

CAMP YOSEMITE

JULY 26 – AUGUST 7, 2008

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Camp Yosemite, co-sponsored by the American Birding Association, offers young naturalists between the ages of 14 and 18 the opportunity to explore and discover the varied ecosystems and landscapes of central California's mighty Sierra Nevada mountains, centering on incomparable Yosemite National Park.

The primary focus is on the birdlife of Yosemite and other important sites east and west of the mountains, but we will take time to observe all facets of nature. The camp is set in a productive learning environment in which campers will be educated on ecology, habitats, and ecosystems, and on improving observation skills. Daily activities are based on thorough exploration of several distinct parts of the national park. Lengthy day hikes, field trips, and discussions complement free time, during which campers will have the luxury of exploring our surroundings in small groups.

From Sacramento, we will first visit the Cozumnes River Preserve en route to Yosemite. At over 40,000 acres, the preserve protects some of the best remaining examples of valley oak woodlands, riparian forests, and freshwater marshes that once covered much of California's great Central Valley. The Cosumnes Preserve is considered a Globally Important Bird Area and we will have a half day to explore the diversity of habitats found here, focusing on finding many of California's specialty birds.

The majority of our time is spent amid the scenic splendor of Yosemite National Park. Known worldwide for its stupendous panoramic landscapes, and as the favored stomping grounds of "Founding Father" John Muir and famed photographer Ansel Adams, Yosemite is among the most cherished of our national parks. Bold, beautiful, and still pristine in many ways, the park is a wonderland to just about any type of naturalist or outdoors enthusiast who visits it. Towering waterfalls, bare granite mountains, alpine lakes and tundra, lush highland meadows, and groves of Giant Sequoia are the most obvious signs of the park's amazing natural beauty.

We will camp for 10 nights between three different locations (altitudes), assuring us immersion in the best and most famous parts of the park. Our days will be filled with plenty of hiking as we strive to experience the national park as intimately as possible. Yosemite's incredible glacially carved landscapes are revealed in full when viewing such iconic landmarks as Half Dome, El Capitan, Cloud's Rest, and Bridalveil, Nevada, and Vernal falls. Featured activities include day-hikes to Sentinel Dome/Taft Point/The Fissures, Dewey Point, and North Dome; visits to three groves of Giant Sequoia; an 8-mile traipse into the heart of Yosemite Valley; camping in the high country at Tuolumne Meadows; a trip across Saddlebag Lake into the Hoover Wilderness; and a grand finale excursion to the shores of Mono Lake.

Campers should expect to see many of the special birds of California and the mountain west including California and Mountain quail, Great Gray Owl, Red-breasted and Williamson's sapsuckers, White-headed Woodpecker, Black Swift, Yellow-billed Magpie, California Thrasher, California Towhee, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, and Pine Grosbeak. Yosemite offers so much more than good birding, however, and our time in nature should produce an interesting assortment of

reptiles, butterflies, mammals, and insects. Finally, Yosemite is home to some of the world's finest mountain scenery and campers will learn of the park's amazing geologic past.

July 26, Day 1: Arrival in Sacramento; afternoon orientation. Campers should plan to arrive in Sacramento no later than 4:00 p.m. today. Campers flying into Sacramento International Airport (airport code SMF) and after leaving the plane, proceed directly to the baggage claim area where you will be met by camp supervisors who will be holding signs displaying the word VENT in large letters. Please wear your VENT identification button (provided with your participant packet) so you will be easily recognized as being part of our group.

For those campers arriving in Sacramento by car, or who will already be there, you should plan to meet your camp supervisors at **Starbuck's Coffee**, located in the Central Area of terminal B at Sacramento International Airport today at 12:00 PM. The Central Area is located between the two wings of terminal B.

Campers will be shuttled with their luggage to the *Fairfield Inn & Suites* where we will spend our first night. Once all campers have arrived, everybody will assemble in the hotel lobby for a camp orientation and welcome. The staff will introduce themselves and outline the exciting events of the coming days. Afterwards, we'll depart the hotel for a couple of hours of birding in a nearby park or preserve for our first introduction to California birds and their habitats. The flashy Yellow-billed Magpie is always high on the wish list of those birding California for the first time and we will make an effort to find the Golden State's only endemic bird.

NIGHT: Fairfield Inn & Suites, Sacramento

July 27, Day 2: Cosumnes River Preserve; afternoon travel to Yosemite National Park. We'll depart the hotel soon after breakfast this morning and begin the several-hour drive to Yosemite National Park. But rather than making a direct blast to the park entrance, we'll take our time observing the landscapes and birds of California's Central Valley. Yosemite is high country in general so it is important that we recognize, and spend time in, some of the habitats that we won't encounter once we are inside the national park.

One such place where we'll experience lowland habitats of exceptionally high quality is the Cosumnes River Preserve, located less than an hour south of Sacramento. At over 40,000 acres, the preserve exists as a critical remnant of one of North America's greatest floodplain ecosystems.

California's Central Valley is blessed with some of the world's richest soils. Deep, dark, and loaded with nutrients, these fertile floodplains originally nourished vast woodlands of valley oak and streamside forests of cottonwood, willow and ash. These soils were continually replenished by a network of rivers draining the west slope of the Sierra Nevada, giving life to an expansive regime of permanent and seasonal wetlands, freshwater marshes, vernal pools, and grasslands. Over time these soils were gradually claimed by farmers and ranchers, who early on recognized the potential for growing crops in such a rich region. Through most of the 20th century, the unabated loss of native habitat through conversion to agriculture saw the original ecosystems of the Central Valley dwindle to mere wisps of their original sizes.

As the alarm sounded over the ongoing loss of habitat, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) moved into the area in 1984 with a conservation plan to preserve 85 acres. In the years that followed, TNC formed important partnerships with a number of strong conservation organizations, branches of the federal government, and the state of California, to acquire and protect more habitat. The preserve finally reached its current size in 2000, 16 years after the project was founded.

Today the Cosumnes River is the only remaining unregulated river on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. The overriding purpose of the Cosumnes Preserve is cooperative management of the preserve for the protection, restoration, and maintenance of two rare biological communities: valley oak riparian forest and freshwater seasonal wetlands.

We will have half the day to explore the forests, wetlands, and grasslands for which the preserve is best known. We will walk some of the most important trails and make sure that campers spend time in all the major habitats found here. The Lost Slough Boardwalk and Willow Slough Nature Trail offer access to willow thickets, restored wetlands, and riparian forest where waterbirds and landbirds occur in abundance. We should have no problems locating such resident species as Great and Snowy egrets, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Cinnamon Teal, Belted Kingfisher, and Black Phoebe, in addition to an enticing assortment of more widespread western species including White-tailed Kite, Swainson's Hawk, Anna's Hummingbird, Acorn Woodpecker, Western Kingbird, Western Scrub-Jay, Bushtit, Lazuli Bunting, and Bullock's Oriole. Especially exciting is the presence in the preserve of many of California's specialty birds. Our time in the field should produce an exceptional list of birds with Nuttall's Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Magpie, Oak Titmouse, Wrentit, California Thrasher, California Towhee, and Tricolored Blackbird all possible.

After lunch we'll load up and spend much of the afternoon en route to the national park. The scenery along the way is quite beautiful and campers will be treated to landscapes of rolling hills covered with dry grassland and giant valley oaks. Approaching the flank of the Sierra we will be gaining elevation and the accompanying changes in vegetation will be readily apparent. Leaving the valley floor, we'll find ourselves amid chaparral covered hillsides (a plant community unique to California) dominated by manzanita, scrub oak, buckwheat and sage.

The forests of the Sierra Nevada are among the most diverse in North America, especially for the variety of coniferous trees found in them. Our travels through the mountains will reveal a wonderful assortment of pines, with a steady change in species makeup the higher we climb. The first pines we'll likely encounter are pinyon pines, followed by digger pines, then come the giant orange-red barked ponderosa pines, and finally the towering sugar pines. Each tree carries its own unique shape and height, yet all are representative of the different life-zones through which we'll travel.

After passing through the entrance gate, we'll wind our way through the heart of the national park en route to the campground. We'll make a point of stopping at the famed Yosemite Valley overlook and gaze upon a sight that many consider the single most stunningly gorgeous panoramic landscape in the world. Directly in front of us, Yosemite Valley stretches to the east as a perfectly sculpted glaciated valley. The landmarks accentuating the valley's grandeur are classic symbols of the incredible beauty that defines Yosemite. In the near-ground, Bridalveil Falls cascades 620 feet to the valley floor; towering over the north side of the valley is El Capitan, that massive granite monolith soaring 3,000 feet over the valley; while straight away to the east, majestic Half Dome rises 5,000 feet over the valley floor; and below us lies a mosaic of grand meadows and thick forest. Taken together, these features form one of the most instantly recognizable landscapes anywhere, a granite shrine to the strength and power of nature.

We'll anticipate a late afternoon arrival at the campground. The long days of summer will allow us time for a few after-dinner excursions. Depending on the time of our arrival, we might have time to make our first attempt to locate a Great Gray Owl in nearby Westfall Meadow.

NIGHT: Camping – Bridalveil Creek Group Campground

July 28-30, Days 3-5: Exploring Yosemite National Park: Bridalveil Creek to Glacier Point. To those who have never been to Yosemite before, this national park, one of our nation's earliest encompasses some of the most glorious mountain scenery in the world. Most people who come here find the combination of stately forests, spectacular rock formations, broad vistas, and rich birdlife irresistible.

The park might best be viewed as one large unit composed of several recognizably distinct parts, with everything centered around the Yosemite Valley. Loosely defined, these regions are: the Glacier Point Road on the rim south of the valley; the valley itself and the Merced River drainage and Crane Flat to the west; and Tuolumne Meadows and Taiooga Pass in the alpine zone to the north and east of the Valley. We will spend the entire camp dividing time among each of these three regions.

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Our time in Yosemite will kick off with three full days exploring the forests, meadows, roads, and trails along the road to Glacier Point, with the group campground at Bridalveil Creek serving as our base. The road passes just south of the valley rim, through upper-middle elevation country covered in majestic coniferous forest and dotted with large granite outcroppings. At an elevation consistently ranging between 7,000-8,000 feet, we'll be far above the warm confines of the valley floor. This part of the national park offers unlimited opportunities for exploration and campers should expect to do much of it on foot! Among the key areas we will want to spend time are:

Bridalveil Creek Campground; Westfall, McGurk and Peregoy Meadows – At 7,200 feet, Bridalveil Creek campground provides a terrific setting from which to base our activities. Glacier Point, at the end of the road, is only a few miles away and we are never far from a number of the park's great hiking trails. Waking up in the cool mountain air with the first rays of the sun penetrating the forest around us provides an exhilarating start to each morning. Lodgepole and sugar pines and white fir are the dominant tree species in the area and generally offer great birding. Sharp-shinned Hawk, Williamson's Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Vaux's Swift, Mountain Chickadee, Song and Lincoln's sparrows, Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco, Western Tanager, and Cassin's Finch are some of the expected species. And late summer is a time when many of the songbirds form up large flocks, roving through the forest in search of food as the time for migration draws near. Such flocks typically hold a variety of flycatchers, vireos, and warblers. By sifting through these flocks we'll likely encounter Dusky Flycatcher, Cassin's and Warbling vireos, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow-rumped, Townsend's, Hermit, and Black-throated Gray Warblers.

Central California represents the southern-most outposts for several highly sought-after species more typically associated with the far north: Great Gray Owl, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Pine Grosbeak. We will make a special effort to find all three species. The woodpecker and grosbeak are even known to occur in and around the campground.

Lush mountain meadows form openings in the deep forests of the west slope of the Sierra Nevada and three such meadows exist near the campground: Westfall, McGurk, and Peregoy meadows. We'll be sure to check the fringes of the meadows in the mornings and afternoons, for this is the realm of the Great Gray Owl. Due to its fleeting and unpredictable nature, this infrequently encountered denizen of the deep woods has earned the nickname "Great Gray Ghost." With luck we may encounter the ghost, flopping along, moth-like, through the secluded recesses of a meadow edge, hunting in the long shadows of the afternoon.

Pohono Trail (Sentinel Dome; Taft Point and The Fissures) - An extended hike on the Pohono Trail will be the featured activity on our second morning out. A 5-mile roundtrip trairpse through a red fir and sugar pine forest will find us enjoying the sights of polished granite, towering trees and massive rock formations. Highlights include a side trip up the massive granitic mound known as Sentinel Dome for commanding 360° views of the surrounding forest and canyon rim; hiking on the edge of the rim for exquisite views of the valley floor far below; hiking out to Taft Point, a lofty promontory that actually extends farther out over the canyon than any other nearby point; and another side trip to view The Fissures, a curious chunk of rock known for its fluted formation. Rivaling the scenery for our attention, the birding along the Phono trail can be exceptional. Clumps of manzanita often hold coveys of Mountain Quail, Green-tailed Towhee, and (Thick-billed) Fox Sparrow. The giant red firs that line the trail are often good places to watch for Black-backed Woodpecker and Pine Grosbeak, while Sooty Grouse can almost seem tame along the sides of the trail.

Ostrander Lake Trail – Though the lake itself is too far for us to reach, we'll find time to walk the first segment of the trail, where the birding is particularly good. A mix of live and fire-killed timber sets the stage for a mingling of habitats with an accompanying mix of interesting birds to be found. Williamson's and Red-breasted Sapsuckers, White-headed and Black-backed woodpeckers, Hammond's Flycatcher, Western Wood-pewee, Black-headed Grosbeak and Cassin's Finch are area regulars.

Dewey Point – Situated farther west along the canyon rim than Glacier Point, Dewey Point offers an appealing destination largely because it used far more infrequently by other hikers than the better known trails. We will

hike at least a portion of the trail, possibly going all the way to Dewey Point for a 7-mile roundtrip hike. The route takes us through the heart of McGurk Meadow for more opportunities for seeing Northern Goshawk, Great Gray Owl, Vaux's Swift, Wilson's Warbler, and others.

Glacier Point – Located at the end of the road, Glacier Point offers a spectacular panoramic vista comparable to the sweeping vista of Yosemite Valley above the park's western entrance. The chief sight here is the in-your-face view of Half Dome, towering like a stone sentinel over the eastern end of Yosemite Valley. Half Dome marks the start of the back country, and peering beyond, we should have little problem sighting the peaks that define Cloud's Rest Summit. The viewing platforms at Glacier Point allow for gazing straight down 3000 feet into the depths of Yosemite Valley, where the majority of people who come to the park spend time.

Panorama and Mist Trails – The hike from Glacier Point down into Yosemite Valley via the Panorama and Mist trails presents one of the most exciting and rewarding activities of the entire trip. An 8.5 mile descent takes us close to Illilouette (pronounced Ill-ill-ou-ette) Falls, with a cascade of 370 feet, and down through an area known as the "Giant Staircase," where we'll pass close by two of the park's most famous falls, Vernal Falls, with a 317 foot drop, and Nevada Falls, with a 594 foot drop.

Wawona and Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias – Situated near the park's southern entrance, about an hour from our campground, the little community of Wawona sits as a well-marked gateway to the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias. Giant Sequoias grow only in central California and almost all of them are found to the south in Sequoia National Park, however, three large groves exist on the western flank of Yosemite and we plan to visit them all. We'll make the drive down here one afternoon to view the Grizzly Giant, the biggest tree in the entire national park. Though the Giant is the most obvious attraction, there are at least 200 trees here with diameters measuring at least 10 feet! Spread between upper and lower groves, we will take time to view as many of the Sequoias as we have time for, for what should present campers a singularly unique experience. Time permitting we may also walk a portion of the Wawona Trail, a wide-open trail skirting the fringes of another of Yosemite's large mountain meadows. We have chances here for such lower montane species as Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker, Calliope Hummingbird, Lawrence's Goldfinch and Purple Finch.

NIGHTS: Camping – Bridalveil Creek Group Campground

July 31, Days 6: Bridalveil Creek to Crane Flat via Yosemite Valley. After the excitement of the previous three days, it will be time this morning to break camp, and head on toward our next destination: Crane Flat campground near the park's northwestern gate. The drive will take only an hour or so, but we'll want to take our time getting there. We'll spend the majority of the morning in Yosemite Valley, where campers will have the opportunity to take a hot shower, spend time at the visitor center, and view the famous sights. One activity we will certainly want to experience is the short hike to the base of Bridalveil Falls. Bridalveil takes its name from the way wind influences the flow of the fall as it cascades down from the valley rim 620 feet above. At times, the falls seem to sway across the cliff face as it plummets to the bottom, with a cloud of mist created by the thundering water gently filling the immediate air around us. Bridalveil is also a great place to look for American Dippers. Black Swifts roost behind the falls and with some luck we may see them coming or going from feeding forays. Beyond that we'll intentionally keep the schedule open to allow us greater flexibility in our planning.

We'll arrive at the campground around mid-day, in time to set up camp and have lunch. This afternoon, campers will have free time to explore their surroundings in small groups, but one activity we will do together is make the 3-mile round-trip hike to the Merced Grove of Giant Sequoias. Unlike the Mariposa Grove, the Sequoias of the Merced Grove are less numerous and smaller in size. But what they lack in size, they make up for in other ways. This grove is more secluded and not as prone to attract large crowds of other tourists. Furthermore, there is no road offering close vehicle access, so the only way in is through a wide track through the forest which we may well have all to ourselves.

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We'll keep an eye out for some of the shyer forest birds, such as Mountain Quail, Pileated Woodpecker, and Winter Wren. Willow thickets along the trail side are the prime habitat of Swainson's Thrush, which favor the darker forests of this elevation.

After dinner we may take an evening drive out the Hetch Hetchy road and try and spot a Black Bear or Mule Deer. Another option would be a walk around the little community of Foresta, where Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks are occasionally found.

NIGHT: Camping – Crane Flat Campground

August 1-2, Days 7-8: Exploring Yosemite National Park: Crane Flat, Tioga Road and Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. At 6,200 feet, Crane Flat sits an elevation between Yosemite Valley and the Glacier Point road. The forest in this area is possibly the most beautiful within the entire national park. Growing conditions are superb between the 5,000 and 6,000 foot elevation zone, with more water, more temperate climate conditions, and more nutrient rich soils predominating. The effects these conditions have on the trees here is obvious, as the forest produces taller, denser growing trees. The closed canopy of the forest produces a lush understory filled with mosses, lichens, ferns and fungi. Waking up amid such a living cathedral as the forests of Crane Flat is a fulfilling experience destined to provide lasting memories. Nearby Chevron Meadow offers more opportunities to find Great Gray Owl, and we will spend time each morning and afternoon searching for them along the meadow edges.

We will have two days to explore the roads and trails in and around Crane Flat and the nearby Tioga Road. The first day is designed to cover a little more ground, providing campers a broad view of the habitats and wildlife found at the park's northwestern corner. We'll begin with an early 3-mile roundtrip hike to the Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias. We will want to get off to an early start to beat the other hikers on what is a fairly heavily used trail. The Tuolumne Grove is closer to the Merced Grove in size and appearance than the Mariposa Grove, yet offers another opportunity to experience a hike on a deep forest trail, with Douglas and white firs, incense cedar, and sugar pines as the primary trees lining the trail. Bird species typical of the area include Rufous Hummingbird, Vaux's Swift, Violet-green Swallow, Hutton's Vireo, Western Bluebird, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Wilson's and Nashville warblers, and Western Tanager.

Over the course of the day we'll head west beyond the park boundary to a lower elevation, where we'll search for birds, butterflies, and reptiles in the vicinity of Ackerson and Hogdon meadows.

In the late afternoon, or perhaps after dinner, we'll take a ride out the Hetch Hetchy road to its end at the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. We'll take our time working the road looking for birds and animals. Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Red-tailed Hawks are all possible here, in addition to Golden Eagle, Pileated Woodpecker, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Common Raven, Steller's Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, and Evening Grosbeak.

We have left the second day open for either more general exploration of the western part of Yosemite, OR, depending on trail conditions', we may embark on a 9.2 mile roundtrip hike to the summit of North Dome, overlooking the northeast end of Yosemite Valley. At this elevation, 7,600-8,100 feet, the birdlife is similar to what we experienced on the Glacier Point Road, but we'll have better chances for Northern Goshawk, Green-tailed Towhee, Fox and White-crowned sparrows, Red Crossbill, Pine Grosbeak, and Cassin's Finch. The reward to climbing North Dome is extraordinary in-your-face views of Half Dome and the south rim of the valley.

NIGHTS: Camping – Crane Flat Campground

August 3-4, Days 9-10: Exploring Yosemite National Park: Tuolumne Meadows to Tioga Pass. Our next destination is the high country crowning much of Yosemite National Park. Leaving Crane Flat by mid-morning, we'll head up the Tioga Road toward the alpine zone that defines the next ecosystem up. Here, at over 8,000 feet, trees grow smaller and the great diversity of the lower elevations dwindles to thick stands of lodgepole

pine. Coming up from Crane Flat, we may stop at the settlement of White Wolf and nearby Mirror Lake for a final stab, if necessary, for Black-backed Woodpecker and Pine Grosbeak.

At Olmstead Point we've reached the alpine zone, where the only trees around exist in isolated pockets of stunted lodepole pine and mountain hemlock. Looking from the viewpoint south over the top of the national park, we'll see Yosemite from a perspective unlike any we've had to this point. In the rarified air of the upper elevation, great domes of granite, polished by wind, snow, rain, and ice glisten under the summer sun. Around the road cuts yellow-bellied marmots and American pikas can be found harvesting grass and other small shrubs in anticipation of winter. The marmots, in particular, are easy to view, providing relatively tame photo subjects!

From Olmstead the road continues on to Tuolumne (pronounced To-all-um-nee) Meadows, our base for the next three nights. We should arrive by mid-day or early afternoon. We'll take time to set up our camp and have lunch before deciding how we'll spend the remainder of our day. At 8,600 feet, we'll be strategically located to experience the alpine country around us. Possible activities include a hike to Lembert Dome or a hike to one of the area's emerald alpine lakes, such as Dog Lake or May Lake.

The next day is bound to be an exciting one, as we have allotted an entire day for hiking, touring, and birding in the highest reaches of Yosemite, from Tuolumne Meadows to the Tioga Pass. East of the meadows, the road climbs until virtually all trees have disappeared and the high country opens up into vast system of wet meadows filled with willow thickets and peppered with small lakes and streams. This is spectacularly beautiful country and we will want to admire the scenery every step of the way. Mountain Bluebird, mule deer, coyote, marmots and golden-mantled ground-squirrels are some of the high country inhabitants of this lifezone.

At the Tioga Pass, we'll find ourselves at nearly 10,000 feet amid tremendously scenic surroundings. Tioga and Ellery lakes border the south side of the highway and in some years hold the last snow fields from the prior winter. We'll take time to search any lingering snow banks we find in hopes of locating American Pipits and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches. The lakes frequently host Ring-billed and California gulls, which have flown up from Mono Lake far off to the east.

Just outside the national park, but north of Tioga Pass, sits Saddlebag Lake, another high elevation lake, but one used primarily by fishermen. We'll take a water taxi across the lake for a short trip into the Hoover Wilderness beyond. Established in 1964, the Hoover Wilderness protects over 48,000 acres of high elevation backcountry adjoining Yosemite National Park. At over 10,000 feet, we will have entered the tundra, a world of sparse vegetation amid crystal clear lakes and 12,000 foot peaks. We won't spend a long time up here, in this rarified air, but we will walk in far enough to experience the tundra life-zone. This area will give us our best opportunity to locate Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches. Interestingly, the state of California introduced White-tailed Ptarmigan into the Sierra Nevada back in the 1960s to supply hunters with another game bird. Since then the bird has proliferated and is occasionally seen in the Hoover Wilderness.

NIGHTS: Camping – Tuolumne Meadows

August 5, Day 11: Exploring the Eastern Sierras: Lee Vining Canyon to Mono Lake. After spending the last 9 days in the national park, we will spend today outside the park, crossing the crest of the mountains and exploring the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada and outlying Great Basin.

The Sierra Nevada is a mighty mountain range, but a range of two very different personalities. The west slope, where the national parks are, is, in comparison to the east slope, mild and more inviting. Trees grow bigger and more densely, ecosystems and habitats are more diverse, rainfall is much higher, and temperatures are more moderate. The east slope tells a different story. It is stark country over there, high, dry, and given to more extreme temperature swings. The summers are hotter on the east side and the winters colder. Trees grow more sparsely and the rock appears more broken up and the peaks more ragged. The east slope of the Sierra is, however, an equally beautiful place with a special charm of its own. Whereas the west slope is a long gradual incline from the distant Central Valley to the peaks of the mountains, the east slope rises abruptly, with the

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mountains seemingly thrusting straight off the desert floor. The eastern slope of the Sierras effectively marks the start of the Great Basin ecosystem, a massive basin-and-range geologic province characterized by vast stretches of desert broken only by a series of high, dry mountain ranges.

We will journey over to the east side for a full day of birding and exploration. Leaving camp early this morning, we'll take about an hour to drive out the park's eastern entrance, down the steep, but highly scenic grade that parallels tumbling Lee Vining Creek and that links to the main highway. Our first destination is Bodie State Historic Park, about an hour's drive from the campground.

The significance of Bodie State Park depends on one's perspective. With origins dating back to 1861, Bodie began as a mining town when gold was discovered in the area. As gold fever raged throughout central California, it was only inevitable that such a quick-strike little town would quickly become noticed. Not only did Bodie grow, but by 1880, the town was said to number 10,000 people! Currently administered by the State of California, Bodie is now an authentic ghost town.

From a natural history standpoint, Bodie is anything but a ghost town. Sitting amid a Great Basin plant community of grassland and sage, the town and its surroundings host numbers of plants, birds, mammals, and reptiles not found in the mountains to the west.

By driving the roads in and around Bodie, we should come across a number of species new for the trip, including Say's Phoebe, Black-billed Magpie, Rock Wren, Sage Sparrow, and Brewer's Blackbird. A sizeable population of Greater Sage-Grouse occupies this area and some are often seen in the morning hours in and around the ghost town. From Bodie we will head to the county park on the northwestern shoreline of famed Mono Lake.

Mono Lake is one of the great must-see sights in the entire Eastern Sierra. As a remnant of an ancient Pleistocene lake, Mono Lake functions as a critical oasis in the dry Great Basin as a vital habitat for millions of migratory and nesting birds. The lake has no outlet and is fed only by streams flowing out of the nearby Sierras. Evaporation, consequently, is high and the lake carries a salt content approximately 2.5 times that of the oceans.

The county park is a lush riparian zone lining the lake's northwestern shoreline. Tall willows, grasses, and marshes define the local botany. The presence of such lush vegetation amid very dry surroundings allows for an interesting mix of birds during the summer months. We'll work the park from one end to the other, searching for such bird species as Green Heron, Common Nighthawk, Western Wood-Pewee, Black Phoebe, Black-billed Magpie, Barn, Bank, Violet-green, Cliff, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Marsh Wren, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Bullock's Oriole.

We'll also journey to the south shore of the lake where we can more easily study the life forms and landmarks for which the lake is best known. There are no fish in Mono Lake, but there are millions upon million of brine shrimp, which serve as the basis for the entire Mono Lake ecosystem. Attending the shrimp are vast numbers of tiny alkali flies; though harmless to humans they are easily seen clustered along the shoreline by the thousands, sometimes making the soil appear black. The shrimp and flies serve as important food sources for many species of birds associated with water. As part of the Mono Lake experience, we'll discuss the lake's famous "tufa" (pronounced two-fuh) towers. The bizarre tufa towers that ring portions of Mono Lake's shoreline are fascinating limestone formations formed through a chemical reaction when calcium rich water from underwater springs comes into contact with the carbonate-rich waters of the lake. These towers, and other islands around the lake, provide critical nesting habitat for as many as 45,000-65,000 California Gulls.

Mono Lake may well be the greatest gathering point in North America for Eared Grebes, with hundreds of thousands filling the lake each fall. In early August we're still too early to experience those kinds of numbers, but we should still have no problem finding them. In addition to the grebes, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, American Avocet, Snowy Plover, Wilson's Snipe, and Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes and Osprey are all species that use the lake for a breeding site or as a migratory staging area.

In the afternoon we'll head east about 10 miles to Sagehen Summit, passing through expansive sage flats and stands of Jeffrey pine. The birding in this area should be good and we will take time to check different sites for Golden Eagle, Lewis's Woodpecker, Gray Flycatcher, Pinyon Jay, Rock Wren, Green-tailed Towhee, and Brewer's and Sage sparrows.

As we make our way back toward camp, we'll re-enter Lee Vining Canyon. Several campgrounds alongside the stream offer more good birding opportunities. The open pine forests found here provide excellent habitat for Williamson's Sapsucker, Common Raven, Clark's Nutcracker, Pygmy Nuthatch, and Mountain Chickadee.

NIGHTS: Camping – Tuolumne Meadows

August 6, Day 12: Exploring the Eastern Sierras; Return to Sacramento. As today represents our final full day together we will want to make the most of our remaining time. We will leave the schedule open so we'll have greater flexibility in our decision-making. Possibilities include searching for any remaining birds we haven't seen, or making a final morning hike to one of the many area lakes. Still another possibility is a departure from Yosemite back out the eastern entrance and returning to Sacramento via a more northern route over Sonora Pass. Regardless, the drive to Sacramento will take 3-4 hours and we will want to be underway by early afternoon.

NIGHT: Fairfield Inn & Suites

August 7, Day 13: Depart Sacramento for home. Campers will be escorted to the Sacramento International Airport in time for flights home. All campers should plan to depart Sacramento no later than noon today.

CAMP SIZE/AGE LIMIT: Camp Yosemite is designed for boys and girls ages 14 through 18 who have an interest in birds and natural history. The camp will be limited to 14 participants.

CAMP STAFF: Victor Emanuel, Barry Lyon, and a third supervisor to be named at a later date.

Victor Emanuel started birding in Texas 59 years ago at the age of eight. His travels have taken him to all the continents, with his areas of concentration being Texas, Arizona, Mexico, Panama, and Peru. He is the founder and compiler for 40 years of the record-breaking Freeport Christmas Bird Count, and served a term as president of the Texas Ornithological Society. Birds and natural history have been a major focus throughout his life. He derives great pleasure from seeing and hearing birds, and sharing with others these avian sights and sounds, both the common ones and the more unusual ones. He initiated the first birding camps for young people, and considers that one of his greatest achievements. Victor holds a B.A. in zoology and botany from the University of Texas and an M.A. in government from Harvard. In 1993, he was the recipient of the Roger Tory Peterson Excellence in Birding Award, given by the Houston Audubon Society in recognition of a lifetime of dedication to careful observation, education, and addition to the body of avian knowledge. In 2004, he received the Roger Tory Peterson Award from the American Birding Association, and the Arthur A. Allen Award from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Victor is a member of the board of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, and the American Bird Conservancy.

Barry Lyon's passion for the outdoors and birding has its roots in his childhood where he grew up in southern California. Through his early and teenage years his developing interests were nurtured by summertime camping trips to southern Arizona and road trips throughout the American West. He attended three VENT/ABA youth birding camps, which would ultimately pave the way for his future involvement with VENT. While in college, Barry studied history and political science, with an emphasis on environment and development politics. He holds a B.A. from the University of Arizona at Tucson from which he graduated in 1994. He joined the VENT team in 1995 and hasn't looked back. Barry has guided tours throughout the United States and Canada, as well as to Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and the Caribbean. In the summer of 2004 he relocated to Austin and joined the staff in an administrative position. Barry will continue to lead a limited number of tours, but his increased responsibilities include new tour development and assisting in marketing and advertising efforts.

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CAMP POLICIES: Summer youth camps operated by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours are designed to expose camp participants to the treasures of the natural world. The settings for VENT youth camps are selected for their biological richness and natural beauty. The staff of the camps designs programs that camp attendees will find exciting and educational. It is our expectation that campers will have the kinds of experiences that create memories that last for a lifetime. The success of our camps depends on the leadership and organization of the staff, but the level of enjoyment that an individual camper achieves will depend on his ability to demonstrate a willingness to cooperate and share. In 20 years of offering youth nature camps, a camp participant has never been sent home. In order to maintain a perfect record, campers must adhere to the following rules:

- There will be no usage of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products permitted. We take a zero tolerance approach.
- Any disputes that arise between campers will be mediated by staff members. Fighting will not be tolerated.
- Cooperation is essential. Every day brings a host of responsibilities to the staff members, from preparing meals to cleaning camp sites, vehicles, ice chests, and cooking supplies. Campers will be required periodically to help with these endeavors. Non-cooperation is not an option.
- Damage or destruction of the property of others is strictly prohibited and is considered grounds for dismissal.

Please read the separate document, “Guidelines for VENT Camps,” for further clarification of what campers can expect and what is expected of them.

Finally, Campers will not be permitted to attend Camp Yosemite unless they and/or parents or legal guardians read, sign, and return the following documents. These documents will be included in materials the Camper will receive after registering:

1) To the Applicant: This document, signed by the Camp Yosemite participant, certifies that the camper has read and understands the rules and regulations of the camp.

2) Release and Assumption of Risk: This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that participation in birding camp activities involves some degree of risk of injury from, but not limited to, the hazards of traveling, hiking in various types of terrain, accident, illness, and the forces of nature. A parent or guardian’s signature holds VENT harmless from any and all liability. VENT is also granted permission to seek medical assistance for an ill or injured camper.

3) Tetanus Shot Certification Document: This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that the prospective birding camp participant is up to date with tetanus vaccination. Campers must provide proof of vaccination.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the camp is **\$995** per person in double occupancy from Sacramento, CA. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 13, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and leadership services provided by the camp staff. The fee does not include airfare from your home to Sacramento and return, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Also not included is the camping equipment (tent, sleeping bag and pad) which must be brought by each camper.

Partial camp scholarships are available through the American Birding Association (ABA) and are awarded to campers who couldn’t attend otherwise. Please contact the ABA for more information.

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 90 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 90 days or more before the tour departure date, the deposit less \$125 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made between 90 and 70 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 70 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself.*

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
90 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$125.
Between 90 and 70 days before departure	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded.
Fewer than 70 days before departure date	No refund available.

TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE: Application forms 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 to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. 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 are available, however, stipulations apply usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details.**

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.

For those campers arriving in Sacramento by car or by other means, the designated meeting place is *Starbucks Coffee* at the Sacramento International Airport, terminal B on July 26 at 12:00 PM. Terminal B is one building with two wings, called B1 and B2. *Starbucks* is located in the Central Area between the two wings on the lower level.

CLIMATE & WEATHER: Summertime in the Sierra Nevada is generally characterized by warm to hot days, cool nights and mornings, and little to no precipitation. Over the duration of the camp we will spend time at elevations ranging from near sea level at Sacramento to 10,000 feet at the Tioga Pass. Campers, consequently, will experience a correspondingly wide temperature range. The following temperatures are based on historic averages and should serve as a pretty good guide with regard to conditions in which campers will find themselves:

At only 27 feet above sea level, Sacramento sits in the heart of the Central Valley, which can be a very hot place during the summer. Though our time there will be limited, we could see temperatures around 100-105° at the height of the afternoon heat. In Yosemite Valley, the historical average high for the late July/early August period is about 90° and the low about 54°. The valley, however, sits at 4,000 feet. Our first camp, at Bridalveil Creek campground, is situated at about 7,200 feet, where temperatures will be anywhere from 10°-15° cooler. Campers should expect nighttime and early morning temperatures in the 40s, but should be prepared for temperatures dipping into the 30s. This is especially true for our time at Tuolumne Meadows in the Yosemite high country, where temperatures will be as much as 20° cooler than in the valley, and where early morning temperatures may drop into the mid- to low 30s. East of the mountains, afternoon highs may climb into the low 90s.

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Sustained rainfall is extremely unlikely at this time of year, but the presence of moisture in the air may produce occasional afternoon thunderstorms. Such storms are characterized by highly concentrated, isolated cloudbursts in which a large amount of rain falls hard and heavily for a short period of time, usually an hour or less. These storms are also capable of producing snowfall on the highest peaks, even in the summer. As a general statement, campers could see temperatures from the low 30s to over 100. **PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW THE PACKING LISTS TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE FULLY PREPARED FOR THE CONDITIONS OF THE CAMP.**

BAGGAGE: As space in the vans is limited, campers should pack as carefully and efficiently as possible. Please avoid bringing any unnecessary items that may take up more room. We recommend that campers pack their clothing and equipment in a pliable, middle to large size duffel bag, and perhaps a smaller bag for camping gear. Campers may wish to bring a carry-on or other small travel bag for toiletries, personal items, or valuables. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING HARD-SIDED SUITCASES OR FRAME BACKPACKS.**

CLOTHING: Summer is a warm and dry time of the year in California, but the nights and mornings in the high mountains can be downright cold. Campers will want to pack clothes associated with warm weather generally, yet be prepared for night and morning temperatures in the 30s. Campers should pack several t-shirts, but making sure to avoid white and other bright colors. Long-sleeved t-shirts will come in handy for evenings and the early morning hours. Shorts will be fine, even preferred most days, but you should also pack a couple pair of long pants. Jeans are acceptable, but are not as comfortable as cotton or other lightweight materials. In addition to cotton socks, campers are advised to bring several pairs of socks made of heavier material, like wool, for maximum comfort on extended hikes.

Packing a light jacket or shell is a good idea in the event of rain or a summertime thunderstorm. All campers should bring a warm fleece or sweater for the cool nights and mornings. For sleeping, campers should also bring a warm pair of sweats or flannel pajamas to ensure warmth is maintained while spending nights in tents.

The importance of having warm clothing should not be overestimated. A hat for protection from the sun is essential. A wide-brimmed hat is best, but campers should bring a baseball cap at the very least. Given the amount of time we will be camping, campers should not expect access to laundry services and should pack accordingly.

A swimsuit might come in handy for the last night at the hotel.

FOR FOOTWEAR, CAMPERS SHOULD BRING A GOOD FITTING, BROKEN IN PAIR OF HIKING BOOTS OR TRAIL SHOE. THERE ARE SEVERAL LENGTHY HIKES PLANNED AND CAMPERS WILL HAVE A MUCH BETTER TIME IF THEY DO NOT HAVE TO COPE WITH SORE FEET OR BLISTERS. A pair of sandals or other lightweight shoe will provide more comfort for all other times.

Please refer to the separate clothing list for a more complete listing of items to bring to camp.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: As we will spend the majority of our time in Yosemite National Park, laundry service is not likely to be available. Campers should be prepared for nearly two weeks in the field without washing clothes.

EQUIPMENT: Campers should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, water bottles, notepads, extra clothing, cameras etc.). Your camp supervisors will have spotting scopes available for group use. We anticipate a limited amount of space in the vehicles, and because of the nature of our birding, campers are asked to leave their scopes at home. Two one-quart water bottles are essential for lengthy hikes. Bicycle type bottles are not a good choice, as they tend to leak. Other items to bring include a camera, towel and washcloth, insect repellent, flashlight and or headlamp. Sunscreen is required for a trip to California in the summer, as the sun's rays are intense and can easily burn exposed skin. A battery-powered travel alarm clock is also recommended. Other items to consider are personal

toiletries and medications. Campers should bring a notebook and pens. Some optional items are your favorite snack foods and extra batteries. **Please refer to the separate packing list for a more complete listing of items to bring to camp.**

Note: As we will be involved with the natural world, we prefer that you do not bring radios, portable music devices, electronic games, etc. to camp.

TIME: California is on Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) during the summer months.

HEALTH: We want your time at Camp Yosemite to be as rewarding and memorable as possible. To ensure this comes to pass, we offer the following information and suggestions for health-related issues:

- Staff members are certified to perform standard first aid and CPR and carry an assortment of first aid supplies.
- Staff members carry a Sawyer Extractor Kit in the unlikely event of poisonous snake or insect bite.
- Those campers on prescribed medication should remember to pack it, and preferably in carry-on luggage. Please check with your air carrier for regulations regarding carry-on baggage.
- **VENT requires that all campers be up to date with his/her tetanus shot. Campers will not be permitted to attend Camp Yosemite unless the accompanying tetanus shot certification document has been returned to the VENT office, signed, and dated by a parent or legal guardian.**
- Due to the higher daytime temperatures of summer, as well as the physical demands of the camp, campers will always be provided with plenty of cool drinks in the forms of bottled water and juice.
- Camping is required for 10 nights of this camp. Staff members will do all the cooking. Campers should expect healthy meals that are low in fat, salt, and sugar, but high in protein, starch and vitamins. Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables will be available.
- Throughout the trip, fast food restaurants will be avoided, although campers are allowed to buy items of their choosing (with their own money) at rest stops.

Altitude: VENT is assuming that this camp will present the first experience for many camp participants to spend time at altitude. While hiking and camping at 7,000-8,000 feet is not technically high country in itself, this altitude level IS essentially high country to those who have never been far above sea level. For this reason, it is vital that all campers report any pre-existing medical conditions to Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. To ensure that everybody has a rewarding, healthy experience at Camp Yosemite, we will take our time getting acclimated to the more rarified mountain air. While several lengthy hikes are scheduled, none are considered physically strenuous. All hikes will be on level ground or even downhill, with no demanding uphill trudges. In the Tioga Pass area, at around 10,000 feet, our activities will be limited, with no lengthy hikes scheduled. Our time in the Hoover Wilderness will involve only a fairly short jaunt beyond Saddlebag Lake into the alpine country beyond. **No activities will be scheduled for which not all campers will be able to participate. All campers will be closely watched by camp staff for any signs of altitude sickness.**

CONDITIONS: Camp Yosemite provides participants an activity-packed program based on an intimate exploration of Yosemite National Park. As such, 10 nights out of the 12 night program will be spent camping in developed campgrounds inside the national park. Campers and their parents are urged to carefully review the packing list to ensure proper preparation for camping at elevations of 6,200 ft., 7,200 ft, and 8,600 ft.

A typical day will see us out bright and early to take full advantage of the long summer days. We will stay busy and active up to lunch, with most morning activities centering on a feature hike. After lunch we'll take a break, during which time campers will have periods of down time to either relax or explore their surroundings in small groups. We will venture out again in the mid-afternoon for either short hikes or vehicle trips to more distant parts of the park, such as the rides to the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias and to Hetch Hetchy reservoir. Since darkness does not fully descend until after 9:00 p.m., there will be post-dinner activities some days. Meal times will fall most days within these timeframes:

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Breakfast: 6:00 – 7:00 a.m.
Lunch: 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
Dinner: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

All vehicle travel will be in 15 passenger touring vans.

Hiking is a key activity on this trip, and campers should expect to participate on numerous hikes, some of which exceed 5 miles in length. Nearly all hikes are on even ground with relatively minimal elevation gains or losses. The most challenging hikes will be only of moderate difficulty. The following hikes and corresponding distances should provide camp participants and their parents with what to expect in terms of physical requirements. Campers should expect to log 40-45 miles on foot.

Glacier Point Hikes:

Pohono Trail, Taft Point, and The Fissures: 5 miles roundtrip
Panorama Trail and Mist Trails: 8.5 miles total; all downhill
Segments of the following trails: Ostrander Lake, Dewey Point, Westfall Meadow,
Mariposa Grove, Wawona Meadow; 8 miles or so (total)

Yosemite Valley Hike:

Bridalveil Falls: 1 mile

Crane Flat Hikes:

Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias: 2.5 miles roundtrip
Merced Grove: 3.0 miles roundtrip
North Dome: 9.2 miles roundtrip

In addition to bird observation, campers can expect to participate in discussions and seminars about birding, biology, ecology, the life of John Muir, and the California gold rush. Campers should bring a notebook for note taking and journal entries.

Campers will be encouraged to call home on a regular basis and keep their families informed of their activities. A cell phone is recommended. Pay phones, hotel room phones, and private phones will be available along the route for coin use, calling card use, or for calling collect.

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 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. The bookstores of the Los Angeles Audubon Society and Tucson Audubon Societies also carry a fine inventory of books on birding and natural history. The bookstores can be accessed through the websites, respectively, of Los Angeles Audubon, www.laaudubon.org, and Tucson Audubon, www.tucsonaudubon.org.

Bird Identification: Campers may bring any of the following field guides as primary resources for bird i.d. All these guides adequately cover the birdlife of the region.

Kaufman, Kenn. *Kaufman Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000.

National Geographic Society. *Field Guide to North American Birds*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 5th edition, 2006.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf Publishing Company, 2000.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Western Birds*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000. This is a slimmed down regional version of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*.

Mammals: Any of these three guides adequately covers the mammal life of the region, however, there are some key differences between them. The Princeton guide offers the most concise, easiest to use field guide, with many well-illustrated plates featuring most of the recent taxonomic changes. A major drawback to the guide is a complete lack of accompanying text. The Kaufman guide is perhaps a better guide in that the color plates include good species accounts. Like the birding guide, Kaufman employs the use of digitally enhanced images, rather than true illustrations to display each species. The Reid guide is the newest and probably best field guide of the lot. It includes the most up-to-date taxonomy available to casual observers and easily the best text descriptions. Some might consider the lack of color plates a drawback.

Kays, Roland W. and Wilson, Don E. *Mammals of North America*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002. The newest field guide and therefore the most taxonomically up to date.

Bowers, Nora, Rick Bowers, and Kenn Kaufman. *Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 2004. This field guide features a better text than the preceding guide.

Reid, Fiona A. *Mammals of North America*. Peterson Field Guides. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 4th edition, 2006.

Butterflies:

Brock, Jim P. and Kenn Kaufman. *Kaufman Focus Guides: Butterflies of North America*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 2003. This is the best North American butterfly identification guide currently available.

Glassberg, Jeffrey. *Butterflies Through Binoculars: The West*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Reptiles:

Stebbins, Robert C. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Reptiles and Amphibians*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1985.

Trees:

Petrides, George A. and Olivia. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Trees*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1992.

History:

Wolfe, Linnie Marsh. *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2nd edition, 2003.

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 December 12, 2007 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

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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.