GRAND ALASKA

Pribilofs & Anchorage

June 16-24, 2027



Red-legged Kittiwake, St. Paul Island, The Pribilofs, AK (© Kevin J. Zimmer)

The Bering Sea is considered to be the center of the adaptive radiation of the Alcid family. Nowhere is that diversity on better display than in the Pribilof Islands, where visitors can expect to see at least seven nesting species of puffins, auklets and murres. The sight-and-sound spectacle of the bird cliffs, with thousands of alcids, fulmars, kittiwakes and cormorants, many of them at close range, has to be experienced to be appreciated. Participants can expect all of the special breeding birds (including, in addition to the alcids, Red-legged Kittiwake, Red-faced Cormorant, Rock Sandpiper, Pacific Wren, Lapland Longspur, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch and Snow Bunting) and abundant photographic opportunities. St. Paul is also a justly renowned outpost for finding Asiatic vagrants, and our trip is timed to coincide with what is typically the best time in spring for finding such rarities, which appear, on average, earlier here than they do at more northern locales such as Gambell and Nome. Birding out of Anchorage

during second half of the tour will offer chances for a number of boreal forest breeders, possibly including Barrow's Goldeneye, Spruce Grouse, Hudsonian Godwit, American Three-toed and/or Black-backed woodpeckers, Boreal Chickadee, White-winged Crossbill and more.

This tour will provide the perfect blend of Bering Sea waterbirds and Bering Land Bridge colonizers, with superb chances for Asiatic vagrants and boreal forest specialties from the Anchorage area.



Tufted Puffins, St. Paul Island, The Pribilofs, AK (© Kevin J. Zimmer)

June 16, Day 1: Arrival into Anchorage

Participants arriving into Anchorage will be met and transferred to the Crowne Plaza Anchorage-Midtown Hotel, where a room will be reserved in each person's name. We'll meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 p.m. for a get-acquainted dinner and to discuss plans for tomorrow.

NIGHT: Anchorage Crowne Plaza Anchorage-Midtown, Anchorage

June 17, Day 2: Anchorage to St. Paul (the Pribilofs)

After breakfast today, we will fly southwest along the Alaska Peninsula toward St. Paul in the Pribilof Islands. As seen from the air, the peninsula is one of Western Alaska's most scenic areas, with remnant volcanic peaks rising 6,000 feet from the coastline. We will probably stop briefly at Bethel for refueling before continuing northwestward over the Bering Sea. There should be time for birding this afternoon (subject to flight schedules) and an after-dinner excursion as well. Please note that in most years, only one VENT leader will be accompanying the group to the Pribilofs. There are excellent resident guides on the Pribilofs who will assist the VENT leader with driving and guiding.

NIGHT: King Eider Hotel, St. Paul

June 18-19, Days 3-4: St. Paul Island

Largest of the Pribilof Islands, St. Paul offers an incomparable seabird experience. At various vantage points along its cliffs, hundreds, or occasionally thousands of birds are visible at once, many of them packed cheek-to-jowl on narrow ledges: Least, Crested, and Parakeet auklets; Common and Thick-billed murres; Northern Fulmars; Horned and Tufted puffins; and more. The colorful Red-faced Cormorants and Red-legged Kittiwakes are easily observed here, and the latter species is a true specialty that is difficult to find elsewhere in Alaska. Flocks of non-breeding Harlequin Ducks along the shorelines and in the harbor are sometimes accompanied by small numbers of King or Steller's eiders. Among the few land birds, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch and Snow Bunting are conspicuous, while more searching is often required to find the Pacific Wren. Rock Sandpipers are common on the grassy interior of the island. In addition, our mid-June visits have often turned up multiple odd strays from Asia. The peak time for Asiatic vagrants on St. Paul averages a week or two earlier than in Nome or Gambell, both of which lie far to the north, so our trip is timed to optimize our chances for finding real rarities. Examples of such bonus birds from past trips include Taiga Bean Goose, Tufted Duck, Black-tailed Godwit, Gray-tailed Tattler, Siberian Sand-Plover, Little Stint, Long-toed Stint, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Ross's Gull, Black-headed Gull, Common and Oriental cuckoo, Eurasian Skylark, Siberian Rubythroat, "Black-backed" Wagtail, Hawfinch, Brambling, and Rustic Bunting. Between stretches of sea cliffs, huge herds of Northern fur seals come ashore each

summer to raise their pups on the beaches, although our May visit will precede the arrival of most of the "beachmasters" and all of the females on shore. The neat and brightly-painted Aleut village of St. Paul makes a picturesque base for exploring these islands.

NIGHTS: King Eider Hotel, St. Paul



Parakeet Auklet, St. Paul Island, The Pribilofs (© Kevin J. Zimmer)

June 20, Day 5: St. Paul to Anchorage

We'll have the entire morning and a little time in the afternoon for birding on St. Paul, after which, we'll return to Anchorage. Flight schedules are always subject to change, but these flights typically depart St. Paul in the late afternoon, arriving in Anchorage sometime after 8:00 p.m. We'll plan on a late dinner at the hotel shortly after arrival.

NIGHT: Anchorage Crowne Plaza Anchorage-Midtown, Anchorage

June 21-23, Days 6-8: Anchorage

We'll keep our exact schedule over these days as flexible as possible, to better take advantage of conditions on the ground (weather, tidal schedules, presence of unusual birds, etc.). On one of these days, we'll probably head up the Glenn Highway toward Glennallen and back, birding en route. This highway traverses some truly grand country and a great variety of habitats that typify the interior of central Alaska. In the early going we'll be bordering the Matanuska River valley and afforded wonderful views of the spectacular Matanuska Glacier. The highway ascends to subalpine zones before dropping into a vast taiga belt of spruce forest dotted with small lakes and barrens of wet muskeg. These habitats are particularly good for such special birds as Red-tailed ("Harlan's" subspecies) Hawk, Merlin, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Shrike, Blackpoll Warbler, White-winged Crossbill, and, in some years, Northern Hawk Owl, a search for which will be a special point of emphasis. The many lakes provide breeding habitat and feeding areas for a variety of waterfowl species including Trumpeter Swan, Barrow's Goldeneye, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Greater and Lesser scaup, Surf and White-winged scoters, and many others. Common, Pacific, and Red-throated loons; Solitary Sandpiper; Lesser Yellowlegs; and dainty Bonaparte's Gulls are just a few of the other species regularly found around these taiga lakes. Stops in areas of bigger timber may yield such prizes as American Three-toed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Pine Grosbeak and others, whereas the subalpine zones that we skirt en route are good for finding Golden Eagle and Townsend's Solitaire. This day will be a long one, with lots of driving but the potential birding payoff is great, and the scenery is guaranteed to delight. We'll return to Anchorage each night in time for dinner.

In previous tours, we used days designated for birding Anchorage to visit the Sockeye Burn area north of Willow, which had only recently been colonized by unusual numbers of Black-backed and American Three-toed woodpeckers following the big Sockeye Fire of 2015. Our visits to this site over recent years have yielded a number of other birds, among them, Spruce Grouse; Sandhill Crane; Northern Goshawk; Merlin, Hairy and Downy woodpeckers; Olive-sided and Alder flycatchers; Western Wood-Pewee; Boreal Chickadee; Varied Thrush; Lincoln's Sparrow; and White-winged Crossbill. However, note that with each passing year since the original burn, this site becomes less attractive to the

woodpeckers, and, indeed, the woodpeckers have been harder to locate at this spot the last few years.

Alternatively, we may opt to bird our way south along a portion of the exceptionally scenic Seward Highway towards Seward. This part of the Kenai Peninsula has much to offer—perhaps an American Dipper bobbing along a rushing, glacier-fed stream; a Barrow's Goldeneye in the reflection of a snow-capped peak on a glass-smooth lake; a Spruce Grouse nervously leading her downy charges safely through the forest; or an American Three-toed Woodpecker quietly flaking bark from a dead spruce. Frequent stops are inevitable, perhaps to appreciate the majesty of a close Bald Eagle, to scope a distant slope for Mountain Goats, or simply to snap a picture of some dazzling alpine backdrop. The moist Sitka spruce forest that hugs the coast near Seward shelters birds like Rufous Hummingbird, Steller's Jay, Chestnut-backed and Boreal chickadees, Pacific Wren, Varied and Hermit thrushes, Townsend's Warbler, Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill (in some years), and "Sooty" Fox Sparrow. Regardless of our exact course of action, these will be days of great adventure, producing spectacular scenery as well as a diverse cross-section of boreal forest and coastal birds, with chances for mammals ranging from Black Bear to Beluga, and from Mountain Goat to Dall's Sheep.

NIGHTS: Anchorage Crowne Plaza Anchorage-Midtown, Anchorage

June 24, Day 9: Departure for Home

Transfers will be provided to the Anchorage Airport for any departing flight.

Essential Tour Information

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 12 participants.

TOUR LEADER: Raymond VanBuskirk with the assistance of local guides



Raymond L. VanBuskirk's love and admiration for the natural world was awakened amidst the pine forests of New Mexico where he grew up. From a very early age he nurtured his passion for birding, and for the past three decades he has dedicated his life to making this passion his career. Raymond joins the VENT family after seven years as a senior tour leader for another organization, and over a decade of leading birding tours independently. Raymond's extensive career includes significant contributions to ornithology, serving as a USFWS research technician studying seabirds on the Arctic Ocean and North Pacific, heading Rosy-Finch and Gray Vireo research studies across New Mexico, developing methods for studying breeding ecology in Grasshopper Sparrows, and holding leadership roles such as past president of the Central New Mexico Bird Alliance and board member of Western Field Ornithologists. He's been a regular instructor for the American Birding Association's youth birding camps and at Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine. Raymond is a proud member of QBNA, the continent's informal club for LGBTQIA+ birders, where he plays a key role in organizing and leading annual conferences that provide a safe, inclusive space for birders to connect and celebrate their shared love of the outdoors and queerness. When Raymond is not traveling, he resides in St. Louis, Missouri with his partner, Marissa, his stepdaughter, Savannah, their dog, Layla, and two large snakes.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: $11,495 per person based on double occupancy or **$12,915** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from Dinner on Day 1 through dinner on Day 8, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does **not** include airfare to nor from Anchorage; however, flights within the tour are included. The fee also excludes laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the "TIPPING" sub-section below. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

IMPORTANT: Rooms are limited at the King Eider Hotel in St. Paul and you may be asked to share. so, you will be credited appropriately. The cost of the flights between Anchorage and St. Paul Island is subject to change. Should this happen, VENT reserves the right to adjust the tour fee accordingly.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT website or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for this tour is **$1,000** per person. At 180 days VENT will collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (February 16, 2027) prior to the tour departure date.

FUEL SURCHARGES: Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TIPPING: An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, $5 to $10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) $15 to $20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

BAD WEATHER/ADDITIONAL EXPENSE RESPONSIBILITY: Our Alaska tours operate in the late spring/early summer period. The weather is highly changeable at this time of year and our tours typically experience a range of conditions, from sunny and clear to overcast and rainy. From time to time, dense fog is a problem at the coastal outpost locations of St. Paul (Pribilof Islands), Nome, and Gambell (St. Lawrence Island), all places visited by our tours. Exceedingly foggy conditions occasionally lead to flight cancellations. Under such circumstances, tour participants will be responsible for any additional expenses that result, principally additional hotel nights. If a flight is cancelled due to bad weather, there will be no refund available for the unused rooms at the intended destination. Most hotels used on this tour have a 30-day cancellation policy for group bookings during the high season. In case of flight cancellation, the VENT office or your tour leaders will make arrangements for additional room nights at the location at which your departure is delayed. Tour participants will either need to pay for the additional nights directly, at the time reservations are made, or, depending on the location, upon receipt of invoice from our office after the tour. VENT cannot be responsible for delays or changes in the itinerary due to weather-related problems.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

CANCELLATION BY VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A "***Force Majeure***" event means any act beyond VENT's control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of $50,000. CST #2014998-50.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

SUGGESTED OPTIONS: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive **Ripcord** plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit**.** With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not

an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a "Cancel for Any Reason" benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: **Ripcord Travel Insurance;** or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The "pay as you go" approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to "pay as you go," you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

About Medjet's MedjetAssist Plan

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company's primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: Medjet.com/VentBird or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIR TRAVEL: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: $50 domestic; $75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE: Please limit baggage to one piece of luggage and one carry-on. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for information pertaining to permissible carry-on items.

The planes used to fly to and from the Pribilofs can have restrictive baggage regulations. Please use a VENT luggage tag to aid leaders in recognizing your baggage during our airport and hotel transfers.

An additional small duffel bag is recommended, either for storing items in Anchorage or for use as your main piece of luggage while in the Pribilofs where space on the flight can be limited.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: The weather in Alaska in May and June is notoriously unpredictable and can still be quite cold. The "layered" technique is your best defense against the variable weather. We suggest you combine a thermal undershirt, shirt, sweater, and coat or jacket. Medium-weight wool or synthetic equivalent for shirts, pants, and sweaters is ideal. Cold-weather gear is essential and should include a warm coat or down jacket, warm hat, gloves, thermal underwear (both tops and bottoms), wool or synthetic equivalent socks, and warm shirts. A rain jacket or poncho is also essential for times when the weather turns misty. Since it can be surprisingly warm too, you should bring some lighter field clothing as well.

FOOTWEAR: Waterproof footwear of some kind is essential for the Pribilofs. Participants should bring rubber boots, waterproof boots, or N.E.O.S. Overshoes that extend to calf height for walking off-road on the wet tundra at St. Paul. Birding around Anchorage does not require such footwear, because most walking in these locations will be along gravel roads or well-maintained trails, where comfortable hiking shoes should suffice.

BINOCULARS: We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. Please do not bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

OTHER ITEMS: We recommend you bring insect repellent, an alarm clock, sunglasses and sunscreen. The leaders will have a spotting scope and some reference books, but you may wish to bring your own. You should also bring your own spotting scope if you are planning on doing digiscope photography, both to avoid monopolizing the group scope(s), and to avoid any chance of scratching the eyepiece of the group scope(s) due to a mismatch in diameter of your camera lens versus the scope eyepiece. A good North American field guide to the birds is the one reference that each participant should plan on carrying for their own personal use.

INTERNET ACCESS & CELLULAR SERVICE: Expect Wi-Fi to be available in both locations. Wi-Fi is typically excellent at the hotel in Anchorage; reliable, but perhaps slow at St. Paul; and available, but less reliable without purchasing a special plan.

WEATHER: Temperatures in the Pribilofs can vary anywhere from the 30s F to the 50s F; however, often windy with drizzle and fog, making it seem much colder than the temperature alone might suggest. Elsewhere on the mainland, temperatures tend to be warmer and may reach the upper 60s or higher.

LAUNDRY: There is a self-serve laundry at the King Eider Hotel on St. Paul Island. Our hotel in Anchorage has both self-service and send-out laundry service.

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary.

Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

SUN EXPOSURE: The sun's ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes), even in winter and early spring. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

INSECT REPELLENTS: There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET: (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin): is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to

complete and must be done outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.

- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION

A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend **www.amazon.com** which has a wide selection; **www.buteobooks.com** and **www.nhbs.com** which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and **www.abebooks.com** for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

FIELD GUIDES:

Field Guides—Birds:

Armstrong, Robert H. *Guide to the Birds of Alaska.* 4th edition. Bothwell, WA: Alaska Northwest Books, 1995.

Brazil, Mark. *Birds of East Asia*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009. This is the best field guide for illustrating any of the possible Siberian vagrants that could turn up at Gambell, St. Paul or elsewhere.

Dunn, Jon L. and Jonathan Alderfer. *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America.* Seventh edition. Washington, D. C.: National Geographic Society, 2017. The recommended field guide.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds.* 2nd edition New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. This classic field guide has been greatly expanded to cover many of the Eurasian vagrants that we could encounter at Gambell, St. Paul or elsewhere.

Reference—Birds:

Gabrielson, I. N. & F. E. Lincoln. *The Birds of Alaska.* Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 1959. Outdated now, but has a lot of information on the life histories of Alaskan birds. Try www.abebooks.com.

Grant, Peter J. *Gulls: A Guide to Identification.* Academic Press, 1997.

Harrison, Peter. *Seabirds: An Identification Guide.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1991 (reprint).

Hayman, Peter, John Marchant & Tony Prater. *Shorebirds: An Identification Guide to the Waders of the World.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1991 (reprint).

Kessel, Brina. *Birds of the Seward Peninsula, Alaska: Their Biogeography, Seasonality and Natural History*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1996.

Kessel, Brina & Daniel D. Gibson. *Status and Distribution of Alaska Birds.* Studies in Avian Biology No. 1, 1978. Try www.abebooks.com.

Zimmer, K. J. *Birding in the American West: A Handbook.* Cornell University Press, 2000.

General Background Reading:

Freuchen, Peter. *Book of the Eskimos.* Fawcett Books, 1981. An easy-to-read classic account of Eskimo life, written in 1931. Out of Print, but appears on www.amazon.com. Other Freuchen titles are available as well: *Arctic Adventure* (AMS Press, 1995) and *Ivalu, the Eskimo Wife* (AMS Press, 1935).

Lopez, Barry. *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape.* Vintage Books, 2001.

McGinniss, Joe. *Going to Extremes.* Plume, 1989 (reissue edition). Raw non-fiction about the people and places of America's last frontier.

McPhee, John. *Coming into the Country.* Noonday Press, 1991 (reissue). Published in 1976, this chronicles a remarkable journey by kayak into the last frontier.

Audubon (May 1988). The entire issue is devoted to Alaska. Especially worthwhile is "Exploring Literature of the Far North," a great bibliography of interesting books on the region.

National Geographic (October 1982). "A New Day for Alaska's Pribilofs."

Alaska Guidebooks:

Rennick, Penny (ed.) *Mammals of Alaska.* Alaska Geographic Guides. Alaska Geographic Society, 1996.

A variety of books on Alaska are available through the Alaska Geographic Society: (907) 274-0521. Alaska Geographic Online is found at www.akgeo.com. Some of these resources include: Alaskan Native Peoples, Mammals of Alaska, and National Parks and Monuments of Alaska. On the tour a number of local guide books and pamphlets can be picked up at local gift shops, including: Louise Potter's Wild Flowers Along Mt. McKinley Park Road (Camp Denali Publishers, n.d.). Although out of print, Potter's book is possibly available in Denali National Park; it is also found on www.amazon.com.

CLO Apps

eBird. **Cornell Lab of Ornithology.** Among the largest and most successful citizen science projects in existence, eBird is an essential tool in promoting bird study and conservation. Among a range of benefits, eBird allows users to keep a variety of lists in a single application. When taxonomic splits are incorporated, lists are automatically updated. Additionally, trip leaders can share daily lists, so one only need accept a shared list and it will upload to your files. Highly recommended.

Merlin Bird ID. **Cornell Lab of Ornithology.** Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions about his or her bird sighting, including date and location, and color, size, and behavior of a bird. Merlin then processes the viewer's responses to present a shortlist of possible identifications, from which the user can choose the likely bird. Species profiles include a brief physical description, photographs, and sound samples. The Photo ID feature allows anyone with a camera to snap a photo and obtain a list of suggestions. Merlin's Sound ID feature allows identification of birds through

audible recognition. To use Merlin, download the app and the appropriate regional "pack." Highly recommended.

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VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

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VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such

participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "***Airline***") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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AKNGE:20270616

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