



MINNESOTA'S NORTHWOODS

May 31 - June 5, 2026



Connecticut Warbler, Minnesota © Erik Bruhnke

The vast expanses of northeastern Minnesota are rich in unique ecosystems and memorable birds. This region, sometimes referred to as the “Northwoods,” will be the focus of our activities for the entire tour as we visit areas both inland and along Lake Superior . The deepest reaches of Minnesota’s bogs and boreal forest are noteworthy breeding grounds for many northern specialty birds. Ruffed Grouse, Great Gray Owl, Black-backed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, and Boreal Chickadee are characteristic and enticing permanent residents of the region. Both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets nest among the areas we visit. Also nesting here are Yellow-bellied, Olive-sided, and Alder flycatchers; over 20 species of warblers including Connecticut, Mourning, Cape May, Golden-winged, and Canada; and many other passerines singing on territory. We may have a chance to see Common Loons, the state bird of Minnesota. With a bit of luck, there is also the possibility of finding a Northern Goshawk, Barred or

Northern Saw-whet owl, or Red or White-winged crossbills in the deep forests. The exceptionally scenic, adjacent North Shore of Lake Superior offers stunning ocean-like vistas where other birds can be found.

May 31, Day 1: Arrival in Duluth, Minnesota

Participants should plan to arrive into Duluth this afternoon and make their way to our hotel where a room will be reserved in each person's name. At the time of this writing the complimentary hotel shuttle has been suspended and participants should plan on taking a taxi/Uber/Lyft to the hotel.



We will gather in the hotel lobby at **4:30 pm** for a welcome and orientation, followed by some local birding. After birding we will make our way to dinner.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn Duluth Canal Park, Duluth



Black-backed Woodpecker © Erik Bruhnke

June 1-4, Days 2-5: Boreal Forest and Great Lakes Birding

Throughout Duluth and within an hour's drive of the city are seemingly-endless birding hotspots. We'll experience different avian treasures every day. One of the most well-known birding hotspots in northeastern Minnesota is Sax-Zim Bog. We'll spend ample time birding throughout alder thickets, sedge meadows, aspen forests, and Black Spruce/tamarack bogs which provide abundant habitat for many nesting birds like, Black-billed Cuckoo, Alder Flycatcher, Golden-winged Warbler, both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, and the magnificent Great Gray Owl. The wet meadow-favoring LeConte's Sparrows and Sedge Wrens make their nests in Sax-Zim Bog every summer, as well as the

more upland Northern Harriers and Sandhill Cranes. The highly-sought Connecticut Warbler is one of the elusive warbler species we'll scan for as we enter the boggy regions of Sax-Zim Bog.

Lake County of northeastern Minnesota is a renowned part of the state where many boreal specialties can be found, and the scenic hotspots within Lake County are sure to impress. Some of the birds on which we'll set our sights include Ruffed Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, Boreal Chickadee, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. The chattering Winter Wren, as well as the melodious Hermit Thrush and Swainson's Thrush breed throughout these forests. Blue-headed and Red-eyed vireos make



Blackburnian Warbler © Erik Bruhnke

this region their summer home as well. One of the special highlights of this tour is experiencing the sights and sounds of northern warbler species which, as previously stated, can approach 20 plus species over the course of this birding adventure! Tennessee Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler all breed throughout this part of Minnesota. The elusive Northern Goshawk is an uncommon but year-round resident throughout the Superior National Forest where we'll spend part of our time. Moose, Wolves, Porcupine, and Ermine (Short-tailed Weasel) are rare but possible throughout the area as well.

The renowned fall hawkwatching site in Duluth, Hawk Ridge, offers extensive trails and bluffs packed with scenic views and nice opportunities to observe breeding birds of the northern brushlands and forests. Although the southbound migration at Hawk Ridge occurs later in the year, we may visit this beautiful spot on the tour to become better acquainted with the unique scenery and natural history of Duluth. Along Duluth's perimeter and throughout quaint nearby towns are expanses of Great Lakes shoreline. These locations provide opportunities for viewing waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, and terns. Several of these water-residing species are local nesters, while others are still migrating north at the time of the tour.

We'll dine at uniquely local establishments that offer a special taste of the area. Many of these restaurants focus on locally-sourced ingredients. Wild rice, Walleye, pasties, maple syrup-complimented dishes, and homemade pies are just a few of the local flavors.

NIGHTS: Hampton Inn Duluth Canal Park, Duluth

June 5, Day 6: Departures

Transfers will be provided to the Duluth International Airport in time for flights departing this morning.

Essential Tour Information

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

TOUR LEADERS: This tour will be led by **Erik Bruhnke**. A second leader will be added if tour size warrants.



Erik Bruhnke has loved birds since he was a child looking at chickadees. In 2008 he graduated from Northland College in Wisconsin with a Natural Resources degree. Erik taught field ornithology at Northland College for three semesters. Between 2009 and 2014, he spent his summers conducting field research focused on breeding bird transects in Upper Michigan, point counts for a breeding bird atlas in Minnesota and Wisconsin's Northwoods, vegetation and breeding bird surveys throughout wind farms in North Dakota's prairie potholes, and cavity-nesting surveys in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon. A devoted raptor nerd, he is drawn to hawkwatches. He worked as an interpreter for six

seasons at Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in Duluth, Minnesota; counted migrating raptors at the Corpus Christi HawkWatch in Texas in 2015; and was the 2016 and 2017 hawk counter at the Cape May Hawkwatch in New Jersey. Erik's wildlife photography has won national awards, and he's written for the American Birding Association's *Birder's Guide*, *BirdWatching* magazine, and *Bird Watcher's Digest*. When not leading birding tours, Erik often leads field trips and speaks at birding festivals. He also enjoys hiking, kayaking, cross-country skiing, and just being out in the snow. In his free time he loves to cook and bake.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: The fee for this tour is **\$3,675** per person in double occupancy from Duluth. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 6, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Duluth and return, arrival transfer to the hotel, alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: If you request single accommodations, a single supplement of **\$710** will be added to your tour fee.

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 31, 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.

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](https://www.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: A couple pairs of pants are essential, and shorts are recommended. Many people prefer synthetic zip-off pant/shorts, as they are functional and breathable for the warm days. Pants made of denim are acceptable, but not as comfortable on the warm days. Should we have an uncommonly cool (but possible) set of days, pants of a heavier consistency will be greatly beneficial. A few t-shirts of long and short-sleeved varieties are great for the conditions in which we'll be birding. Button-up field shirts are breathable and lightweight. Several thin layers go a long way when looking to stay warm. A fleece and/or sweater will also be important to have with you. The mix of sunny days and a possibility of rainy days will warrant bringing a hat. Many folks prefer the wide-brimmed variety, and a standard baseball cap, although the latter offers less sun protection but will suffice.

Rain gear is very important, as rain showers may occur. It is a good idea to have a set of gloves along should a cool front occur. Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Insect-Shield pants and long-sleeved shirts made of lightweight, yet durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular. These provide useful protection from the sun and from mosquitoes and a chance of black flies.

FOOTWEAR: Bring a good fitting, broken-in pair of water-resistant hiking boots or trail shoes for time in the field. Athletic shoes are sufficient when not birding and for evenings. A pair of rubber boots or Neos are critical in walking comfortably through waterlogged bog habitat while in search of the Connecticut Warbler. Although some of these areas may not be accessible every year due to varying rainfall and snowmelt, it is important to have entirely-waterproof footwear available should this bog-walking opportunity present itself.

EQUIPMENT: One of the most important aspects of having an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with proper equipment. The following items will come in handy during your trip to Minnesota:

You should pack a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, water, etc.). You will need an alarm clock for our early-morning starts and ear plugs if you are a light sleeper. In addition, you will certainly need insect repellent since mosquitoes, black flies, and ticks will be present in a few areas. The city of Duluth has excellent-tasting tap water. Please consider bringing your own water bottle and refilling it, to reduce the consumed resources while on tour. Bottled water (among other beverages) will always be available.

Binoculars: We strongly recommend good binoculars of at least 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 magnification. We recommend that you do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like “minis” because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars using minis is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 7x35 or 8x42 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting Scopes: Your tour leader will have a scope available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. A scope is not often beneficial with woodland birding, but can be an important tool to have when scanning distant waters and shoreline.

DESTINATION Information & TOUR Conditions

CLIMATE & WEATHER: The weather this time of year is highly variable. Mornings can start out in the 40s, 50s, or sometimes in the 60s. Cool fronts can limit daytime highs to the 50’s but on many days the temperatures can peak into the 60s, 70s, and occasionally in the 80s. Cool fronts can bring a burst of insulation-requiring conditions, whereas warm fronts can bring exceptionally comfortable conditions. Being right on Lake Superior often results in a cooler sensation than when we’re birding even slightly inland. Rain is a regular occurrence this time of year too, with some visits experiencing warm and comfortably dry days and some visits experiencing cooler days with intermittent scattered rain. It is important to come prepared for the varied weather that can occur here.

CONDITIONS: Birding in northeastern Minnesota is easy-going. The landscape is largely flat, but dotted with areas of higher elevation terrain. This tour will concentrate its activities on areas that are level and easily accessed. Gravel roads through large forests, edges of fields, and possibly a sandy beach or two will comprise most of the terrain through which we’ll be birding. To see Connecticut Warbler, one of the target birds of the tour, we may have to put on the taller rubber boots to trek through a Black Spruce bog. Annual rainfall and snowmelt can affect accessibility to this particular habitat.

We’ll have a few early mornings in order to take full advantage of birdsong and prime bird activity (for migrants and resident species alike). Several days may require slightly more driving through national forest lands to locate different birds. On these commuting days, the scenery alone is top-notch, and the birding is exciting among the locations we may visit. Frequent birding opportunities are available should we venture into the national forests. Varied weather such as windy conditions or rain can influence where we’ll bird on different days. Flexibility is key.

This tour is suitable for all travelers. Any amenities beyond birding needs are available moments away from our hotel. The places we’ll visit for birding will vary daily, with an overall goal to give participants a special feeling of northern Minnesota’s sense of place.

The Hampton Inn is right along Lake Superior in Duluth’s Canal Park, a short peninsula where one-of-a-kind stores and restaurants line the streets. Fitness room, indoor pool, hot tub, and walking path are available at the hotel, and we are a moment’s walk from the iconic Duluth Lift Bridge.

MEALS: Great food compliments fun days of birding. Duluth prides itself with many locally owned and unique dining establishments. Locally sourced ingredients and culinary dishes unique to this

northern region will be available. Wild rice, walleye, and maple syrup-accented dishes are just some of the flavors to savor. We will take full advantage of the finer dining options in town. Duluth also has a booming microbrewery scene. Those with an appreciation for craft beer will find the selection pleasing. We will make a point of dining at different establishments to get a taste of what the area offers.

INTERNET SERVICE: The Hampton Inn offers free Wi-Fi internet access as well as computer access at the business center.

TIME: Minnesota operates on Central Daylight Time (CDT).

LAUNDRY SERVICE: The Hampton Inn offers coin-operated laundry facilities.

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.

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.

BITING INSECTS: Mosquitoes, black flies, and ticks will be present in a few areas.

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.

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 [Amazon](#) which has a wide selection; [Buteo Books](#) and [NHBS](#) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [Abe Books](#) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

FIELD GUIDES:

Birds:

Dunn, Jon L. & Jonathan Alderfer (Editors). *National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of*

North America. National Geographic, 2017 (seventh edition).

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

Sibley, David Allen. ***The Sibley Guide to Birds***. National Audubon Society. Alfred E. Knopf Publishing, 2014 (second edition). For those who prefer the smaller regional Sibley Guides, we also recommend the following title:

Sibley, David Allen. ***The Sibley Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern North America***. National Audubon Society. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016 (second edition).

Other Birding Resources:

Eckert, Kim. ***A Birder's Guide to Minnesota*** Duluth: Stone Ridge Press, 2022 (fifth edition)

Mammals:

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

Butterflies:

Kaufman, Kenn. Et al. ***Kaufman Field Guide to Butterflies of North America***. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 2006 (second edition).

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 23, 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.

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