



Get to know guide Steve Ogle

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Steve Ogle has been guiding tours with Eagle-Eye Tours for over 15 years. He has guided [British Columbia](#), [High Arctic & NWT](#), Narwhals & Polar Bears, [Walrus & Bowhead Whales](#), [Point Pelee](#) and his specialty, [Patagonia Wildlife Safari](#) and [Patagonia Photo Tour](#). Steve is from British Columbia and loves nature and photography. We are so happy to have Steve as part of our Eagle-Eye Tours team. We recently asked him a few questions about his background and thought it would be fun to share them with you, so you can learn a little bit more about him and his birding passion.

When did you become interested in birds?

Well, I have to think back to a long time ago, I was always into animals, looking for foxes, cats and all sorts of critters. I probably got into it from watching some of those old school black and white wildlife TV shows. I grew up near Point Pelee, which was a pretty good hot spot for birding. At that time, I was looking for all sorts of animals and then I noticed the birds and I started paying attention to them. In my final year of university I started doing some volunteer work, bird banding and some other projects that were related to birds. In fact, I met some of my mentors back then, such as Paul Prior, who's also a guide for Eagle-Eye Tours. Paul actually gave me all the tips about birds back in the early days. He introduced me to birding by ear for example, so it's a really great privilege to work with Paul now especially on tours like the Patagonia Wildlife Safari.

Do you have a favourite bird family or bird?

My favourite bird is the Chucao Tapaculo, the reason being, when I was in my mid 20s I went to Patagonia and volunteered on a project studying Tapaculos and forest fragmentation. I think this species evolved to live around mammals; whenever there was an ungulate digging up the soil, the birds would come in. When we walked around the forest, they would come up and walk around your

feet, I even had them land on my shoulder. So that is why the Chucao Tapaculo is one of my favourite birds in that part of the world. My favourite bird around home in western Canada, is a very powerful little Falcon called the Merlin. I sometimes see them from my office window as they nest in the Douglas fir trees around my house. Otherwise it's really hard to pin down a favourite species. I really do love warblers too because I grew up in southern Ontario and May is a very exciting time there when the warblers pass through on migration.

Do you have a bird life list?

Yes, I do have a bird life list, but it wasn't always the case. I guess I started listing early on when I would take a bird book and put little check marks in the book, but then, up until about 10 years ago, I had a mantra: 'it's better not to list than become obsessed'. The danger being if I get too focused on the list then I wasn't going to enjoy the trip I was on. But I let go of that thinking and do enjoy listing now. It's exciting, it gives you a new reason to visit a new place, it makes you excited about seeing new birds. However, I am careful for the listing to not take over the enjoyment of day-to-day birding. A great benefit of listing is that you get to review your list, E-Bird has a great mechanism for reviewing your life list. When I'm guiding a tour, I don't get to see too many new birds because I've been to the tour destination before, but my reward is to see the new birds through the eyes of the tour participants. In that way I am involved in other people's lists, which is exciting.

Do you have a favourite birding destination?

Yes, definitely Columbia! I've been there five or six times now and I've told myself it's going to take at least 10 visits to see a good representation of all the different areas and a lot of the different birds. I also love birding in Chile even though I've seen a lot of the species there, I always look forward to returning to Chile. And then Costa Rica is a very fun country to bird watch in because you don't have to go very far to see a whole new set of species, you can go from the dry Pacific forests over to the wet Caribbean forests in less than a couple hours, so yes Costa Rica would also be one of my favourite birding destinations.

How has birding enriched your life?

Birding has given me a pretty good reason to get outside and away from the office! I also like skiing and mountain biking. Living in a mountain town, we get to do a lot of those things but getting out birding is just a low stress, low output activity and at the end of a two hour walk looking for birds, I feel really relaxed and rejuvenated. Those moments spent in nature that's really what it's all about to me. Looking at birds gives me a lot, it fills my cup. Getting to share birds with other people is also rewarding. When I go out with a friend or maybe I'm with tour guests then I get to see and join in their excitement. Maybe they haven't seen a Black-capped Chickadee before, or maybe I get to show them an American Robin, they get pretty excited and I get to be excited along with them.

What are the craziest things you have done to see a bird?

The craziest thing I've ever done to see a bird was on a trip to Colombia. I was with a couple friends, we were skiing the glaciers in the Santa Marta mountains, and I knew that there was a very special species in that area. It took us 10 days to hike up to the habitat where the bird was living and lo and behold I saw it! The species of Hummingbird is called the Blue-bearded Helmetcrest and not many people have had a chance to see that species.

How would your friends describe you?

My friends would describe me as someone who likes birds. But interestingly most of my friends are not birders, so I'm the one who gets the forwarded messages about the rare bird that appeared on

the news. They always have to tell me about it, even though I might have even been the one to find the bird and most likely already know about it. In general, I'm a go-getter, I like to explore and I like to get out there. I'm enthusiastic, I want everyone around me to have a good time and I like to have a good time. When I'm out in nature, I don't want to pass up opportunities like checking out a salmon run or looking for grizzly bears. You know, you only live once. I think that the world has so many opportunities to show us things and oftentimes when you're on a trip you won't go back, so I like to make the most of it.