

GCBO Oregon Birding Tour

June 19-26 June, 2021



Come explore Oregon's beauty and so many birds along with GCBO's Executive Director, Martin Hagne. This wonderful trip includes six full days of birding, and the opportunity to use the beautiful Sister-Bend area as our base for at least two-three nights. For the Central Oregon portion we will visit all of the primary habitats of this sub-region which include montane and sub-montane fir-pine forests, drier pine-juniper forests and the high desert sagebrush steppe over the first couple days and leave the last day for clean-up of any target species that we may have missed. Please see detailed trip description and itinerary below.

We will travel in two vans for comfort, and be guided by two wonderful expert local bird guides. Dave Irons and Shawneen Finnegan live in the Portland area and knows Oregon and the southwest birds better than anyone!

Tour Includes: Hotel rooms, van transportation, birding guides, entry fees, and van snacks.

Max Participants: 12

Single: \$1,680.00 (does NOT include airfare or meals/drinks)

Double: \$1,450.00 (does NOT include airfare or meals/drinks)



TRIP DESCRIPTION:

June in the Pacific Northwest is a buffet of sensory pleasures. Over six days we'll visit a variety of habitats and encounter upwards of 200 species of birds, including a number of breeding species that are only found along the Pacific slope of North America.

Visual distractions are many in Oregon, including a stunningly gorgeous rocky coastline, snow-capped volcanic peaks along the crest of the Cascades, and high mountain lakes with postcard-perfect reflections of the mountains that feed them. We'll pass through ancient conifer forests that are home to some of the oldest and tallest Sitka spruce, western red cedars and Douglas firs on Earth. East of the Cascades the fragrance of ponderosa pine, western juniper and sage is ever-present.

We'll start with a day in the Oregon Coast Range a low mountain range between the outer coast and Willamette Valley. The mixed conifer/alder/bigleaf maple woodlands and patchwork of regenerating clearcuts create a diverse array of habitats that are inhabited by an equally diverse mix of woodland species, including regional specialties like Varied Thrush, Red-breasted Sapsucker and Hermit Warbler. We'll hope to encounter secretive Mountain Quail and Sooty Grouse as well.

A full day along the outer coast will include visits to promontories where we'll enjoy the cacophonous seabird colonies that nest on nearshore sea stacks and rocky headlands. Expect to see and hear plenty

of Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants and of course the iconic Tufted Puffin.

From there we'll work our way inland through the Willamette Valley up and over the summit of the Cascades to the drier eastern slope of the Cascades and out onto Oregon's high desert plateau. Woodpeckers abound in the Central Cascades, with 11 of the state's 12 regular-occurring species found there. Fluting vocalizations of Swainson's and Hermits Thrushes and the cheerful notes of White-crowned Sparrows dominate the woodland chorus. Over the course of the week we should see and hear 11 species of flycatchers, including several that only breed west of the Rockies. Common nesting warblers include Hermit, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's Wilson's, Nashville, Orange-crowned, Yellow and MacGillivray's and the mix of expected finches includes Purple and Cassin's, Red Crossbill, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak. Out in high desert sagebrush steppe we'll see a mix of desert sparrows, Gray Flycatcher and open country raptors

Along the way there will be no shortage of treats for your taste buds. The region is renowned for its craft beers made with locally-grown hops and there are hundreds of wineries, large and small. Oregon is famous for its Pinots, produced from grapes grown in the foothills of the Willamette Valley. Whether you are grabbing a quick bite from a food cart or a taco truck, or sitting down at an upscale eatery, expect a tasty and quality meal with many locally-sourced ingredients. *(Food and drinks not included in trip fee)*

Weather at this season can be a mixed bag. It is likely to be cool most mornings, thus having layers that can be easily added or shed is imperative. Rain can be heavy and unfortunately persistent during June, especially along the outer coast. Hot and dry summer weather typically kicks in around the 4th of July. At higher elevations morning temps may dip into the 40's or even into the 30's when the rising sun is still at a low angle. Daytime high temps above the mid-80's would be a surprise at this time of year. East of the Cascades we will be in the rain shadow of the mountains, thus it is likely to be considerably drier, although the elevation is about 3500-4000' so it will be generally cooler than it is closer to sea level. Sturdy boots that are somewhat waterproof is the recommended footwear. Biting insects are generally not much of a problem except around some of the mountain lakes and wetlands. We have no chiggers (thankfully) and wood ticks are pretty scarce in the areas we'll be visiting.

TRIP ITINERARY:

Day 1 (Saturday 19th)— Arrival to Portland airport. Evening dinner, introduction to participants, and tour itinerary.

Day 2 (Sunday 20th)— Spend the morning in the Oregon Coast Range west of Portland. Lots of target western birds: Mountain Quail, Sooty Grouse, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Band-tailed Pigeon, Rufous Hummingbird, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Hammond's Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Hutton's Vireo, Varied Thrush, Pacific Wren, American Dipper, Hermit Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak. Other common birds would include Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Red-shafted Flicker, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Wilson's Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Spotted Towhee, White-crowned Sparrow, Western Tanager, Purple Finch, Pine

Siskin and Willow Flycatcher. In the afternoon return to the lowlands with a focus on oak-savannah habitats. Target birds: Acorn Woodpecker, Western Bluebird, California Scrub-Jay, Anna's Hummingbird, Vaux's Swift, Bewick's Wren, Bushtit and Lazuli Bunting. Late afternoon head to outer coast (Seaside or Cannon Beach) and stay the night.

Day 3 (Monday 21st) — Start in Cannon Beach for: Tufted Puffin, Pigeon Guillemot, Common Murre, Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants, over-summering scoters, Marbled Murrelet, Rhinoceros Auklet and Black Oystercatcher. Early Heermann's Gull is possible. We can do some sea watches. Work our way south to Newport with a few stops along the way. Spend the night in Newport.

Day 4 (Tuesday 22nd) — Spend maybe two hours birding around Newport, before heading inland. Wrentit is pretty easy here if we don't get it the day before. Mostly a travel day with about 4-5 hours of driving as we work our way over to central Oregon. Plenty of places to bird on the way over the pass, with more stops for mountain birds like quail and grouse if we haven't gotten them yet. More opportunities to see mid-slope breeders like Hermit Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Hammond's Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler etc. If there is water at Lost Lake, we should have breeding Barrow's Goldeneye.

Days 5, 6 and 7 (Weds-Friday) — Stay three nights in Sisters and do daily forays out into the three specific habitat types, all within about 60-70 miles of the motel. The Best Western in Sisters has really nice Ponderosa Pine habitat and great birding right at the hotel, where there are feeders. We could go out in the evening for Common Poorwill if folks are up for that.

Day 5 (Wednesday 23rd) — Focus our efforts on the Santiam Pass area and pine forests right around Sisters/Black Butte area. Potentially 10-11 species of woodpeckers, including Lewis's, White-headed, Williamson's, Red-naped and Red-breasted Sapsuckers, plus Black-backed and American Three-toed Woodpeckers. Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers are common in these habitats, plus we can also get Thick-billed Fox Sparrow, Townsend's Solitaire and Clark's Nutcracker at higher elevations. Mountain Chickadees, Cassin's Finches and Pygmy Nuthatches are all common in the pine forests.

Day 6 (Thursday 24th) — Focus on high desert sagebrush steppe and some juniper-pine forests habitats south and east of Bend. Start the morning out in the sage for Sagebrush Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Sage Thrasher, Gray Flycatcher and likely some raptors. From there work our way west over to Fort Rock for open country raptors including Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk and Swainson's Hawk. Canyon Wren and Rock Wren breed at Fort Rock, as do Green-tailed Towhees. Time permitting we can spend some time at the Cabin Lake Guard Station guzzler, where there is a spring-fed water feature and photo blind. Great for woodpeckers, finches, crossbills and various sparrows that come in to get water.

Day 7 (Friday 25th) — Depending on what birds we still need we would either go back out in the juniper-pines, or spend some more time in the fir-pine forests around Sisters and up towards Santiam Pass. We will plan on leaving this day flexible depending on what folks are interested in seeing more of. Finally, we could also keep staying over in Sisters on Friday night optional and either leave there late Friday afternoon and head back to Portland, or stay over and travel back to Portland on Saturday.

Day 8 (Saturday 26th) — Travel Day — Fly out of Portland.

OUR GUIDES:

Dave Irons started birding at age six and became fully hooked by age 17, when he connected with other young birders. His curiosity about vagrancy, biogeography, and the finer points of field ID, along with finding opportunities to pass forward what he has learned, sustain his passion fifty-plus years later. Dave is a past member of Oregon's Bird Records Committee (OBRC) and served as the Oregon/Washington regional editor for *North American Birds* for more than a decade. He authored the *ABA Field Guide to the Birds of Oregon*, published in 2018. Over the past two decades Dave has led field trips and taught birding classes for Lane Community College, Pacific Northwest College of Art, the Siskiyou Field Institute, the Winter Wings Festival, Western Field Ornithologists, American Birding Association, Oregon Birding Association, Oregon Pelagic Tours, Lane County Audubon Society, the Audubon Society of Portland and the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival.

Shawneen Finnegan, after growing up in California's Bay Area found her tribe and calling when she discovered birding in her early 20s. Already a talented artist, she began drawing and painting birds. Her illustrations have adorned bird festival t-shirts and her art, photos and writing have been featured in numerous identification articles, field guides and state and regional monographs. Driven to be recognized as a "top birder," Shawneen's ascent into birding's upper echelon was rapid. She led and later managed tours for WINGS, was *Birding* magazine's photo editor for several years, and has served on four state bird records committees. In addition to birding around the globe, Shawneen has lived in birding meccas, with long stints in Cape May and Tucson. In 2007 she moved to Portland, Oregon to be with her mom, who passed in 2012. She and husband Dave Irons are the statewide eBird Review Coordinators for Oregon, making their home in Beaverton.



Photos by Dave Irons