

# RIVERS & MOUNTAINS OF OREGON & WASHINGTON: AN INTRODUCTORY BIRDING TOUR May 16-23, 2015

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*The lower Columbia River Gorge, framed by towering basalt cliffs and lined with oaks and evergreens, ranks high among the most scenic places in the United States. The tour route follows the Columbia Gorge east from Portland through varied habitats that offer a wide variety of birds, other wildlife, and an array of marvelous wildflowers. We have two nights at Mt. Adams Lodge, at the foot of 12,281 ft. Mt. Adams in the South Cascades. This comfortable lodge offers fine food, sits in a large area of forested grounds, and has bird feeders busy with grosbeaks, Cassin's and other finches, as well as Calliope and other hummingbirds. Nearby Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge hosts nesting White-headed Woodpeckers, Cassin's Vireos, and Gray Flycatchers. The mountains and foothill habitats nearby hold Hermit Warblers, and many other species, from Western Tanagers and MacGillivray's Warblers to American Dippers and Lazuli Buntings. The oaks along the Columbia are a summer home to lovely Lewis's Woodpeckers, Ash-throated Flycatchers, and lots of bluebirds.*

*After two nights near Mt. Adams, our route continues east along the Columbia Gorge, then south into Oregon's Blue Mountains, where mountain birds such as Williamson's Sapsuckers and Golden Eagles are a good bet. Nesting Great Gray Owls are seen at traditional nest sites in the Blue Mts. some years, but absent in others. Extensive freshwater marshes nearby are home to nesting Cinnamon Teal, Virginia Rails, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and Sandhill Cranes with chicks. High elevation grasslands provide nesting areas for Long-billed Curlews, Gray Partridge and Chukar. 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 great birding and other natural history interests, 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 16, 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, Portland, Oregon

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**May 17, 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 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. Many different birds are possible across a variety of habitats along the route, from riparian edges to oak woodland to foothill forest. Rufous Hummingbirds whistle along streamside thickets; Chestnut-backed Chickadees work the tall firs; and Wilson's and MacGillivray's Warblers – among at least eight species of warblers along the entire tour 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.). Arriving at the Mt. Adams Lodge on the Flying L Ranch grounds by late afternoon, we'll relax and watch the hummingbird and seed feeders. Calliope and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, plus Evening Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills (some years), and Cassin's finches are regular. We'll also stroll the forested grounds in search of birds.

NIGHT: Mt. Adams Lodge, Glenwood, Washington

**May 18, Day 3: Mt. Adams and Glenwood.** Today and tomorrow morning, with Mt. Adams Lodge as our base, we'll explore a number of great birding spots between Mt. Adams and the Columbia River at the height of the nesting season. The many acres of the lodge grounds provide excellent, diverse birding, from warblers and tanagers to grosbeaks, buntings, flycatchers and hummingbirds. We'll visit the Garry Oak stands along the Columbia and Klickitat Rivers where Ash-throated Flycatchers and Lewis' Woodpeckers nest. We'll also explore conifer forests on the hem of Mt. Adams where a whole host of songbird species – such as Townsend's Solitaire, Hermit Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, and Hammond's Flycatcher – 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 19, 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 Hawk, Acorn Woodpecker, Western and Eastern kingbirds, Western Wood-Pewee, lots of Lazuli Buntings, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Meadowlark and Lesser Goldfinch. Time permitting; we will begin birding the Blue Mountains near La Grande (2271 ft.) later today.

NIGHT: Best Western Rama Inn, La Grande, Oregon

**May 20-21, Days 5 & 6: The Blue Mountains.** The forest near La Grande typically supports a breeding population of Great Gray Owls, and because when present they often nest on known nesting platforms, the owls are readily seen. In the history of this tour, we have found nesting Great Gray Owls present some years, but absent in others, so there is no guarantee we will see this species. Other birds typical of this forested zone are Williamson's Sapsucker Townsend's Solitaire, Townsend's Warbler, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Western Tanager and Hammond's, Dusky and Olive-sided flycatchers – among many others. Black-backed Woodpecker is possible.

Just south of La Grande 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. This area will likely occupy most of one afternoon.

NIGHTS: Best Western Rama Inn, La Grande, Oregon

**May 22, Day 7: 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 – if we haven't already taken this option enroute to La Grande – takes us through scenic, rolling grasslands, with a chance for such birds as Long-billed Curlew, Gray Partridge, Chukar, Lark Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, and Horned Lark. Back at the hotel in Portland, we'll have a farewell dinner and final checklist session.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn Portland Airport, Portland, Oregon

**May 23, Day 8: Departures from Portland.** Tour participants may depart from Portland anytime today.

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

**TOUR LEADER:** Bob Sundstrom

**Bob Sundstrom** has led VENT tours since 1989 to Hawaii, Mexico, Belize, Trinidad & Tobago, Japan, Iceland, Papua New Guinea, the Southwest Pacific, Antarctica, the Bering Sea, and the Galapagos, as well as many destinations throughout North America. When not on tour, Bob keeps busy as the lead writer for the public radio program *BirdNote*, which is archived at [www.birdnote.org](http://www.birdnote.org). Bob earned his doctorate at the University of Washington, and takes a strong interest in both the natural and cultural settings of his tours. Bob and his wife Sally live along rural Scatter Creek Valley south of Olympia, Washington. Bob lived in Seattle for more than 25 years, continues to teach birding workshops there, 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*.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the tour is **\$2,195** per person in double occupancy from Portland, Oregon. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to dinner on Day 7, 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 **\$495**. 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 & 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.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for this tour is **\$300** per person. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, 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 the initial deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com)) should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

**PAYMENTS:** Initial tour deposits may be made by MasterCard, Visa, check, money order, or bank transfer. All other tour payments, including second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc.,

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must be made by check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). 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.

**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:** The weather in Oregon and Washington this time of year is typically mild, with temperatures ranging from the 50s to the low 80s. Because we will be birding in or near the mountains on several occasions, cooler conditions are possible (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 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 warm head covering. Don't underestimate the potential for cold, especially in the mountains and after dark. There will be no 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. Hiking shoes with a built-in waterproof lining are ideal.

**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.

National Geographic Society. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. Sixth Edition. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2011.

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

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.

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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, 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 on August 21, 2014, 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.