Eagle-Eye Tours

Alberta Birds & Dinosaurs Itinerary

Link: Alberta Birds & Dinosaurs

Tour Overview

Amazing landscapes, great birds, and one of the richest dinosaur fossil sites in the world- join us on an amazing birding tour to the badlands of Alberta! The bulk of our days will be spent exploring the Red Deer River Valley badlands and adjacent prairies around Drumheller and Dinosaur Provincial Park. Breeding season will be in full swing in this amazing region of central Alberta, and birding will be the focus each morning. We will explore several unique habitats including Prairie sloughs, riparian Cottonwood forests, and the desert-like conditions of the badlands. Our afternoons will be spent learning about the unique geology and natural history of the region at Dinosaur Provincial Park and the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology.

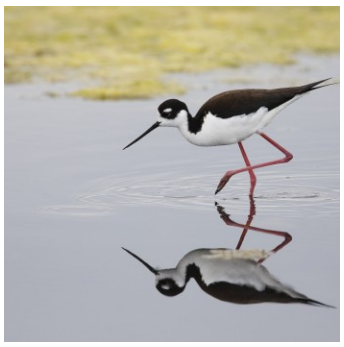
Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival in Calgary



Participants will be arriving in Calgary throughout the day for our Alberta birding tour. For those arriving early, there are opportunities for birding in and around Calgary. The Inglewood Bird Sanctuary along the Bow River is an excellent area for foothills and riverine species, and is easily accessible within the city of Calgary. Alternately, there are some great museums worth visiting in the city. We meet in the evening at our hotel for a get-together and a discussion of the next day’s activities. Night in Calgary.

Day 2 – Prairie Sloughs and the Drumheller Badlands



After breakfast we head east along the Trans-Canada Highway and onto the open short-grass plains characteristic of southeastern Alberta. Along the drive we pass some very rich wetlands that host up to 15 species of waterfowl including Cinnamon Teal. Other targets in this area include Horned and Eared grebes, foraging Black Terns, and several shorebirds including Wilson's Phalarope, American Avocet, Prairie Willet and a few Black-necked Stilt feeding along the shoreline. After we've explored this rich birding area we will continue on our way east to the town of Drumheller in the badlands of the upper Red Deer River Valley. After a picnic lunch, we spend the afternoon exploring the valley with its canyons, hoodoos, and considerable geologic history. In the late afternoon, we arrive at our hotel in Drumheller, where we spend the next two nights.

Day 3 – Grassland Birds and Dinosaur Provincial Park



After an early breakfast, we head southeast through short-grass prairies toward picturesque Dinosaur Provincial Park. En route to the park we will make several stops looking for Sprague's Pipits, Chesnut-collared Longspurs, Long-billed Curlews, and Pronghorns. The extensive badlands within the park are home to Say's Phoebes, Rock Wrens, Lark Sparrows, Prairie Falcons, Mountain Bluebirds, and a small population of Violet-green Swallows. In the sagebrush at Dinosaur Provincial Park there are Brewer's Sparrows along with oodles of Clay-colored Sparrows. Other goodies we might find today include Yellow-breasted Chat and Brown Thrasher in the riparian scrub, along with Loggerhead Shrike and even Eurasian Collared-Dove just outside the park. After a picnic lunch, we will take time to explore the visitor centre and learn more about the wealth of dinosaur fossils within this UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will return to our hotel in Drumheller late in the day.

Day 4 – Drumheller and the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology



Today we spend the bulk of our day in and around Drumheller. After breakfast we look for forest birds in the riparian Cottonwoods of McMullen Island Provincial Park where we should find Veery, Western Wood-Pewee, and perhaps some late migrants. From here we make our way to the world-renowned Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, where we will spend several hours exploring the exhibits. In the afternoon we will head west toward Calgary, stopping at Orkney Viewpoint en route. Night in Calgary.

Day 5 - Departure

Our Alberta birding tour ends today. If you are carrying on to our Canadian Rockies birding tour, you will head west to the Rockies today. If not, you can depart for flights home anytime today.

What to Expect

Overview

The Alberta Birds and Dinosaurs tour is a moderately paced birding tour. You can expect some early mornings and the occasional post-dinner excursion.

Food

We generally have breakfast at the hotel before we head out for the day. Sometimes we will have optional pre-breakfast walks. We often take a picnic lunch in the field, but will occasionally stop at a restaurant for lunch. Dinner is usually at the lodge or a nearby restaurant. Each evening after dinner we compile the day's checklist, review the day's activities, birds, mammals and other observations, and plan the next day's activities.

Accommodation

Generally we stay in standard hotel rooms in locations close to where we want to go birding.

Walking

The walking on this tour is rated easy to moderate. Most birding is done from roads and well-marked trails, but we occasionally traverse low brush, swampy and uneven terrain, and there is some hill hiking. We walk at a slow pace, stopping frequently to observe fauna and flora.

Driving

Driving times will vary from 1 – 3.5 hours of driving when transferring to a new location. We will have many rest stops along the way when moving to a new town.

Climate

Spring in Alberta is usually dry and sunny, but rain and cool mornings are possible, so pack layers. In the Alberta Badlands, expect warm or hot days with potential for wind and rain, but be prepared for sudden cold fronts. Evenings and early mornings can be quite cool. Mosquitoes are unpredictable in late May, so bring bug spray and possibly a head net. An umbrella could also be useful for both sun and rain protection.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

• Good quality accommodation
• All meals and soft drinks
• Ground transportation
• 4 - 8 participants will be guided by one guide. 9 - 12 participants will be guided by two guides in two vehicles
• All park, conservation and entrance fees

Tour Price Does Not Include

• Flights to and from Calgary
• Travel Insurance
• Items of a personal nature
• Taxes (5% GST)
• Alcoholic beverages