MINNESOTA

Migratory Gems of Hawk Ridge & Western Lake Superior

September 20 - 25, 2027



White-throated sparrow among fall colors in Duluth © Erik Bruhnke

Fall migration in northeastern Minnesota holds a kaleidoscope of migrating avian possibilities. The expansive North Shore of Lake Superior funnels hundreds of thousands of birds past Duluth every fall. Each day we will be sure to savor the autumn Northwoods scenery, complimenting the exciting birding taking place. In addition to spending a great deal of time learning about the many songbirds and waterbirds around the vicinity of Lake Superior, we will also spend time advancing our hawkwatching skills at the renowned local hawkwatching site, Hawk Ridge. A diverse plethora of raptors and non-raptors alike are all possible at Hawk Ridge. The extensive and legendary Sax-Zim Bog will also be explored to maximize our birding experience in northeastern Minnesota. In addition to the wonderful birding, we will be enjoying delightful cuisine (focusing on many local ingredients at local restaurants), all while staying at one hotel with lake-facing rooms, our home-sweet home for the tour. All-in-all, this tour is a treat to the senses during a special timeframe of fall migration taking place.

September 20, Day 1: Arrival in Duluth, MN

Participants planning to arrive in Duluth this afternoon should make their way to our hotel where a room will be reserved in each person's name. Participants should plan on taking a taxi/Uber/Lyft to the hotel (approximately $30). Including those who arrive pre-tour for Hawk Ridge's Hawk Weekend festival, we will gather as a group in the hotel lobby at 4:30 p.m. for a welcome and orientation, followed by some local birding. After birding we will make our way to dinner.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn Canal Park, Duluth

September 21-24, Day 2-5: Hawk Ridge, Great Lakes, and Boreal Forest Birding

Throughout the tour we'll visit an array of hot spots, providing a thorough sampling of local and migrating birds of the area. Our hotel is just a short drive from the legendary Duluth hawkwatching site: Hawk Ridge - one of the highlights of our tour. An official hawk count has been taking place at Hawk Ridge since 1972. Throughout the tour we will be sure to spend time at Hawk Ridge exploring the raptor migration when the conditions/times are best for doing so. Day-by-day we will monitor the weather and upcoming days' forecast to plan our birding locations accordingly to maximize our birding potential.



Bald Eagle © Erik Bruhnke

From atop Hawk Ridge, kettles of Broad-winged Hawks may be seen migrating through in considerable numbers during the latter half of September. We will also be in prime time to see Sharp-shinned Hawks migrating through in good numbers as well. Although peaking in greater numbers in October and into early November, American Goshawks (at the timing of the tour) are very scarce but possible as an early migrant. Nice flights of all three regularly occurring falcons (Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, and American Kestrel) are likely, especially when the weather is favorable for good migration. Red-tailed Hawks are increasing in numbers as October draws near, and Osprey can be coming through in good numbers. The birdfeeders at Hawk Ridge often welcome a plethora of White-throated Sparrows and White-crowned Sparrows, with a chance of Harris's Sparrow and other species joining them during this sparrow-filled time of migration. Late September is a great time to scan the skies for raptors and more at Hawk Ridge, and we will be sure to take full advantage of this hotspot.

Throughout the westernmost tip of Lake Superior are two major peninsulas; Park Point and Wisconsin Point. These vast expanses of land are highly regarded as offering some of the best overall birding opportunities in the area. The fusion of woodlands meeting vast dunes, great lakes shorelines, and expansive waters makes these two nearby spots worthy of birding. Park Point and Wisconsin Point are just minutes from our hotel. While scanning from shore, we'll spend some time going over gull ID (yes, it can be fun!) along with looking for uncommon jaegers. We'll be on the lookout for migrating Common Loons, the state bird of Minnesota. With luck we may have a chance for Red-throated Loons, a possible rarity during the mid-fall months. Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal are migrating through, as are Northern Pintail in late September. With persistence, an uncommon Horned Grebe or Surf Scoter could be possible, in addition to other water-dwelling rarities. The latter half of September is also a good time to look for various shorebirds migrating through the area too. Along the wooded habitat nearby, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Golden-crowned Kinglets are likely as are several lingering, latter-autumn warbler species. Purple Finches, American Robins, and movements of Common Grackles and Rusty Blackbirds often migrate through in good numbers as late September comes around. Some of these may be seen throughout the nearby woodlands, while others may be seen passing through the skies, exhibiting the phenomenon known as morning flight. Tens of



American Kestrel © Erik Bruhnke

thousands of Blue Jays migrate past Duluth every fall, with many of them flying throughout middle and late September. The high-soaring American White Pelicans and Sandhill Cranes could grace our presence at any time too. We will spend several mornings checking the nearby shorelines and surrounding areas, looking for a rich spectrum of migrating possibilities.



Fox Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow © Erik Bruhnke

On at least one day of the tour, we will make our way up to Sax-Zim Bog. This renowned hotspot is located just short of an hour's drive northwest of our hotel. The day's plan for the Bog is variable, but we will likely make an early-morning effort to look for the Great Gray Owls in the boggy habitat at this location. Although uncommon, Great Gray Owls are possible in Sax-Zim Bog during the fall months. The many vast roads and boardwalks in Sax-Zim Bog welcome our travels among different environments (boggy areas, large fields, upland forests, and more). We will be on the lookout for resident Canada Jays, with a slight possibility of Boreal Chickadee and Black-backed Woodpecker in the respective areas. Like the areas closer to Duluth, Sax-Zim Bog provides good habitat for migrating, boreal-breeding warblers. An array of sparrows is possible in Sax-Zim Bog in late September including Dark-eyed Juncos, White-throated, White-crowned, Fox, and Swamp Sparrows to name just a few. Northern Harriers often patrol the food-rich fields of Sax-Zim Bog, and it's worth keeping an eye out for field-dwelling Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs too. There is much to appreciate throughout this expansive and unique landscape of Sax-Zim Bog; renowned for winter and summer birding but underappreciated throughout the fall months.

On one night of the tour there will be an optional post-dinner excursion up to Hawk Ridge for a scheduled owl banding program, where we may have a chance to see up-close Northern Saw-whet Owls.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn Canal Park, Duluth

September 25, Day 6: Departures Home

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

ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION

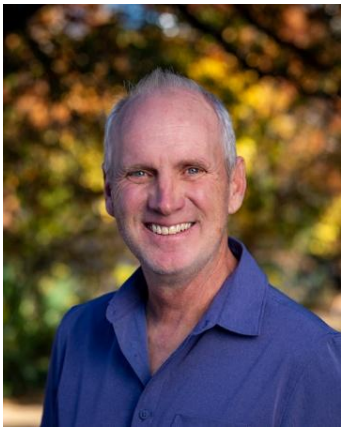
TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 12 tour participants.

TOUR LEADER(s): This tour is led by Erik Bruhnke and Barry Zimmer.



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.



Barry Zimmer has been birding since the age of 8, building a lifelong career centered on exploration, fieldwork, and sharing the natural world with others. While his greatest expertise lies in the birds of North and Central America, his travels have taken him to nearly every corner of the globe, including Japan, Russia, Madagascar, Africa, and New Zealand.

A respected figure in the birding community, Barry is a longtime member of the New Mexico Bird Records Committee and previously served 12 years on the Texas Bird Records Committee. He has coauthored three books—Birds of the Trans-Pecos, A Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley, and Birds and Birdfinding in the El Paso Area—all regarded as essential regional resources.

Beyond birding, Barry is an avid nature photographer, having captured more than 1,600 bird species on film. His images and field experience reflect both his scientific knowledge and creative eye. A graduate of the University of Texas at El Paso with a degree in psychology, Barry also enjoys cooking, sports (as a dedicated Red Sox fan), and movies. He lives in El Paso, Texas, with his wife, Yvonne, and their daughter, Alexandra.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: **$3,850** per person based on double occupancy or **$4,585** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 through dinner on Day 5, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does **not** include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city; however, flights within the tour (if any) are included. The fee also excludes laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the "TIPPING" sub-section below.

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

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (May 23, 2027) 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 AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, 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 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. Cool nights and cool-to-warm days are the norm this time of year, making additional layers of great value for the tour. T-shirts and long-sleeved shirts are functional, and a sweater/fleece will likely be used daily. Button-up field shirts are functional when milder days take place. Rain gear (jacket and pants) is important, as rain showers can occur with the changing of weather fronts. It is a good idea to have a set of gloves. The mix of sunny days and the possibility of rainy days will warrant bringing a hat. Many folks prefer the wide-brimmed variety; a standard baseball cap, although offering less sun protection, will suffice. A warmer hat is also recommended for

the cooler early mornings that we will be experiencing. Outdoor stores such as Cabela's, REI, and Duluth Trading Company carry field clothing that many birders find appealing.

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. Some folks may opt to bring NEOS overshoes or full rubber boots, which can come in handy should rainy conditions take place throughout the tour.

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.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. 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 throughout the tour.

Binoculars: We strongly recommend good binoculars of 7, 8 or 10 power magnification. We recommend that you do NOT bring mini binoculars (pocket-size 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 mini binoculars is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. It can cause frustration, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. Larger binoculars have better light-gathering ability and will offer more enjoyable views during our field experiences.

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; however, while scanning the waters, beaches, and skies throughout the tour, a spotting scope will come in handy. A spotting scope is by no means required for the tour, as the leader's scope will be readily available every day, used when needed.

DESTINATION INFORMATION & TOUR CONDITIONS

CLIMATE & WEATHER: The weather this time of year is highly variable. Mornings can start out in the 40s but more often in the 50s. Cool fronts can limit daytime highs to the 50s but on many days the temperatures can peak into the 60s and seldomly into the 70s. Early morning frost is also possible. Cool fronts can bring a burst of insulation-requiring conditions, whereas warm fronts can bring exceptionally mild and comfortable autumn conditions by Upper Midwest standards. Being right on Lake Superior often results in a cooler temperature, compared to when we're birding even slightly inland throughout the tour. Some late-September visits to Duluth experience warm and comfortably dry days, and some visits experience Minnesota's Northwoods' cooler days with intermittent scattered rain. It is important to come prepared for the varied weather that can occur here. The summertime black flies are long-gone by the time of our tour and mosquitoes are nearly non-existent, with a slight chance of them on only the mildest of fall days.

CONDITIONS: The landscape that we hike on the tour is largely flat but dotted with areas of slightly higher elevation terrain. This tour will concentrate its activities on areas that are quite level and easily accessed, despite much of Duluth existing on a large hillside. 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. We may partake in some light trail-hiking in the woods as well, with varying but easy-walking terrain.

We'll have some early mornings to take full advantage of birdsong and prime birding activity (for migrants and resident species alike). Varied weather such as windy conditions or rain can influence where we will bird on different days. Flexibility is key with our birding plans each day. This tour is suitable for all travelers.

Any amenities beyond birding needs are available moments away from our hotel. The Canal Park Lodge is in Duluth's Canal Park, a short peninsula along Lake Superior where a plethora of one-of-a-kind stores and restaurants line the streets. Fitness room, indoor pool, and hot tub are available in our hotel, with a lakeside walking path immediately behind the hotel.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: The Canal Park Lodge offers laundry facilities.

TIME: CDT

MEALS: Great food complements fun days of birding. Duluth prides itself on 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-focused dishes are just some of the flavors to enjoy. 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. Weather pending, we may partake in an outdoor picnic or two to enjoy some birding while dining. Throughout the tour we will make a point of dining at different establishments to savor a taste of what the area offers.

HEALTH & SAFETY

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

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

SUN EXPOSURE: The sun's ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes). Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and

be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

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

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

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

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- **Permanone® (Permethrin)**: is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.

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

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks. https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you

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

SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION

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

Sibley, David Allen. The Sibley Guide to Birds of North America. Second Edition. New York: Knopf, 2014.

Dunn, Jon and Jonathan Alderfer. National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America. Seventh Edition. Washington, D. C.: National Geographic Society, 2017.

O'Brien, Michael, Richard Crossley, and Kevin Karlson. The Shorebird Guide, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

Liguori, Jerry. Hawks from Every Angle: How to Identify Raptors in Flight. Princeton University Press, 2005.

Dunne, Pete, David Sibley, and Clay Sutton. Hawks in Flight (2nd edition). Boston: Mariner Books, 2012.

Eckert, Kim. A Birder's Guide to Minnesota (5th edition). Duluth: Stone Ridge Press, 2022.

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 October 26, 2026, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "***Airline***") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any

Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete Terms and Conditions on our website.

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