammulated Owl	Sage Thrasher
Clark's Grebe	Williamson's Sapsucker	Northern Mockingbird
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Red-naped Sapsucker	Mountain Bluebird
Common Poorwill	Lewis's Woodpecker	Townsend's Solitaire
Black Swift	American Three-toed Woodpecker	Black Rosy-Finch
White-throated Swift	Prairie Falcon	Cassin's Finch
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Western Wood-Pewee	Cassia Crossbill
Calliope Hummingbird	Hammond's Flycatcher	Lesser Goldfinch
Rufous Hummingbird	Gray Flycatcher	Brewer's Sparrow
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Dusky Flycatcher	Black-throated Sparrow
Black-necked Stilt	Western Flycatcher	Lark Sparrow
American Avocet	Say's Phoebe	Sagebrush Sparrow
Snowy Plover	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Green-tailed Towhee
Long-billed Curlew	Western Kingbird	Spotted Towhee
Marbled Godwit	Gray Vireo	Yellow-breasted Chat
Wilson's Phalarope	Plumbeous Vireo	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Red-necked Phalarope	Loggerhead Shrike	Western Meadowlark
Willet	Canada Jay	Bullock's Oriole
Western Sandpiper	Pinyon Jay	Brewer's Blackbird
Franklin's Gull	Steller's Jay	Great-tailed Grackle
California Gull	Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	MacGillivray's Warbler
Neotropic Cormorant	Black-billed Magpie	Western Tanager
American White Pelican	Clark's Nutcracker	Black-headed Grosbeak
Snowy Egret	Mountain Chickadee	Lazuli Bunting