

Alberta Birds & Dinosaurs with Canadian Geographic Itinerary

[Link: Alberta Birds & Dinosaurs with Canadian Geographic](#)

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 - Frank Lake IBA and Elbow Falls



We depart Calgary early and drive to the Frank Lake Important Bird and Biodiversity Area for prairie wetland birds including White-faced Ibis, Cinnamon Teal and Western Grebe. We then head west out of the prairies and into the foothills region visiting several great birding locations including Brown-Lowry Provincial Park and Elbow Falls where our targets will include American Three-toed Woodpecker, American Dipper and Harlequin Duck. Night in Calgary.

Day 3 - 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, 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 4 - 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 5 - 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 6 - Departure

Our Alberta birding tour ends today. You can depart for flights home anytime today.

What to Expect

On our Alberta birding tour, we start our day with an early breakfast and then head off for most of the day, having a picnic lunch around noon. Days are long at this time of the year, and we make the best use of our time accordingly. Our day in Dinosaur Provincial Park will involve a fair bit of driving with numerous birding stops there and back. The Alberta badlands are likely to be warm or even hot during the day, with a possibility of rain. It can be quite windy at times. However, being the northern prairies, a cold front could move through, so it is best to be prepared for changeable weather. Evenings are likely to be cool, nights can be quite chilly, and early mornings can likewise be cool before it warms up. It is unlikely to snow. Nevertheless, participants should layer their clothing as conditions can change quickly while we are in the field. Mosquitoes are equally unpredictable in late May; we may encounter just a few, or rather a lot. Participants should include bug repellent and perhaps a head net in their luggage, just in case! An umbrella would be useful. Each evening we compile the day's checklist, review the day's activities, birds, mammals and other observations, and plan the next day's activities.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- Good quality accommodation
- Breakfast and lunches
- Ground transportation
- 5 - 7 participants will be guided by one guide and one ambassador. 8 - 12 participants will be guided by two guides and one ambassador in two vehicles
- All park, conservation and entrance fees

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to and from Calgary
 - Travel Insurance
 - Evening meals
 - Items of a personal nature
 - Taxes (5%GST)
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