

# RIVERS & MOUNTAINS OF OREGON AND WASHINGTON AN INTRODUCTORY BIRDING TOUR

May 22-28, 2011

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*The towering basalt cliffs of the lower Columbia River Gorge rank among the most scenic places in the United States. On this tour we follow the oak-clad slopes of the Columbia Gorge east from Portland, past towering Mt. Hood, through varied habitats that offer a wide variety of birds, other wildlife, and wildflowers. We'll spend two nights at Mt. Adams Lodge, which sits at the foot of 12,281 ft. Mt. Adams in the South Cascades. The comfortable lodge offers fine food, has a large area of forested grounds to explore, and its feeders are busy with grosbeaks, crossbills, and other finches, plus Calliope Hummingbirds. Nearby, Conboy National Wildlife Refuge hosts nesting Sandhill Cranes, White-headed Woodpeckers and Gray Flycatchers. The mountains and foothill habitats nearby hold Hermit Warblers and many other species, from Western Tanagers and Northern Pygmy-Owls to American Dippers and Lazuli Buntings. The oaks along the Columbia are a summer home to lovely Lewis's Woodpeckers, Ash-throated Flycatchers, and bluebirds.*

*After two nights at the Lodge, we drive farther east along the Columbia Gorge to Oregon's Blue Mountains, where Great Gray Owls are a good bet and Williamson's Sapsucker are likely (as one of 10+ species of woodpeckers possible on the tour). Flammulated Owl, Townsend's Solitaire and Townsend's Warbler nest here too. Two nights in La Grande, Oregon put us within a few miles of great birding in the Blue Mts. plus extensive freshwater marshes – home to nesting Cinnamon Teal and other ducks, as well as Black-necked Stilts, Virginia Rails, and families of Sandhill Cranes. The scenic beauty and wildlife diversity of this tour will make for a very memorable week, at an ideal season to travel in the Pacific Northwest.*

*VENT's "Introductory Tours" are focused within a small geographic area that has a great birding and other natural history interest, and are scheduled at peak seasons. Like our other introductory tours, this tour is designed to appeal to birders of all experience levels, and makes a special effort in the field to talk about or answer questions about optics; how birds are related to one another and grouped in classification; techniques for learning to identify birds; and the importance of habitat and seasons in finding birds.*

**May 22, Day 1: Arrival in Portland.** Participants may plan to arrive in Portland, Oregon (airport code PDX) any time today and check in at the airport hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. Please schedule your arrival time early enough so everyone can convene in the hotel lobby at 6:30 p.m. for an informal orientation prior to a get-acquainted dinner.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn, Portland Airport

**May 23, Day 2: Up the Columbia River to Mt. Adams.** Today's travel will take us east from Portland along the Columbia River, with the option to bird some on both the Oregon and Washington sides of the river as we head towards our lodging at Glenwood, Washington, about 25 miles north of the Columbia River.

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Many different birds are possible as we enter a variety of habitats along the route from riparian edges, to oak woodland and to foothill forest. Rufous Hummingbirds whistle along streamside thickets; Willow Flycatchers call from low shrubs; Bullock's Orioles sing from cottonwood trees; and MacGillivray's Warblers – among at least eight species of warblers along the route – sing from shrubby thickets. Black-headed Grosbeaks and Warbling Vireos are widespread as are Red-breasted Sapsuckers and Western Tanagers. Common Mergansers and American Dippers nest along the smaller streams. Oak habitats are prevalent as we begin the climb toward Glenwood (1895 ft.) and we should see our first beautiful Lewis's Woodpeckers (Acorn Woodpecker is possible too) and lots of Western Scrub-Jays. Arriving on the Mt. Adams Lodge at the Flying L Ranch grounds by mid-afternoon, we'll take a break, watch the hummingbird and seed feeders (Calliope and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, plus Evening Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills, and Cassin's finches are regular), and stroll the forested grounds later in the day.

NIGHT: Mt. Adams Lodge, Glenwood, Washington

**May 24, Day 3: Mt. Adams and Glenwood vicinity.** Today and tomorrow morning will give us some time to bird with the gracious Mt. Adams Lodge as our base for exploring the many great birding spots between Mt. Adams and the Columbia River at the height of the nesting season. We'll range from the Garry Oak stands along the Columbia and Klickitat Rivers where Ash-throated Flycatchers and Lewis' Woodpeckers nest, to the conifer forests of the Mt. Adams slopes where a whole host of songbird species – such as Varied Thrush, Townsend's Solitaire, and Hermit MacGillivray's Warblers – nest. Conboy Refuge, with its nesting Sandhill Cranes, White-headed Woodpeckers, Gray Flycatchers and Pygmy Nuthatches is a short drive from the lodge. During our two nights at the Flying L Ranch, we'll dine at the Mt. Adams Lodge, and listen to Olive-sided Flycatchers, Nashville Warblers, and Lazuli Buntings singing nearby.

NIGHT: Mt. Adams Lodge, Glenwood, Washington

**May 25, Day 4: Mt. Adams to La Grande, Oregon.** Our route today takes us along the Klickitat River canyon, one of the scenic highlights of the Northwest. Its oak-covered slopes attract numbers of Lewis's Woodpeckers, as well as Ash-throated Flycatchers, Lark Sparrows, Wild Turkeys, and other birds. Continuing west along the Columbia River toward La Grande, we'll again see a varied landscape with considerable habitat variety. Today's birds may include Swainson's and possibly Ferruginous hawk, Acorn Woodpecker, Western and Eastern kingbirds, Western Wood-Pewee, lots of Lazuli Buntings, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Meadowlark and Lesser Goldfinch. Time permitted, we will begin birding the Blue Mountains near La Grande (2271 ft.) later today. Just south of town are extensive freshwater marshes – home to nesting Cinnamon Teal and other ducks, as well as Black-necked Stilts, Virginia Rails, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and families of Sandhill Cranes.

NIGHT: America's Best Value Sandman Inn, La Grande, Oregon

**May 26, Day 5: The Blue Mountains.** The Oregon forest near La Grande supports one of the largest breeding populations of Great Gray Owls in the Northwest and we will have an excellent chance to find this impressive owl today. Other birds typical of this forested zone are Williamson's Sapsucker and Black-backed Woodpecker plus such species as Townsend's Solitaire, Townsend's Warbler, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Western Tanager and Hammond's, Dusky and Olive-sided flycatchers – among many others. For those who would like, we will return here after dinner to do some owling after dark, with a reasonable chance of seeing a Flammulated Owl and perhaps Poorwills.

NIGHT: America's Best Value Sandman Inn, La Grande, Oregon

**May 27, Day 6: La Grande to Portland.** After breakfast in La Grande, we'll begin birding our way back to Portland to arrive by late afternoon. We'll cover new ground on the return trip, and look for birds that may have evaded us so far, with the possibility of a final visit to the Blue Mts. forest enroute. One possible return route takes us through scenic, rolling grasslands, with a chance for such birds as Gray Partridge, Chukar, Grasshopper

Sparrow, and Horned Lark. Back at the hotel in Portland, we'll have a farewell dinner and final checklist session.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn, Portland Airport

**May 28, Day 7: Departures from Portland.** Tour participants may depart from Portland anytime today.

**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.

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 7 participants.

**TOUR LEADER: Bob Sundstrom**

**Bob Sundstrom** has led VENT tours since 1989 to destinations including Hawaii, Mexico, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Iceland, Papua New Guinea, the Southwest Pacific islands, Antarctica, the Bering Sea, and many destinations throughout North America. Bob takes a strong interest in both the natural and cultural settings of his tours. He earned his doctorate at the University of Washington. Bob and his wife Sally live in the rural Scatter Creek Valley south of Olympia, Washington. Bob lived in Seattle for more than two decades, continues to teach birding workshops, and leads a program of short, regional tours that begin in the Seattle area. During two seasons of work in the Pribilof Islands, he helped chronicle the occurrence of North American bird rarities. A skilled birder with a special interest in bird song, Bob has served on the boards of several nature and conservation organizations, as well as the Washington State Bird Records Committee. He is a co-author of *The National Audubon Society Field Guide to the Pacific Northwest*. When not on tour, Bob keeps busy as the lead writer for the daily public radio program *BirdNote*, which is archived at [www.birdnote.org](http://www.birdnote.org).

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the tour is **\$1995** per person in double occupancy from Portland, Oregon. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to dinner 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 Portland and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$365**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**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.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$300** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$150** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$50** per person. If cancellation is made between 120 and 90 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 90 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee

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schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. ***We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.***

If you cancel:

120 days or more before departure date  
Between 120 and 90 days before departure  
Fewer than 90 days before departure date

Your refund will be:

Your deposit minus \$150\*  
No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded  
No refund available

\*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$50 per person.

**TRIP INSURANCE:** A brochure and application form for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. **We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness.** VENT recommends *Travel Insured International* as our preferred insurance provider. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. Contact *Travel Insured International* prior to registration for details. Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than *Travel Insured International*, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

**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.**

**AIR INFORMATION:** 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. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

**BAGGAGE:** Luggage space in the vans is at a premium. Soft luggage is much preferable to rigid suitcases for making the most of our limited storage space. Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized bag and one carry-on per person.

**CLOTHING/WEATHER:** June weather in Oregon and Washington is typically mild, with temperatures ranging from the 50s to the low 80s. Because we will be birding at higher elevation occasionally and a night outing is an option, expect cooler conditions (down to 40 F.). At least some precipitation is likely during the course of the tour. We want you to be comfortable, so ***please be prepared for varying conditions.*** Please bring enough different clothing layers to meet the potential range of conditions. This is especially important if you chill easily or aren't accustomed birding in cool weather.

The following should cover all likely conditions: lightweight field clothing (e.g. cotton shirts and pants/jeans) and a light jacket close at hand will suffice for warm days. Bring additional warm layers for cooler conditions like night birding or a cooler weather pattern: a pile jacket or warm sweater; perhaps a turtleneck; consider lightweight, long underwear; a pair of gloves and warm head covering. Don't underestimate the potential for cold, especially in the mountains and after dark. There will be little opportunity to shop for additional clothing. For wind and moisture, a good windproof/water-resistant outer shell such as a Goretex parka will be essential along with rain/wind pants for a cooler day in the mountains. Please avoid wearing nylon or similar rain/wind-pants during forest and trail birding as the noise they create makes it difficult to hear and locate birds. Casual dress for dining is fine throughout the tour.

A pair of lightweight hiking shoes or boots will be the ideal footwear for most outings, although supportive athletic shoes would be okay too. There is no need to bring rubber boots, although precipitation may create conditions that require walking through tall, damp grass.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair. 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. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

Some walks may cover a mile or more and could encompass an hour or two of absence from the van. Please bring a small daypack or belt pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.) and a water bottle that can be refilled for hiking and other outings during the trip. We also hope to cut down on buying lots of small bottled waters by refilling your personal containers. For sunny conditions, sunscreen and a protective hat are recommended. Occasional mosquitoes and wood ticks are a possibility so a small quantity of insect repellent may come in handy. There are no chiggers in the Northwest. You will need an alarm clock and a small flashlight. There may be some good photo opportunities, so keep your camera handy each day.

**HEALTH:** If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, 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. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots.

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website, [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com) offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from this store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You may also visit such other online stores such as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print or hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) which specializes in ornithology books.

**Birds:**

Bannick, Paul. *The Owl and the Woodpecker: Encounters with North America's Most Iconic Birds*. Seattle, Mountaineer Books, 2008.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. National Audubon Society. New York: Knopf, 2000.

Wheeler, Brian K. *Raptors of Western North America*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2003.

Zimmer, Kevin J. *Birding in the American West: A Handbook*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell U. Press, 2000.

**Other Natural History:**

Alden, Peter, Amy Gregoret, Richard Keen, Daniel Mathews, Eric A. Oches, Dennis Paulson, Robert Sundstrom, and Wendy B. Zomlefer. *The National Audubon Society Field Guide to the Pacific Northwest*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.

Eder, Tamara. *Mammals of Washington and Oregon*. Renton, WA: Lone Pine Press, 2002.

Lyons, C.P. *Trees & Shrubs of Washington*. Renton, WA: Lone Pine Press, 1999.

Parish, Roberta, Ray Coupe, and Dennis Lloyd. *Plants of Southern Interior British Columbia*. Renton, WA: Lone Pine Press, 1996.

Pojar, Jim and Andy MacKinnon. *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast*. Renton, WA: Lone Pine Press, 1994.

Storm, Robert M. and William P. Leonard. *Reptiles of Washington and Oregon*. Seattle: Seattle Audubon Society, 1995.

Taylor, Ronald J. *Sagebrush Country: A Wildflower Sanctuary*, 1992.

Turner, Mark and Phyllis Gustafson. *Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest*. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 2006.

Whitney, Stephen. *The Pacific Northwest*. A Sierra Club Naturalist's Guide. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1989.

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**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger 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 passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect August 25, 2010 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.