

AUTUMN GRAND MANAN

BIRDS AND WHALES

AUGUST 27 - SEPTEMBER 2, 2012

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Located in the Bay of Fundy, off the coast of Maine and New Brunswick, the picturesque island of Grand Manan makes an ideal base for experiencing the phenomenon of fall migration along the northeast coast. Migrant landbirds pouring through the spruce woods include warblers (roughly 20 species are possible), flycatchers, vireos, sparrows, and finches. Various shorebirds visit the marshes, and the nearshore waters are filled with eiders, cormorants, and gulls.

The thing that makes this area stand out from other migration hot spots, though, is the ready availability of exciting pelagic birding and whale watching. Nearby submarine canyons promote cold-water upwellings that attract numbers of marine birds and mammals every fall. Accordingly, we will take a full day boat trip to search for such birds as Razorbill; Atlantic Puffin; Manx, Sooty, and Greater shearwaters; Leach's (uncommon) and Wilson's storm-petrels; Northern Gannet; jaegers; Red-necked and Red phalarope; Black-legged Kittiwake; and Arctic Tern. Tossing out chum often brings hundreds of gulls and shearwaters within feet of our boat.

Whale watching is superb here as well, with Humpback, Minke, and Fin whales all seen regularly. But it is the opportunity to see the critically endangered North Atlantic Right Whale that is perhaps the biggest draw of all. Only about 430 of these animals are believed to exist, and the majority of them come to this region in late summer and fall. While seeing them cannot be guaranteed, our chances are excellent.

The weather in September is often the best of the entire year on Grand Manan, with fair, sunny days and calm seas being the norm. Biting insects are few, and the island is uncrowded. Our stay will be all the more pleasant due to the charm and atmosphere of the Marathon Inn, a grand old country inn with delicious home-cooking and fine birding right on the grounds.

August 27, Day 1: Arrival in Bangor. Tour members should make arrangements to arrive in Bangor, Maine today. We will meet in the hotel lobby at 6:00 p.m. for a get-acquainted dinner and to discuss plans for tomorrow.

NIGHT: Four Points Sheraton, Bangor

August 28, Day 2: Bangor to Grand Manan. Today we will drive to Black's Harbour, New Brunswick, to catch our ferry for the ninety minute ride to Grand Manan. Before arriving at Black's Harbour we will spend a little time exploring the Orono Bog area north of Bangor in search of migrants. A wide variety of warblers are possible here and this area is particularly good for the locally uncommon Palm Warbler. The ferry crossing frequently produces at least a few pelagic birds including small flocks of phalaropes, or lone jaegers, gannets, and shearwaters. We will arrive at the Marathon Inn in time for dinner.

NIGHT: Marathon Inn, North Head

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August 29-31, Days 3-5: Grand Manan and Pelagic Trip. These three days will be spent exploring the Bay of Fundy and the island of Grand Manan. Our exact schedule will remain flexible, allowing us to take best advantage of the tides and weather. One full day will be devoted to a boat trip into the Bay of Fundy in search of pelagic birds and marine mammals. Grand Manan is situated in close proximity to a number of prominent submarine canyons and shelves. As the currents meet these underwater barriers, great upwellings are created which propel the colder, nutrient-rich bottom waters to the surface. This, in turn, concentrates plankton, fish, and ultimately, large numbers of pelagic birds and whales.

We will journey by boat to some of the choicest areas, including the Old Proprietor Shoal, Gannet Rock, the Prong, and the Bulkhead Rip. Hordes of shearwaters (mostly Greater & Sooty, with small numbers of Manx) can be sighted here with an occasional jaeger in pursuit. Also found are lesser numbers of Atlantic Puffins, Common Murres (scarce), Razorbills, and Northern Gannets, all of which have left their breeding islands and are now concentrating over a few productive feeding areas. Wilson's and Leach's (very uncommon) storm-petrels and migrant flocks of phalarope are also likely. There is always the outside chance of a real rarity such as Great Skua or South Polar Skua, both of which are seen at least occasionally in these waters. We're also likely to see whales, including perhaps Fin, Humpback, and Minke. We will make a special effort to locate the very rare North Atlantic Right Whale, whose world population is estimated at just over 400 animals. Forty to fifty of these magnificent creatures are concentrated in this portion of the Bay of Fundy, affording us a unique chance to observe them.

Not all our time will be spent at sea, for there is plenty to do on Grand Manan itself. The spruce forests here should harbor numbers of migrant passerines, particularly warblers. At favored spots, such as Long Eddy Point, it's not uncommon to encounter flocks containing Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, both kinglets, a couple of vireos, a few flycatchers, and a half dozen or more species of warblers. If we are lucky enough to be visiting during a good finch year, we may find dozens of White-winged crossbills (other years none may be present at all).

Castalia Marsh is a staging area for migrant shorebirds, offering good species diversity and numbers of individuals. Among others, past trips have produced Black-bellied Plover; American Golden-Plover; Ruddy Turnstone; Whimbrel; Red Knot; and White-rumped, Pectoral, Least, and Semipalmated sandpipers. In addition, we're usually able to locate a couple of Nelson's Sparrows lurking along the muddy shore lines at this season. Almost anything is possible!

The scenic coastline can be productive for such species as loons, scoters, Great Cormorants, Common Eiders, and Black Guillemots, not to mention the gorgeous maritime scenery and the spectacle of some of the world's highest tides. Raptors should also be in evidence, including Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Merlin. It's rare to find a single spot that has so many attractions for the visiting birder. That this abundance is found amidst such a charming and attractive setting makes Grand Manan the kind of place that one longs to visit repeatedly.

NIGHTS: Marathon Inn, North Head

September 1, Day 6: Grand Manan to Bangor. Should time allow, we may make a last check of some of our favorite spots before boarding a morning ferry back to Black's Harbour. Our birding stops on the return to Bangor will depend largely on what we have or have not seen, but will likely include Moosehorn Refuge, and selected spruce forests. We'll arrive in Bangor in time for a farewell dinner.

NIGHT: Four Points Sheraton, Bangor

September 2, Day 7: Departure for Home. Participants may make plans to return home any time today.

Special Note: On some tours and in certain areas (such as Bangor), the larger 15-passenger vans are not available. Every effort will be made to secure the larger vehicle for this tour. However, when smaller vans are reserved, participants will not always have a window seat (three people to a bench seat) and you will be asked to rotate daily.

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 12 participants.

TOUR LEADER: Barry Zimmer and Brennan Mulrooney

Barry Zimmer has been birding since the age of eight. His main areas of expertise lie in North and Central America, but his travels have taken him throughout much of the world, including such exotic locales as Japan, Russia, Madagascar, Africa, and New Zealand. Barry is a longtime member of the New Mexico Bird Records Committee, and served on the Texas Bird Records Committee for 12 years. He has co-authored 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*. Barry has a keen interest in nature photography, having captured over 1,000 species of birds on film. His other interests include sports (a diehard Red Sox fan), cooking, and movies. He received his degree in psychology at the University of Texas in El Paso. Barry resides in El Paso with his wife, Yvonne, and their daughter, Alexandra.

Brennan Mulrooney was born and raised in San Diego, California. Growing up, his heart and mind were captured by the ocean. He split his summer days between helping out behind the scenes at southern California's leading aquarium and working on sport fishing vessels off the coast. As a wildlife and fisheries biology major at UC Davis, he developed his fascination with birds and love of birding while taking a required ornithology course. Since graduating from UC Davis, Brennan has traveled throughout the United States working on widespread ornithological field studies. His work has taken him from the mountains of northern California to the Salton Sea in southern California, and from Cape May, New Jersey to Key Largo, Florida. Currently Brennan lives in San Diego with his wife Brynne and their son Declan. Participants often comment that Brennan's sharp eyes, sharper wit, and easygoing attitude make it a pleasure to bird with him.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$3095** per person in double occupancy from Bangor, Maine. 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, pelagic trip as stated in the itinerary, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Bangor 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 **\$410**. 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.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

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.***

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	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.

Medical insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation/repatriation during the trip is also recommended for this tour. This coverage is included in the Worldwide Trip Protector plan offered by *Travel Insured International*. A good website for information and acquisition of emergency evacuation/repatriation insurance is: www.insuremytrip.com.

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.

ACCOMMODATIONS: The Marathon Inn is a charming country inn with good birding on the grounds. It does not, however, have an elevator – rooms vary from ground level to third floor. Help with baggage is readily available.

BAGGAGE: We ask that you limit your baggage to one medium or large suitcase and a carry-on.

CLIMATE & CLOTHING: Generally the temperatures on land should be mild to warm (mid-60's to low-80's as highs, and upper 40's to mid 50's as lows) at this time of year, and light field clothing (i.e. cotton pants and shirts) will be adequate. You should also have a windbreaker or light jacket. Conditions at sea could be much colder. Be sure to bring a warm sweater and heavier jacket, thermal underwear, rain gear, gloves and a warm hat for the boat trips and for unexpectedly cool days on land. Be sure as well to bring a comfortable pair of boots or sturdy walking shoes. Also bring a hat for protection from the sun.

DOCUMENTS: Citizens of the United States are now **required** to have a passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure for international crossings between the United States and Canada. Non United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

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.

INSECT PROTECTION: Insects and mosquitoes (a few are likely) are usually not much of a problem in the fall; repellent is optional.

MISC ITEMS: *An alarm clock is necessary.* Your tour leaders will have a spotting scope. If you have one and would like to bring it, please do. If you are prone to seasickness, check with your doctor about the proper medication to bring. The Marathon Inn does not have phones in the guest rooms; however, guests may place and receive calls in the lobby.

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.

Field Guides: Birds

Dunn, Jon. *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, Fifth edition. Washington, D. C.: National Geographic Society, 2006.

Field Guides: Other

Bowers & Kaufman. *Mammals of North America*. Hillstar Editions L.C. 2004.

Brock, Jim P. & Kaufman, Kenn. *Butterflies of North America*. Hillstar Editions L.C. 2003.

Harrison, Peter. *Seabirds: An Identification Guide*. Houghton Mifflin. Boston. 1983.

Leatherwood, Stephen and Reeves, Randall. *The Sierra Club Handbook of Whales and Dolphins*. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1983.

Newcomb, Lawrence. *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide*. This guide uses an easy two-part key system

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

Peterson, Roger Tory and Margaret McKenny. *A Field Guide to Wildflowers of Northeastern and Northcentral North America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

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 affect December 28, 2011 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.