



# CAMP CASCADES

*July 22- August 2, 2026*



*Skyline Trail, Mount Rainier National Park © Michael O'Brien*

Camp Cascades, co-sponsored by Black Swamp Bird Observatory (Ohio), offers young naturalists between the ages of 14 and 18 the opportunity to explore and discover the unique ecosystems of the Puget Sound and Cascade Mountain regions. The primary focus is on the birdlife of this biologically rich state, but we will take time to observe all facets of the region's flora and fauna. The camp is set in a productive learning environment in which campers will be educated on ecology, habitats, and ecosystems, and on increasing observation skills. Daily activities are based on thorough exploration of each of the distinct regions we visit. Hikes, field trips, and discussions will complement free time, during which campers will have the opportunity to rest, study, or work on their journals. Campers do not need to be expert birders but do need to have an interest in nature.

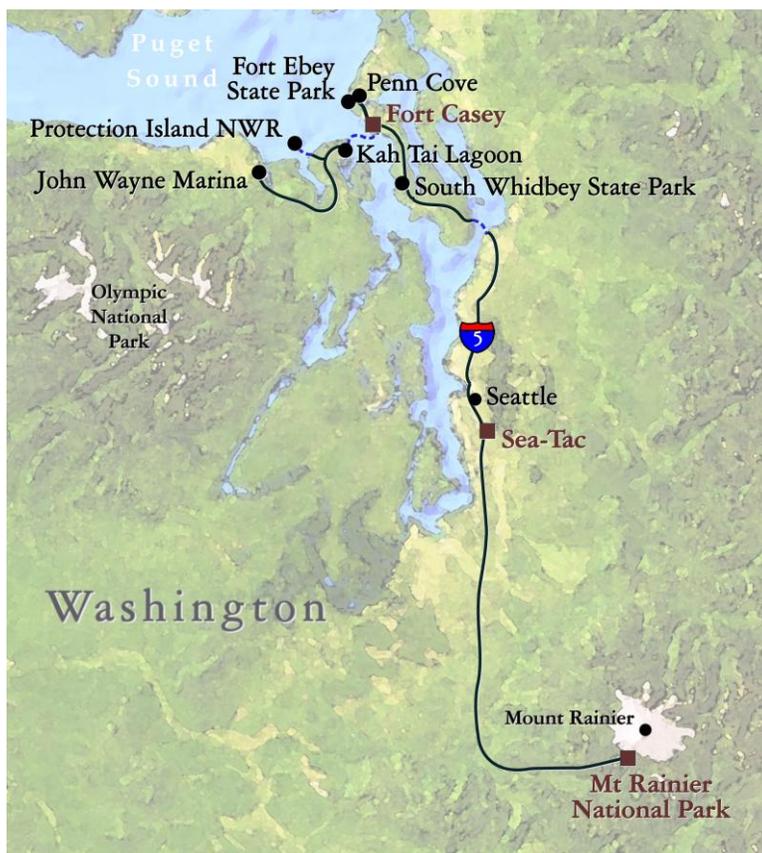
From Seattle, we will travel to Whidbey Island on the shores of majestic Puget Sound. Our base for four nights is the Camp Casey Conference Center; a restored military post now operated for youth groups and students by Seattle Pacific University. Old Fort Casey is a perfect location from which to discover the diversity of habitats and accompanying birds of the Puget Sound region. Morning walks in the nearby forest and hedgerows will turn up many of the characteristic birds of the Pacific Northwest. Nearby Crockett Lake typically hosts a variety of migrant waterfowl and shorebirds. We will take afternoon excursions to Penn Cove and other coastal locations north of the camp to experience the near-shore marine environment. We will spend another day on the Olympic Peninsula at the foot of the magnificent Olympic Mountains, searching for various shorebirds and seabirds at Kah Tai Lagoon, Dungeness Bay, and Ediz Hook.

For the second half of camp, we will experience the big forests, thundering waterfalls, and spectacular alpine habitats of the Cascade Mountains. Our activities will center on Mount Rainier National Park, one of the country's best-known and revered national parks. Harboring a splendid combination of natural wonders, wildlife, and scenery, Mount Rainier is a dream for photographers, nature lovers, and hikers. Featured activities include hikes to spectacular Comet and Narada falls, a visit to the park's Paradise visitor center and hikes on the sublime Skyline Trail and Sunrise area for spectacular wildflowers and world-class alpine scenery.

Campers should expect to see many of the special coastal and mountain birds and animals of the Pacific Northwest including Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Black Oystercatcher, Sooty Grouse, Marbled Murrelet, Rhinoceros Auklet, three species of sapsuckers, White-headed Woodpecker, Western Flycatcher, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Varied Thrush, Townsend's Warbler, Hoary Marmot, American Pika, and Mountain Goat. With much luck, White-tailed Ptarmigan and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch are also possibilities.

The Pacific Northwest offers so much more than good birding, however, and our time in nature should produce an interesting assortment of amphibians, butterflies, trees, and wildflowers.

Camp Cascades presents a rare chance for young naturalists to be in the field with their peers and with expert leaders. Together we will come to learn and appreciate more fully the complex and beautiful ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest.



Camp Cascades starts and ends in Seattle (Sea-Tac).



*Seawatching at Fort Casey © Louise Zemaitis*

## July 22, Day 1: Arrival at Sea-Tac; transfer to Whidbey Island

Campers should plan to arrive at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (airport code SEA) no later than 1:00 p.m. today. Upon arrival, please proceed directly to the baggage claim area where you will be met by camp supervisors who will be holding signs displaying the word “VENT” in large letters. Please wear your VENT name tag (provided with your participant packet) so you can be easily recognized as being part of our group. Any campers arriving in Seattle by other means, or who will already be there, should contact our office for further instructions for meeting the group.

Once we are all assembled, we will depart the airport for Whidbey Island, located approximately 25 miles to the northwest. From the town of Mukilteo, we will catch a ride to Whidbey Island aboard a state ferry that services this stretch of Puget Sound. The ride will take about 20 minutes and provides an exciting experience, especially for anyone who has never ridden on an automobile ferry. There will be time to visit the outdoor passenger deck and look for our first birds on the trip. The ever-present Glaucous-winged Gulls are to be expected along with a smattering of Pelagic Cormorants and Pigeon Guillemots.

We will arrive at Camp Casey in the late afternoon in time to settle in and relax a little after a day of traveling. After dinner, we will have an official orientation and camp welcome. The staff members will introduce themselves and outline the exciting events of the coming days.

**NIGHT:** Camp Casey Conference Center, Whidbey Island

## July 23, Day 2: Exploring Fort Casey; afternoon at Penn Cove, Fort Ebbe, and Swantown

Situated at the top of Puget Sound, facing the Straits of Juan de Fuca, the Camp Casey Conference Center will be our home for the next three days. Fort Casey is an old military post now owned and operated for students and youth groups by Seattle Pacific University. We will stay in one of the buildings on the property that offers full privacy including a kitchen where we will prepare our own meals (everybody is expected to help!).

On this, our first morning, we will explore the adjacent woods and fields starting right after breakfast. A trail through an older growth forest of Grand Fir, Douglas Fir, and Western Hemlock will provide a perfect introduction to the local forest. West Coast specialty birds to look for include California Quail, Western Flycatcher, Hutton's Vireo, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Black-headed Grosbeak in the woods, and Bushtits and Bewick's Wrens in dense vegetation. We might also encounter Pacific Wrens and Pileated Woodpeckers, or perhaps a roosting Great Horned Owl at old Ft. Casey. Red Crossbills have been common for some years and occasionally fly overhead.



*Chestnut-backed Chickadee © Michael O'Brien*

Nearby are "birdy" hedgerows and mixtures of deciduous and coniferous wood, not to mention the old battlements to explore at adjacent Camp Casey. Other birds we may encounter are Band-tailed Pigeon, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Black-capped Chickadee, and our first Steller's Jays.

The area can also be good for mammals, and we will likely encounter the "Columbian" Mule Deer, which displays an all-black tail above, and Douglas's Squirrel, or Chickaree as it is known locally. Interestingly, the bizarre banana slug, a specialty of the wet forests of the west coast, occurs throughout these damp woods and we will

certainly try to locate these distinct creatures.

We will spend the afternoon exploring more of Whidbey Island, visiting some sites between Camp Casey and the town of Oak Harbor in the center of the island. A few miles to the north is Penn Cove; a deep-water bay that attracts Common Loons, waterfowl, and a variety of gulls and terns. In some years, Red-necked Grebes and Surf and White-winged scoters may be found over-summering. Heermann's and California gulls are common post-breeding visitors, and in some years, there are even a few Short-billed and Bonaparte's gulls around. This area is also a good place to study Glaucous-winged Western gull hybrids, which are common here.

On the pebbly shore at the west end of the lagoon we may locate migrating shorebirds such as Greater Yellowlegs, Black Turnstone, or even an early Surfbird. Waterfowl are often numerous in the small ponds fringing the cove. Careful searching may turn up Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead, American Wigeon, or Green-winged Teal.

Other likely destinations include Fort Ebey State Park, where towering Grand and Douglas firs, and even a few Sitka Spruce, are home to confiding flocks of Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Brown Creepers; Swantown Marsh and Bos Lake, which often teem with other eclipse-plumage ducks, as well as various migrant shorebirds, will test our identification skills,. This evening, we will take time to review our experiences to date and maybe spend the after-dinner hours enjoying a sunset over Crockett Marsh.

**NIGHT:** Camp Casey Conference Center, Whidbey Island



*Red-breasted Sapsucker*  
© Michael O'Brien

## July 24, Day 3: South Whidbey State Park; afternoon at Fort Casey and Crockett Marsh

We will have another full day to explore the diversity of habitats and ecosystems that make Whidbey Island such a rich place.

Our destination for the morning is South Whidbey State Park, located a mere five miles from Fort Casey, and one of the island's true natural treasures. A 348-acre tract of old growth forest serves as the park's centerpiece, where ancient Red Cedars, Western Hemlocks, and Douglas Firs tower over a garden-like understory forest of Red Alder, moss-covered Big Leaf Maple, and a collection of smaller plants and trees including Red Elderberry, Salmonberry, Stinging Nettle, and a variety of ferns.

Our primary objective is to experience the special qualities of an old-growth forest. We'll walk the park's two deep-forest trails, the two-mile Forest Discovery Trail and the mile-and-a-half Wilbert Trail, which takes hikers through wooded uplands, down to bubbling streams and into the depths of the darkened forest, where ferns and rhododendrons thrive. We'll be on the watch for many of the birds that are typical of the woodland domains of the Pacific Northwest including Band-tailed Pigeon, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Western Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Pacific Wren, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. A forest as expansive as this is also a good place to search for a variety of species that are less common around Fort Casey, such as Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hutton's Vireo, Red Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak.



*Western Sandpiper © Michael O'Brien*

We'll return to the Camp Casey Conference Center for lunch and some free time before resuming our activities later in the day. Around mid-afternoon we will dedicate time to searching the beautiful rocky shoreline and offshore waters bordering the west side of the camp. It is not uncommon to find Marbled Murrelets and Pigeon Guillemots feeding and floating offshore,

while farther out, Common Murres and Common Loons are occasionally visible. Harlequin Ducks and White-winged Scoters are often seen bobbing in the surf beneath the steep cliffs around us.



*Pigeon Guillemots © Michael O'Brien*

We'll then head to shallow Crockett Marsh on the east side of the camp for early migrant shorebirds and resident marsh birds. Baird's, Pectoral, Western, Least, and Semipalmated sandpipers (the last more uncommon here) can be closely compared, as the first juveniles should be arriving to join the worn, breeding plumaged adults that preceded them south. We should also be able to closely compare both species of yellowlegs and dowitchers in various plumages. Northern Harriers and Bald Eagles nest here, and their hunting activities can often be observed. Peregrine Falcons are occasionally seen strafing the shorebird flocks looking for a meal. We will also take time to investigate the densest areas of the marsh, the preferred domain of Virginia Rail and Marsh Wren.

**NIGHT:** Camp Casey Conference Center, Whidbey Island

## July 25, Day 4: Olympic Peninsula

Today we catch an early ferry across Admiralty Inlet to Port Townsend for a full day on the Olympic Peninsula. The ferry crossing is always birdy with lots of Rhinoceros Auklets, Pigeon Guillemots, and Pelagic Cormorants crossing in front of the bow.

Arriving on the Olympic Peninsula is always an exciting event. The lush, second growth coniferous forests lining the roadsides are composed primarily of Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, and Western Hemlock. Overall, the landscape across the north end of the peninsula is one of thick, dark forests interspersed with grassy pastures, stands of Red Maples, and quaint country homes. We'll kick off our activities with a visit to Kah Tai Lagoon where Virginia Rails are often present, along with an assortment of ducks, and sometimes Pied-billed Grebe. From here it's on to Anderson Lake State Park, a 476-acre tract of woodland surrounding Anderson Lake. Western Red Cedar, Douglas Fir, and Red Alder mix with freshwater marshes to form habitats rich in birds and other wildlife. This lightly visited state park is often good for Red-breasted Sapsucker and a mix of other species including Rufous Hummingbird, Vaux's Swift, Cedar Waxwing, Townsend's and Wilson's warblers, and Western Tanager.



*Black Oystercatcher © Michael O'Brien*

Heading west, we'll visit Dungeness Bay, where several view points offer quality scenery and prime opportunities for a wide variety of migrant shorebirds. We'll also visit Ediz Hook, just outside Port Angeles. Essentially a manmade barrier against the open sea, Ediz Hook is a reinforced peninsula of rock, sand, and pavement that protects the nearshore waters of Port Angeles and serves as a base for the U.S. Coast Guard. The short drive out the length of the peninsula is essential for the visiting birder, as an interesting assortment of birds can be present at any time of year. During our visit, we are likely to encounter an array of waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, alcids, and possibly a few loons or grebes. Some species of particular interest here are Harlequin Duck, Pelagic and Brandt's

cormorants, Black Oystercatcher, Black Turnstone, Western Gull (here at about the northern limit of its range), Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Marbled Murrelet, and Rhinoceros Auklet. Less common species such as Surf-bird, Wandering Tattler, and Black-legged Kittiwake have all been recorded on past Camp Cascades, so we'll keep our eyes open for any of these rarer possibilities.

**NIGHT:** Camp Casey Conference Center, Whidbey Island

## July 26, Day 5: Fort Casey to Mt. Rainier

After breakfast we may have time for a final check of the nearby woods, or perhaps we'll try to dig out a final shorebird species at Crockett Lake. At some point we will pack up and depart Camp Casey, head back toward the south end of Whidbey Island, and ultimately cross back over to the mainland.

Once off the ferry, our route to Mt. Rainier will take us directly south through the Seattle metroplex before diverting on a southeasterly direction. Much of the drive will be typical highway driving, but the final leg of the journey will see us traveling through small towns and farm country before arriving at the national park entrance. En route, we will stop to restock our supplies in preparation for six nights we'll be here. Overall, the trip to Mt. Rainier will take about three hours.

**NIGHT:** The Lodge at Shawnee Trail, Packwood WA



*Sooty Grouse © Michael O'Brien*

## July 27-29, Days 6-8: Mt. Rainier National Park: Paradise

We'll spend the next three days exploring the Longmire-Paradise region of iconic Mt. Rainier National Park. On the first two days, we'll immerse ourselves in the forests, rivers, and waterfalls that grace the lower slopes of the mountain while the third day will be dedicated to experiencing the grand beauty of Rainier's subalpine and alpine life-zones.

Designated in 1899 as our fifth national park, Mount Rainier is a place of monumental beauty. The massive, glacier-laden volcanic dome that dominates the alpine life-zone is, at 14,411 feet, the park's most obvious feature, but lower down the mountain, below the permanent snow and ice, lies a fabulous mosaic of ecosystems. Towering forests, roaring rivers, breathtaking waterfalls, tranquil mountain ponds, and flower spangled meadows together make up the remainder of the park's natural wonders. The community of Longmire and the Jackson Visitor Center are the centers of human activity in the southern part of the national park and serve as a gateway to the renowned Paradise region. Because of the multitude of habitats found according to elevation, there is great variety to the bird, mammal, and plant communities which all occur here in a relatively compact area. Among the plants, it is worth noting that early August is a sublime time to be in the high country, when expansive mountain meadows and trailsides are a riot of color. The sampling of the profusion of wildflowers we should see during our visit includes purples (asters, gentians, jacob's ladders, daisies, phlox, and lupines), whites (heathers, saxifrage, Avalanche Lilies, and bistorts), reds (spireas, penstemons, paintbrush, and columbines) and yellows (arnicas, cinquefoils, Glacier Lilies, and Monkeyflowers).

Featured destinations and activities on this portion of the camp may include:

**Narada Falls** – One morning we may embark on a 4.5-mile hike from Narada Falls to the community of Longmire. The trailhead lies a short distance up the road from the campground and promises an easy downhill grade past three waterfalls and through the heart of a deep forest of Western Red Cedar, Douglas Fir, and Western Hemlock. Gorgeous Narada Falls, which starts this hike off with a bang, is very different than Comet Falls. What this cascade lacks in height, it more than makes up for in volume and width. The trail snakes down from the top of the falls along its eastern side, offering superb views of the broad apron at the top and water crashing on to the jumble of boulders at the bottom. Photographic opportunities abound, and we'll take time to simply enjoy the beauty of the place and appreciate nature's awesome power. Below the falls, the trail winds through the forest more or less in the direction of Longmire, along the way passing smaller Madcap and Carter falls. Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Western and Hammond's flycatchers, Steller's Jay, Vaux's Swift, Pacific Wren, American Dipper, Varied Thrush, Yellow-rumped and Townsend's warblers, and Western Tanager are all species that may be seen along the way. At one point, the trail crosses the Nisqually River. From this perspective, Mt. Rainier looms massive and spectacular against the northern skyline.



*American Dipper © Michael O'Brien*



*Hoary Marmot eating lupines © Michael O'Brien*

**Skyline Trail** – We will allot an entire day to hike the 7-mile Skyline Trail, possibly the greatest day-hike available in the entire national park, offering glaciers, snowfields, wildflowers, and the majestic mountain itself. This ambitious route provides sensational scenery in such staggering proportions, not to mention an abundance of wildlife along the way, that we will need most of the day to take it all in. Access to the trailhead is from the Jackson Visitor Center where a paved, looped path traverses beautiful, flower-filled meadows and stands of Subalpine Fir before rising above tree-line and reaching the base of Rainier's

permanent snowline. Weather cooperating, the views of the mountain are bigger-than-life. Every twist and turn of the path reveals glorious scenery around us and on every horizon. The wildlife sighting possibilities are amazing. Among mammals, we have a chance to see American Pika, Cascades Golden-mantled Ground-Squirrel, Hoary Marmot, Black Bear, Mule Deer, Mountain Goat, and Coyote. The birds that occur here include Prairie Falcon, Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, Sooty Grouse, Canada Jay, Common Raven, Violet-green Swallow, American Pipit, Horned Lark, and Pine Grosbeak. At the top of the route, where the trail reaches true alpine country, we have at least a slim chance to see two of the region's greatest avian prizes: White-tailed Ptarmigan and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch.

**NIGHTS:** The Lodge at Shawnee Trail, Packwood WA

## July 30, Day 9: East of the Cascade Crest

A short excursion east of the Cascade Crest at White Pass will take us to much drier “rainshadow” habitats reminiscent of the Southwest and home to a very different suite of birds. We’ll first visit Oak Creek Wildlife Area, with its steep rocky slopes surrounding an oasis of Oregon Oaks. Species we may encounter here include White-throated Swift, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Canyon Wren, and Lazuli Bunting.

At nearby Wenatchee National Forest, open Ponderosa Pine forest is home to White-headed Woodpecker and Williamson’s Sapsucker, along with Dusky Flycatcher, Western Bluebird, and abundant Western Wood-Pewees.

**NIGHT:** The Lodge at Shawnee Trail, Packwood WA

## July 31-August 1, Days 10-11: Mt. Rainier National Park: Sunrise; return to Sea-Tac

For the final leg of the camp, we will return to Mt. Rainier, this time exploring the park’s east side, including the vicinity of the Sunrise complex.



*White-tailed Ptarmigan © Michael O'Brien*

The Sunrise region of Mt. Rainier National Park sits at a higher elevation than Paradise, which means that more of the park’s subalpine and alpine regions are easier to access. The whole area is laced with a fantastic network of trails, each of which brings the visitor face-to-face with extraordinary natural wonders that include glaciers, tarns, forests, mountain meadows, and other views of Mount Rainer.

The centerpiece of our activities will be a hike to **Mount Fremont Lookout**. This 5.4-mile out-and-back takes off from the Sunrise Visitor Center, ascends to Sourdough Ridge, and then angles northwest along the side of Mount Fremont, culminating at a fire lookout at an elevation of 7,200 feet. The view from the lookout is supreme with arresting views available of Mount Rainier, Skyscraper Mountain, and Grand Park. At this elevation we are in prime country for observing alpine species such as White-tailed Ptarmigan, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, and Mountain Goat.

In the early afternoon of August 3, we’ll begin the drive back to Sea-Tac. Our chosen route back to “civilization” will depend on our timing, but we expect to arrive at the hotel by 6:00 p.m.

**NIGHT:** July 31: The Lodge at Shawnee Trail

**NIGHT:** August 1: Red Roof Inn, Sea-Tac Airport, Seattle

## August 2, Day 12: Departing flights home

Campers will be escorted to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) with plenty of time to check in for departing flights home. All campers should plan to depart Sea-Tac no later than 12:00 p.m. today.

### Essential Tour Information

**CAMP SIZE/AGE LIMIT:** Camp Cascades is designed for youth aged 14 to 17 who have an interest in birds and natural history. They must be under 18 at the start of camp. The camp will be limited to 14 participants.

**CAMP STAFF:** Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis



**Michael O'Brien** is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has a passionate interest in bird vocalizations and field identification, and a serious addiction to migration and nocturnal birding. His travels have taken him throughout North and Central America and beyond. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*, and is primary author of *Larkwire*, an online and handheld application for learning bird sounds. His illustrations have been widely published in books and field guides, including the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the new Peterson field guides. Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies, leads several "Birds & Butterflies" tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis, and is coordinator of the Cape May Butterfly Count.



**Louise Zemaitis** is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey where she is a popular field trip leader teaching birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory. She also enjoys leading birding groups and lecturing at birding festivals and is known for her enthusiasm for all natural history subjects. Louise and her husband, Michael O'Brien, have been guiding young birders at birding events and conferences for many years. In addition to leading, Louise is field coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May, served as compiler of the Cape

May Christmas Bird Count for over 20 years, and owns Swallowtail Studio in West Cape May. An honors graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art, she enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published. Her proudest accomplishment has been the raising of her two sons, Bradley, a biologist and artist, and Alec, a library scientist and musician.

### **CAMP COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION**

**CAMP FEE: \$4,195** per camper. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 12, accommodation as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and leadership services provided by the camp staff.

The fee does not include airfare to Seattle nor returning to your home, airline baggage fees or special assistance charges, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

Partial camp scholarships MAY be available through the American Birding Association (ABA) and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours and awarded to campers who couldn't otherwise attend. Please contact the ABA and VENT for more information.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** You may register for camp through the [VENT website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per camper. Online registration requires deposit payment by Visa or MasterCard. Full payment of the camp fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date (March 24, 2026).

**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.

### **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 summer camp prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide a full refund, which will constitute full settlement.

If VENT cancels or delays camp or any portion of camp as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the camp fee; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a refund and will not be liable or responsible to any person, 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 herein.

**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.**

**CAMP POLICIES:** Summer youth camps operated by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours are designed to expose camp participants to the treasures of the natural world. The settings for VENT youth camps are selected for their biological richness and natural beauty. The camp staff designs programs that camp attendees will find exciting and educational. It is our expectation that campers will have the kinds of experiences that create memories that last for a lifetime. The success of our camps depends on the leadership and organization of the staff, but the level of enjoyment that an individual camper achieves will depend on his ability to demonstrate a willingness to cooperate and share. **In 40 years of offering youth nature camps, a camp participant has never been sent home.**

**In order to maintain a perfect record, campers must adhere to the following rules:**

- There will be no usage of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products permitted. We take a zero tolerance approach.
- Any disputes that arise between campers will be mediated by staff members. Fighting will not be tolerated.
- Cooperation is essential. Every day brings a host of responsibilities to the staff members, from preparing meals to cleaning camp sites, vehicles, ice chests, and cooking supplies. Campers will be required periodically to help with these endeavors. Non-cooperation is not an option.
- Damage or destruction of the property of others is strictly prohibited and is considered grounds for dismissal.

**Finally, Campers will NOT be permitted to attend a VENT Camp unless they, along with their parents or legal guardians read, sign and return the following documents. These documents will be included in materials the Camper will receive after registering:**

**1) To the Camper:** This document, signed by the camp participant, certifies that the camper has read and understands the rules and regulations of the camp.

**2) Release and Assumption of Risk:** This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that participation in birding camp activities involves some degree of risk of injury from, but not limited to, the hazards of traveling, hiking in various types of terrain, accident, illness, and the forces of nature. A parent or guardian's signature holds VENT harmless from any and all liability. VENT is also granted permission to seek medical assistance for an ill or injured camper.

**3) Tetanus Shot Certification Document:** This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that the camp participant is up to date with tetanus vaccination. Campers must provide proof of vaccination.

**4) Acknowledgement of Receipt of Camp Packing List:** This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges receipt of a packing list provided by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours.

**5) Emergency/Medical Evacuation Insurance:** This document signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges purchase of insurance that covers emergency evacuation and medical coverage.

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

**MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT:** The parents, or legal guardian, of all camp participants are **required** to purchase emergency/medical evacuation insurance for his/her son or daughter for this program and will be asked to sign and return to the VENT office a waiver stating that this has been done. Such insurance should be available from any insurance company which provides trip cancellation coverage. Please refer to the **Trip Cancellation & Medical Evacuation Insurance** section of this itinerary for more information.

**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.

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

### **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](http://Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and terms 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 airline. **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:** As space in the vans is limited, campers should pack as carefully and efficiently as possible. Please avoid bringing any unnecessary items that may take up more room. We require that campers pack their clothing and equipment in a pliable, middle-to-large duffel bag, and perhaps a smaller bag for camping gear. Campers may wish to bring a carry-on or other small travel bag for toiletries, personal items, or valuables. PLEASE DO NOT BRING HARD-SIDED SUITCASES OR FRAME BACKPACKS. **Campers who bring excess or oversized luggage may be required to ship some of their luggage home at the beginning of camp.**

The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. 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 the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

**CLOTHING:** Summer is a pleasant time of year for most of Washington State. The temperature is generally warm, yet be prepared for night and morning temperatures in the low 40s. Short periods of rain are certainly possible, but mild, dry conditions are expected through much of the trip. **However, campers must be prepared for a wide range of conditions!** Our lengthier hikes in the Cascades could be cool-to-cold if the skies are overcast due to unsettled weather.

- **T-Shirts (short-sleeved):** pack several, but make sure to avoid white and other bright colors.
- **T-Shirts (long-sleeved):** handy for evenings and the early morning hours.
- **Shorts:** preferred for most days.

- **Long Pants:** a couple pair are necessary for chillier weather. Jeans are acceptable, but are not as comfortable as cotton or other lightweight materials.
- **Long johns:** essential for cold-weather hikes, and a welcome item for sleeping on chilly nights.
- **Socks:** lightweight cotton socks and heavier socks, like wool, for maximum comfort on extended hikes, as well as thin liner socks to reduce friction and help prevent blisters.
- **Light gloves:** essential for hiking in chilly weather.
- **Hat:** essential for protection from the sun; wide-brimmed is best, but campers should bring a baseball cap at the very least.
- **Heavy fleece, sweater, or packable insulated jacket:** for cool nights and mornings, or exposed mountain hikes.
- **Sturdy waterproof shell jacket:** used as an outer layer for hiking in inclement weather.
- **Warm sleepwear:** long johns or flannel pajamas ensure warmth is maintained while spending nights in tents.
- **Swimsuit:** handy if weather conditions and time permit a dip in a swimming hole.

### **The importance of having warm clothing should not be underestimated!**

As we will spend the majority of our time based out of a bungalow-type building (on the coast) and camping (inland), laundry service will not be available. Campers should be prepared for a week-and-a-half in the field without being able to wash clothes.

**FOOTWEAR:** Several lengthy hikes are planned.

- **Hiking boots or trail shoes:** should be broken-in and well-fitting to prevent sore feet and blisters. Liner socks worn under hiking socks also go a long way toward preventing blisters.
- **Lightweight walking shoes:** provide comfort for non-hiking situations.
- **Sandals:** may be used during downtime but are not recommended for outings.

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

- **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. A belt pack or day-pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, two water bottles, notepads, extra clothing, cameras etc.) is necessary.
- **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.
- **Two one-quart water bottles:** Essential for lengthier hikes. Having one Hydro-flask type vacuum-insulated bottle may be desirable to keep drinks cold. Bicycle-type bottles are not a good choice, as they tend to leak, and may contain Bisphenol-A (BPA).
- **Camera:** please read the additional note below regarding cameras.
- **Flashlight and/or headlamp**
- **Sunscreen:** required for a trip to Washington in the summer, as the sun's rays are intense in the mountains and can easily burn exposed skin.
- **Battery-powered travel alarm clock:** campers bringing cell-phones with alarms will not need this.
- **Toiletries and medications:** as necessary
- **Notebook and pens:** for field notes and field sketches

- **Favorite snack foods:** optional
- **Extra batteries:** optional

### **Additional Important Packing Notes:**

- **Please refer to the packing list, which will be included in materials the Camper will receive after registering for a more complete listing of items to bring to camp.**
- As it is our intent to be immersed in the natural world, we prefer that you do not bring portable music devices, electronic games, etc. to camp.
- **Cameras:** Many campers may wish to bring a camera, and it is perfectly fine to do so. However, excessive camera gear is not appropriate for this camp, and **bulky, hard-framed camera cases are not permitted.** The camp experience is about being in nature and observing wildlife. An aggressive pursuit of photographs can get in the way of this and is not appropriate. **Participants whose primary objective is photography should not sign up for this camp.**

### **DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS**

**CLIMATE:** The lofty ridges of the north-south running Cascade Range divides Washington into two climate regimes. West of the Continental Divide, temperatures are moderated by the marine influence of Puget Sound. Summers are warm, but not hot, while winters can be wet and cold, but not frigid. East of the mountains, where considerably less precipitation falls, conditions are generally dry with cold winters and warm to hot summers.

While Washington is often associated with gloomy, overcast skies and rain, summer is a delightful time to visit most parts of the state. For the first half of the camp, we will be in the Puget Sound area and the Olympic Peninsula northwest of Seattle. Beautiful weather is expected, with clear to partly cloudy skies and daytime temperatures into the upper 70s (°F). Nighttime and morning temperatures may drop into the upper 50s. Precipitation is unlikely, but campers should be prepared for the possibility of rain if the summer is an unusually wet one.

Moving into the central Cascades for the second part of the trip, we will likely experience conditions similar to that of the coast, with plenty of sunshine and clear to partly cloudy skies. The days are likely to be a bit warmer than on the coast and the nights a little cooler. Days can be warm (up to the 80s), with nights cooling down to the low 50s. Campers must be aware that weather fronts rolling in off the Pacific are possible in the late summer and can produce heavy overcast, steady rain, and even mountain snow; some hikes above treeline could experience temperatures into the low 40s. Though such weather is highly unlikely, campers need to come to camp prepared.

**CONDITIONS:** A typical day will see us out bright and early to take full advantage of the long summer days. We will stay busy and active up to lunch, with most morning activities centering on a feature hike or area exploration. After lunch we'll take a break, during which time campers will have periods of downtime to either relax or explore their immediate surroundings in small groups. We will go out again in the mid-afternoon for either short hikes or vehicle trips to nearby areas. Since darkness does not fully descend until after 9:00 p.m., there will be post-dinner activities some days. Mealtimes will usually fall within these time frames:

Breakfast:	6:00–7:00 a.m.
Lunch:	12:00–1:00 p.m.
Dinner:	6:00–7:00 p.m.

Accommodations at Fort Casey will be in a private large house owned and operated by the Camp Casey Conference Center. The building consists of several large bedrooms with enough beds to accommodate 17 people.

In the Cascades, we will be staying at a cabin in the town of Packwood. Most meals will be cooked on site, though at least one dinner out is planned.

Hiking is an important activity on this trip, and campers should expect to participate in day-hikes of varying lengths, some of which exceed five miles. The most challenging hike will be moderately difficult on an occasionally steep trail. The following hikes and corresponding distances should provide camp participants and their parents with information on what to expect in terms of physical requirements. Campers may log up to 20+ miles on foot.

Hike:	Distance (round-trip):	Difficulty:
Forest Discovery Trail	2 miles	Easy
Wilbert Trail	1.5 miles	Easy
Comet Falls and Van Trump Park	5.8 miles	Upper moderate
Narada Falls	4.5 miles	Easy
Skyline Trail	7 miles	Moderate
Sunrise Rim	4.9 miles	Low moderate
Mt. Fremont Lookout	5.4 miles	Moderate

All vehicle travel will be in 15-passenger touring vans. We will make a round-trip visit to the Olympic Peninsula aboard the Washington state ferry system.

Campers will be encouraged to call home on a regular basis and keep their families informed of their activities (note: cell reception is lacking in much of the Cascades). However, the use of cell phones should be limited to personal downtime away from the group. **Use of cell phones (other than for field-related activities such as photography or audio recording) during any group activity, either in the field or during checklist sessions, is prohibited.**

**TIME:** Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) is the standard in Washington during the summer months.

### **HEALTH & SAFETY**

**HEALTH:** We want your time at Camp Cascades to be as rewarding and memorable as possible. To ensure this comes to pass, we offer the following information and suggestions for health-related issues:

- Staff members are certified to perform standard first aid and CPR and carry first aid supplies.
- Those campers on prescribed medication should remember to **pack it in carry-on luggage**.
- **VENT requires that all campers be up to date with his/her tetanus shot. Campers will not be permitted to attend a VENT Youth Camp unless the tetanus shot certification document has been returned to the VENT office, signed and dated by a parent or legal guardian.**
- Due to potentially high summer temperatures, campers will always be provided with plenty of cool drinks in the forms of water, Gatorade, and juice.

- Staff members will do all the cooking, though campers may sometimes be enlisted to help with prep and cleanup. Campers should expect healthy meals that are low in fat, salt, and sugar, but high in protein, starch and vitamins. Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables will be available.

**\*\* Campers with special dietary needs should notify our office upon registration.**

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.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can refer to the [CDC website](#), and Canadian citizens should check the website of the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying "Up to Date" with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance for avoiding COVID-19.

**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.

## **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](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

The bookstores of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, [www.laaudubon.org](http://www.laaudubon.org) and Tucson Audubon Society, [www.tucsonaudubon.org](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org) also carry a fine inventory of books on birding and natural history. The bookstores can be accessed through their respected websites.

## **FIELD GUIDES:**

### ***Birds***

Campers may bring any of the following field guides as primary resources for bird identification. All these guides adequately cover the birdlife of the region.

Kaufman, Kenn. ***Kaufman Field Guide to the Birds of North America***. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000.  
National Geographic Society. ***Field Guide to North American Birds***. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2017.

Sibley, David Allen. ***The Sibley Guide to Birds***. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf Publishing Company, 2014. Second edition.

Sibley, David Allen. ***The Sibley Guide to Western Birds***. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. This is a slimmed down regional version of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, second edition.

### ***Mammals***

Any of these three guides adequately covers the mammal life of the region. However, there are some key differences between them. The Princeton guide offers the most concise, easiest to use field guide, with many well-illustrated plates featuring most of the recent taxonomic changes. A major drawback to the guide is a complete lack of accompanying text. The Kaufman guide is perhaps a better guide in that the color plates include good species accounts. Like the birding guide, Kaufman employs the use of digitally enhanced images rather than true illustrations to display each species. The Reid guide is the newest and probably best field guide of the lot. It includes the most up-to-date taxonomy available to casual observers and easily the best text descriptions. Some might consider the lack of color plates a drawback.

Kays, Roland W. and Wilson, Don E. ***Mammals of North America***. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009 (second edition).

Bowers, Nora, Rick Bowers, and Kenn Kaufman. ***Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America***. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 2007 (second edition).

Reid, Fiona A. ***Mammals of North America***. Peterson Field Guides. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2006.

### ***Butterflies***

Brock, Jim P. and Kenn Kaufman. ***Kaufman Focus Guides: Butterflies of North America***. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 2003. The best all-around North American butterfly identification guide currently available.

Glassberg, Jeffrey. ***Butterflies through Binoculars: The West***. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

### ***Reptiles***

Stebbins, Robert C. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Reptiles and Amphibians*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1985.

### **Trees**

Petrides, George A. and Olivia. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Trees*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1992.

## **CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY APPS & ONLINE RESOURCES:**

**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."

**LARKWIRE:** A complete, game-based learning system for mastering bird sounds and visual identification, available by subscription from the App store.

## **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 October 18, 2025 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.

SCWA:20260722

Rev: 08/01/25 – MO

PNP: 10/06/25 – CD/DE