MIDWEST WARBLERS

Magee Marsh and Kirtland's Warbler

May 16-24, 2027



Kirtland's Warbler © Michael O'Brien

Warblers are among the most popular groups of birds in North America. Their brilliant colors and energetic songs enliven spring mornings throughout much of the continent. This tour will celebrate the diversity of these wonderful birds, in a region that arguably holds the highest warbler abundance anywhere – up to 30 species are likely on this tour!

Along Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline lies the legendary Magee Marsh, perhaps the single best location in North America to view migrant warblers. A tiny stretch of woods along the lakeshore concentrates northbound migrants, who stop here to rest and refuel before making the 30-mile crossing to Ontario. Views of birds here can be astounding, with some often just feet away! Our two days here during the height of spring migration should yield a dazzling array of warblers, plus many other songbird migrants including thrushes, flycatchers, vireos, tanagers, and orioles. Nearby Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge compliments Magee nicely, with a good variety of shorebirds, herons, and waterfowl.

Before heading to Magee, we'll explore Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Located in eastern Ohio, this park harbors birds more typical of the southern Appalachians, such as Hooded, Cerulean, and Yellow-throated warblers, Acadian Flycatcher, and Wood Thrush.

The second phase of our tour takes place in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, home to the Kirtland's Warbler. We'll have three days to explore this wonderful and birdy area and devote at least a full morning to searching for Kirtland's in the young jack pine forests it depends upon. Although Kirtland's will be a central focus, we'll seek many other special breeding birds such as Sedge Wren, Golden-winged, Mourning, and Cape May warblers, Upland Sandpiper, Ruffed Grouse, Eastern Whip-poor-will, and Henslow's Sparrow. We'll also visit Tawas Point on the shores of Lake Huron. Though not as well-known as Magee Marsh, it can be just as productive for migrant songbirds and gives us a final opportunity to add a few species to our list.



May 16, Day 1: Arrival in Cleveland, Ohio

Participants may plan to arrive in Cleveland, Ohio any time today, and check in at the airport hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. Please schedule your arrival in time to meet the group in the hotel lobby at 6:00 p.m. for a trip welcome and orientation, followed by dinner.

NIGHT: Home2 Suites, Cleveland Airport

May 17, Day 2: Cuyahoga Valley NP, Ohio

On our first morning, we'll travel south from Cleveland to visit Cuyahoga Valley National Park, along the scenic Cuyahoga River. This park, the only national park in Ohio, preserves among the most northerly examples of Appalachian mixed mesophytic forest, a highly diverse broadleaf forest typical of the Southern Appalachians. We'll visit several sites in the park, including the historic Ohio and Erie

Canal Towpath Trail, and seek species of a decidedly southern affinity, such as Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Hooded, Prothonotary, Cerulean, and Yellow-throated warblers. After a full morning, we'll head west and finish the day on the shores of Lake Erie at Maumee Bay State Park, where a stroll around the grounds could produce some migrant warblers or sparrows and nesting Cliff Swallows. After dinner, we'll make an effort to see displaying American Woodcock.

NIGHT: Maumee Bay State Park Lodge and Conference Center, Oregon, OH

May 18, Day 3: Magee Marsh and Ottawa NWR, Ohio



Yellow-throated Warbler © Michael O'Brien

We'll have most of two days to explore the Magee Marsh area on Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline. Magee is widely and justifiably regarded as the warbler capital of North America during spring migration. A boardwalk trail through a narrow strip of woods may offer amazing views of migrant songbirds. During mid-May, warbler migration will be at its peak, and we stand a good chance of finding 15-20 species here alone. With a little luck, we'll encounter some of the later migrant warblers, such as Wilson's, Canada, Mourning, and possibly Connecticut, which are rare earlier in the month. Meanwhile, such dazzling beauties like Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Blackburnian are likely sightings. There are other migrants to be seen here as well, such as cuckoos, thrushes, flycatchers, vireos, and orioles, so we'll have plenty to keep us busy! Nearby Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge has a wonderful wildlife drive where we should see a good variety of waterbirds, including Trumpeter Swan, Sora, Common Gallinule, Sandhill Crane, and if water levels are right, numbers of migrant shorebirds. And the forested margins of Ottawa bring us even more possibilities for migrant songbirds. Several fields in this area often harbor a few nesting Henslow's Sparrows, so we'll be sure to look (and listen) for them.

NIGHT: Maumee Bay State Park Lodge and Conference Center, Oregon, OH

May 19, Day 4: Magee Marsh and Ottawa NWR, Ohio

We'll have another full morning to explore Magee Marsh and environs, revisiting our favorite spots, and likely checking a few new ones. In the afternoon, we'll make our way west to Ann Arbor, likely making a stop to look for Red-headed Woodpecker.

NIGHT: Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Ann Arbor, MI

May 20-22, Days 5-7: Michigan's Lower Peninsula

Our birding in Michigan will begin at the 21,000-acre Waterloo State Recreation Area, the largest park in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. A mosaic of forest, lakes, marsh, and grasslands, Waterloo holds a wide array of bird species. We'll focus our efforts first on an area of mature hardwood forest, home to a thriving population of Cerulean Warblers, along with Blue-winged and Hooded warblers, Ovenbird, and Scarlet Tanager. Nearby grasslands harbor some interesting species, including Sedge Wren, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, and the very local Henslow's Sparrow. By late morning, we'll begin to head north toward Tawas City, stopping en route at Au Sable State Forest where a few Golden-winged and Mourning warblers nest.



Henslow's Sparrow © Michael O'Brien

We'll have parts of four days to explore the Drift Plains and Northern Lakes and Forest Region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Based in the town of Tawas City, we'll be close to many wonderful birding sites, particularly Huron-Manistee National Forest, where Kirtland's Warblers are numerous. We'll devote as much time as necessary to searching for this special bird, which nests exclusively in large, dense stands of young jack pines. A conservation success story, the Kirtland's Warbler was at the brink of extinction in the early 1970s, when populations were estimated to be around 400 individuals.

Through intensive habitat management and cowbird control, the population reached 4000 by 2012, though the species' survival remains dependent on conservation efforts.

As we explore the pine-barrens searching for Kirtland's Warblers, we will likely see a few other interesting species, such as Palm and Nashville warblers, Eastern Towhee, Clay-colored and Vesper sparrows, and perhaps even an Upland Sandpiper. In our travels, we will likely visit a boardwalk through boreal forest habitat and search for forest birds such as Ruffed Grouse, Barred Owl, Blue-headed Vireo, Winter Wren, and a long list of warblers, including Canada and Northern Waterthrush. No doubt one of our favorite destinations will be Tawas Point State Park on the shore of Lake Huron, and just minutes from our hotel. Although not as famous as Magee Marsh, Tawas Point can be equally outstanding as a concentration point for songbird migrants and a frequent magnet for rarities. Narrow sandy beaches here sometimes hold a number of migrant shorebirds, gulls and terns. Being so close to Tawas Point, we'll have the flexibility to visit here when conditions look best for migrants and are likely to visit more than once. Of course, there are countless magical spots in the Lower Peninsula: lakes, ponds, marshes, bogs, and meadows that we will chance upon during our exploration. Some of our favorite moments will likely come from these little treasures. On one evening, we'll do an outing to look for Eastern Whip-poor-will.

NIGHTS: Tawas Bay Beach Resort, Taws City, MI



Golden-winged Warbler © Michael O'Brien

May 23 Day 8: Michigan's Lower Peninsula, back to Detroit

After another full morning of exploring Michigan's Lower Peninsula, we will make our way back to Detroit by late afternoon.

NIGHT: Courtyard by Marriott Detroit Metro Airport, Romulus, MI

May 24, Day 9: Departure from Detroit

Tour participants may make arrangements to depart from Detroit at any time today.

Essential Tour Information

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 12 tour participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis



Michael O'Brien is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant based in Cape May, New Jersey. A lifelong student of the natural world, he is especially passionate about bird vocalizations, field identification, and the thrilling spectacle of migration—both diurnal and nocturnal. His curiosity and expertise have taken him across North and Central America and beyond in pursuit of birds, sounds, and new experiences in the field.

At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with the Cape May Bird Observatory, where he leads workshops and guided outings and, for many years, conducted the fall songbird migration count. His contributions to ornithology and bird education include coauthoring *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*. He is also the primary author of *Larkwire*, a popular app for learning bird sounds.

Michael's artwork has appeared in numerous books and field guides, including the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the *Peterson Field Guide* series. Beyond

birds, he shares a deep enthusiasm for butterflies and co-leads “Birds & Butterflies” tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis. He also coordinates the annual Cape May Butterfly Count.



Louise Zemaitis is an artist and naturalist based in Cape May, New Jersey, where she combines her love of art and nature as a popular field trip leader and instructor. As an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon’s Cape May Bird Observatory, she teaches birding workshops and leads tours that reflect her broad curiosity and enthusiasm for all aspects of natural history.

In addition to her guiding work, Louise has long been active in Cape May’s conservation community. She served as field coordinator for the Monarch Monitoring Project, tracking the migration of these iconic butterflies, and as compiler of the Cape May Christmas Bird Count for many years. Alongside her husband, Michael O’Brien, Louise has guided and mentored young birders at events and conferences across the country, inspiring the next generation of naturalists.

An honors graduate of Temple University’s Tyler School of Art and owner of Swallowtail Studio, Louise works as a freelance artist whose illustrations have appeared in numerous publications. She takes special pride in her role as a mother to two creative sons: Bradley, a conservation educator and artist, and Alec, a library scientist and musician.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: **$4785** per person based on double occupancy or **$5680** 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. Airfare to and from the tour’s starting and ending cities is not included. Any flights within the tour itinerary 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.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT website or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The deposit for this tour is $500 per person. We accept MasterCard and Visa.

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 (January 17, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

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.

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.

*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.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: Dress will be informal throughout. We recommend a couple pairs of pants, several t-shirts, and several long-sleeved shirts. Many outdoor stores carry the designer clothing that many travelers now favor. This includes shirts and pants made of light but durable material, well ventilated, and with numerous pockets. You should definitely bring a few items of heavier clothing in the event of our encountering cold and/or wet weather. Examples of items of this nature include flannel shirts, down or fleece sweaters, and a warm, waterproof jacket.

FOOTWEAR: For footwear, light hiking boots or trail-walking shoes are adequate. Rubber boots are cumbersome to lug around and not practical on this tour, but since wet weather is a possibility, you may wish to bring Gore-tex shoes or "Neos" overshoes. A hat for protection from the sun is essential. A pair of lightweight gloves is also recommended. Please be advised that laundry facilities are available at all of our accommodations, but time to do laundry will likely be limited.

EQUIPMENT: Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable. Below is a list of items that will ensure you are well-prepared:

Sunglasses and sunscreen are essential, as the sun can be intense, even in the spring. A wide-brimmed hat is also recommended for sun protection. We are likely to encounter mosquitos at some point, so insect repellant is recommended. Some sort of travel alarm clock or cell phone alarm is essential. Either a small travel umbrella or rain jacket is essential in the event we encounter rain. Because we'll be spending a good bit of time on foot, some participants may wish to bring a collapsible walking stick, or possibly a portable fold-up travel chair. A camera is recommended for scenery shots or chance bird photography. However, if you are a serious bird photographer, please be aware that excessive camera gear or bulky, hard-framed camera cases are not appropriate for this tour.

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.

Spotting Scopes: Your tour leaders will have scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

DESTINATION INFORMATION & TOUR CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS: Though this will not be a particularly strenuous tour, our days in the field will usually be full, and participants need to be in reasonably good physical condition. There will be much time spent on foot, with some walks of two hours or more. Most walking will be on roadsides, boardwalks, or trails, sometimes on uneven ground, such as damp or sandy trails, possibly with roots. We will also do a fair amount of driving on this tour in order to reach the most productive birding areas; the longest drive will be around three hours. To take advantage of peak songbird activity, we will likely get an early start on most days, but balance that with at least an hour break before dinner. A typical day will begin with breakfast around 5:30 or 6:00 am followed by a full day in the field. Evening outings will be offered on at least one or two nights. Special Note: On some tours and in certain areas, the larger 15-passenger vans are not available. Every effort will be made to secure the larger vehicle for this tour. However, when smaller vans are reserved, participants will not always have a window seat and you will be asked to rotate daily.

CLIMATE: Spring in the Upper Midwest is a pleasant time of year, typically with cool to mild days and chilly nights. We can expect daytime highs to be in 60's or 70s, with nighttime lows in the high 30s to low 50s. Wind speed and direction will play a role in our comfort level; if a north wind is blowing off the lake, we should expect it to feel chillier. Rain is always a possibility.

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:

Birds:

Any of the following guides are excellent choices for this tour:

Kaufman, Kenn. Kaufman Field Guide to the Birds of North America. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005.

National Geographic Society. Field Guide to North American Birds. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 7th edition, 2017.

Sibley, David Allen. The Sibley Guide to Eastern Birds: Second Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. (A more portable version of the larger Sibley Guide, covering only eastern birds. Probably the best guide for this tour.)

Sibley, David Allen. The Sibley Guide to Birds. Second Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. (A large book, but arguably the best North American field guide, with the most complete and accurate ID information.)

Bird References:

Dunn, Jon, and Kimball Garrett. A Field Guide to Warblers of North America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. (The most authoritative and useful treatment of warblers, with comprehensive coverage of identification, aging, sexing, and subspecies.)

Ehrlich, Paul R., et. al. The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988. (An excellent reference guide, full of essays and information about North American Birds.)

Kaufman, Kenn. Lives of North American Birds. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. (An excellent and underrated resource to the natural history of North American birds.)

Stephenson, Tom, and Scott Whittle. The Warbler Guide. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. (A large book, profusely illustrated with photos, and *excellent treatment of warbler sounds.)*

Mammals:

Reid, Fiona. Peterson Field Guide to the Mammals of North America. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Fourth Edition, 2006.

Butterflies:

Brock, Jim P. & Kaufman, Kenn. Butterflies of North America. New York, NY. Houghton Mifflin Company,2003.

Trees:

Petrides, George A. Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Trees. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1988.

CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY APPS & ONLINE RESOURCES:

eBird: 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: Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate bird watchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions regarding 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, followed by the appropriate regional "pack."

TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, "*VENT*") act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

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.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on September 21, 2026 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

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.

View the complete Terms and Conditions on our website.

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