

SPRING IN THE WASHINGTON CASCADES

JUNE 5 – 11, 2011

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“A RELAXED & EASY DEPARTURE WITH BOB SUNDSTROM”

Leavenworth, Washington is an ideal venue for a late spring nature tour. This charming town sits at the foot of Icicle Canyon in the Cascade Mountains, on the north side of scenic Mt. Stuart. Our lodging, tucked right alongside the Wenatchee River, has a fine reputation for hosting groups in a relaxed setting. Every room has a balcony overlooking the rushing river, and one can sit on the balcony and watch songbirds and ospreys during tour breaks. White-headed Woodpeckers and Pygmy Nuthatches, as well as Evening Grosbeaks and Western Tanagers visit the grounds of the inn. Our lodging is just a few minutes from Icicle Creek, where American Dippers bob on the rocks in the fast flowing stream and Harlequin Ducks nest. In late May, wildflowers carpet the forest floor and canyon roadsides.

The tour begins in Seattle and we will have a full day at an ideal season to bird across the Cascade Mts. With four nights in Leavenworth, we'll explore a variety of sites within reasonable driving distance, including beautiful Icicle Canyon. On one day, we'll explore the full length of a canyon in the nearby Entiat Mts. Beginning at the rocky cut of the Columbia River, our drive passes through towering rimrock cliffs, sagebrush, and hayfields, then higher into ponderosa pine stands, mixed conifers, and right up into aspen-rimmed beaver bogs. Bird possibilities are as diverse as the habitats. Chukar often sit atop basalt towers in the early morning, and brilliant Lazuli Buntings, noisy Yellow-breasted Chats, and tiny Calliope Hummingbirds are regular sights along the canyon road. We'll watch for such birds as Northern Pygmy-Owl, Say's Phoebe, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole, and Cassin's Finch, among many others. We will explore the back roads of the Wenatchee Mountains too, where Ruffed Grouse drum, Williamson's Sapsuckers nest at higher elevations, and Hermit Thrushes sing all day.

Another day takes us into the nearby sage and potholes country, home to nesting Sage Thrashers and Brewer's and Sage sparrows, as well as lovely American Avocets, Cinnamon Teal, blue-billed Ruddy Ducks, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. An optional evening drive in the mountains will focus on finding Common Poorwills, and perhaps include a brief bit of owling.

Although one cannot hope to see all the birds of Washington in such a short tour, this tour incorporates some of the richest spring birding possibilities in the Northwest, and the opportunity to spend most nights at one lodging while exploring diverse areas within a reasonable driving distance.

This tour is one in our series of Relaxed & Easy (R&E) tours. These tours are appropriate for participants who want a slower paced tour, with somewhat fewer hours in the field and light physical activity. They are ideal for persons who prefer a somewhat later start in the morning (typically 7:00

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a.m.), a break after lunch and a shorter afternoon outing. They involve only short walks, usually not more than a half mile, and avoid difficult terrain.

June 5, Day 1: Arrival in Seattle. Participants should make arrangements to arrive in Seattle on June 5th and transfer to the *Holiday Inn SeaTac Airport Hotel*. The Holiday Inn, just a few minutes from the airport, operates a complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport. Please meet in the hotel lobby at **6:30 p.m.** for an informal orientation just before a get-acquainted dinner.

NIGHT: Holiday Inn SeaTac Airport, Seattle

June 6, Day 2: Seattle to Leavenworth, with Birding on Both Sides of the Cascade Mountains. Departing Seattle on this spring morning, we'll take a bit of time to sample the bird life of the Puget Sound lowlands. Woods, brushy areas, and open fields host a range of birds like Black-headed Grosbeaks, Wilson's Warblers, Spotted Towhees, and Cedar Waxwings. The forest edge echoes with the whirring voices of Winter Wrens, and here too we may find Pacific-slope Flycatchers and Black-throated Gray Warblers. Other species nesting close by include Rufous Hummingbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Bushtit, and White-crowned Sparrow. Soon we will be driving up the west slope of the Cascade Mts., to cross the summit of Snoqualmie Pass at just over 3000 feet. The Cascade Range has a profound effect on the climate west and east of the crest. At Snoqualmie Pass we begin to leave western Washington's moister habitats behind, passing into the overall drier but highly varied terrain of eastern Washington. Washington east of the Cascade crest will be the focus of most of the tour.

As we descend the east slope, American Dippers are regular along sparkling streams, and we will be in good areas for MacGillivray's, "Audubon's," Yellow-rumped, and Yellow warblers, as well as Vaux's Swift, Red-naped Sapsucker, Osprey, Hammond's Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, and many other species of birds. Where the mountain firs begin to give way to ponderosa pines, we'll be on the lookout for Evening Grosbeak, Cassin's Vireo, Chipping Sparrow, Western Wood-Pewee, and Cassin's Finch. And as the pines meet rolling grasslands, we are in the realm of Mountain and Western bluebirds, Common Snipe, California Quail, Vesper Sparrow, Western and Eastern kingbirds, Bullock's Oriole, and Black-billed Magpie, among others. We plan to arrive in Leavenworth by late afternoon.

NIGHT: Alpine Rivers Inn, Leavenworth

June 7-9, Days 3-5: Birding Nearby Areas with Leavenworth as our Base. With three full days in Leavenworth, we have the freedom to explore an amazing variety of habitats within modest driving distance of our gracious lodging. Within a few minutes of the inn, a walk among the pines or along a creek may well turn up nesting White-headed Woodpeckers, Calliope Hummingbird, Nashville Warbler, Vaux's Swift, Evening, and Pygmy Nuthatch, among others. We'll take a morning drive up along fast-flowing Icicle Creek through several different elevation zones into the majestic Stuart Range. In addition to dippers, Harlequin Ducks, and Common Mergansers on the creek, the canyon offers a fascinating mix of east-of-the-Cascades birds with typically west side birds like Red-breasted Sapsucker and Chestnut-backed Chickadee. Townsend's Warblers, Western Tanagers, Townsend's Solitaires, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Cassin's Vireos, and swifts are just a sample of the birds that can be seen in Icicle Canyon.

On another day, we'll venture north of Wenatchee into the Entiat Mts., where a remarkable array of birdlife awaits. Beginning at the rocky cut of the Columbia River, our drive passes through towering rimrock cliffs, sagebrush, and hayfields, then higher into ponderosa pine stands, mixed conifers, and right up into aspen-rimmed beaver bogs and tamarack country. Bird possibilities are as diverse as the habitats. Chukar are a good possibility in the first few miles up the canyon, sitting atop basalt towers in the early morning. Brilliant Lazuli Buntings, noisy Yellow-breasted Chats and MacGillivray's Warblers, tiny Calliope Hummingbirds, Red-naped Sapsucker, Lewis's Woodpecker, Northern Pygmy-Owl, as well as Say's Phoebe, Dusky Flycatcher, Veery, Cassin's Vireo, Cassin's Finch, Red Crossbill, Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, Rock and Canyon wrens,

and lots of other birds are found here. The tiny, diurnal Northern Pygmy-Owl is a reasonable possibility, as are Golden Eagles, and some years highly mobile flocks of Clark's Nutcrackers forage in the pines.

Another day takes us into the nearby sage and potholes country, home to nesting Sage Sparrows, as well as Sage Thrashers and Brewer's Sparrows – one of the continent's great singers. Larger bodies of water may host lovely Clark's and Western grebes, and Black-necked Stilt and American Avocets may turn up on shallow wetlands. Handsome Cinnamon Teal nest side-by-side with Blue-winged Teal and Ruddy Ducks, while clangorous Yellow-headed Blackbirds add a distinctive wild sound to the cattails. The pothole lakes also host nesting Great Egrets, Black-crowned Night-Herons, and Caspian and Forster's terns.

For those who would like to venture out one evening for a drive in the mountains, we'll hope to find Common Poorwills and perhaps do a brief bit of owling.

NIGHT: Alpine Rivers Inn, Leavenworth

June 10, Day 6: Leavenworth to Seattle. After a final breakfast in Leavenworth, we'll begin birding our way back to Seattle, 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, perhaps including such higher elevation species like Sooty Grouse, Williamson's Sapsucker, Varied Thrush, Townsend's Solitaire, Hermit Thrush, and Red Crossbill. Back in Seattle, we'll have a farewell dinner and final checklist session.

NIGHT: Holiday Inn SeaTac Airport, Seattle

June 11, Day 7: Departures from Seattle. Tour participants may depart at their convenience.

RELAXED AND EASY (R&E) TOUR INFORMATION: Relaxed & Easy (R&E) tours are similar to "regular" VENT tours, but set to a slower pace, with somewhat fewer hours in the field and lighter physical activity. They are ideal for participants who prefer a somewhat later start in the morning, a little lengthier afternoon break, and a shorter afternoon outing. Walking is limited to short walks of usually not more than a half mile, avoiding difficult terrain. A typical day will begin with breakfast around 6:30-7:00 a.m., followed by birding until about noon. We will attempt to have lunch every day between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m., followed by an afternoon break (when possible). We will resume birding for a couple of hours in the mid afternoon. On most days we will attempt to provide 45 minutes to an hour for personal time before dinner. We will have dinner between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. Strenuous physical activity will be avoided, and all walking will be limited to well-marked roads and trails, excluding uneven or rough terrain.

Relaxed & Easy (R&E) refers only to the slower pace of a tour, not to a participant's birding skills or ability. Accordingly, birders of all levels of ability are welcome, as they are on typical VENT tours; R&E tours should not to be mistaken as tours for beginning birders. All birders are welcome, regardless of skill level, as they are on regular VENT tours.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least **four 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 14 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Bob Sundstrom and Michael O'Brien

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

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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.

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

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$2075** per person in double occupancy from Seattle. 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 Seattle 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 **\$325**. 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 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.

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 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

Your refund will be:
Your deposit minus \$150*

Between 120 and 90 days before departure	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded
Fewer than 90 days before departure date	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: May weather in Washington is typically mild, with temperatures ranging from the 50°s to the low 80°s. Because we will be birding at higher elevation occasionally and a night outing is an option, expect cooler conditions (down to 40°). 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 to 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 a warm head covering. Don't underestimate the potential for cold, especially 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. You may also need 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.

FOOTWEAR AND HIKING: 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.

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OTHER NEEDS: 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 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 or head lamp. Your leader will have a spotting scope for group use, but you may wish to bring your own. There may be some good photo opportunities, so keep your camera handy each day.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra digital storage media or film, 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. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

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, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

SUGGESTED READING: Our website, 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, and for those out-of-print or hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com or 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.

Kruckeberg, Arthur R. *The Natural History of Puget Sound Country*. Seattle: U. of Washington Press, 1991.

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

Lyons, C.P. *Wildflowers of Washington*. Renton, WA: Lone Pine Press, 1997.

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.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and 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, motor coach, 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. When 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 October 14, 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.