Eagle-Eye Tours

British Columbia Birding with Canadian Geographic Itinerary

Link: British Columbia Birding with Canadian Geographic

Tour Overview

Join Eagle-Eye Tours and Canadian Geographic as we visit the highlights of southern British Columbia from the west coast rainforest to the arid grasslands of the Okanagan. British Columbia is known for its diverse set of habitats and subsequent diverse birds and other wildlife.

We begin in the Greater Vancouver area is one of the top birding regions in the province and ranks among the best places in Canada to see many Pacific Northwest specialties. Here we will look a variety of warblers, shorebirds and waterfowl, as well as a diverse range of seabirds including Rhinoceros Auklet, Marbled Murrelet and Pigeon Guillemot.

From here we'll traverse inland to the famed Okanagan region, known not only for its vineyards but also for avian diversity. Areas such as Kilpoola Lake host Common Poorwills and perhaps even Sage Thrashers, while Vaseux Lake is a site where we could have our highest daily species totals for the trip. Manning Park is another highlight stopover.

Overall, this unique British Columbia birding tour offers the chance to see an incredible array of birds, in addition to some of the world's best wildlife viewing. British Columbia is a magnificent province that has much to offer the naturalist explorer, from wild Pacific coastline to alpine tundra, and from arid desert to lush rainforest and more.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Vancouver



We will meet for dinner and discuss our upcoming adventure doing a relatively short birding tour of British Columbia. Night near the Vancouver airport.

Day 2: Vancouver



Iona Island is one of the best sites in a city that is renowned for good birding. We'll listen for the chattering of Bewick's Wren, Warbling Vireo and Bushtit as we explore this part of the Fraser River Delta. In one flock, we may see all seven species of swallows possible in Western Canada! From here we'll head right into picturesque downtown Vancouver and through the rainforest environs of Stanley Park. We'll cross over to the north shore for an early dinner and to check out Maplewood Flats Conservation Area or hike the forests of Grouse Mountain. Night near the Vancouver airport.

Day 3: Boundary Bay and on to Manning Park



We continue our Lower Mainland birding, this time stopping on the Fraser Delta to see where B.C.'s largest river empties into the Straight of Georgia. While here we may try for a roosting Barn Owl or some shorebirds at Brunswick Point before we explore the renowned Boundary Bay, an incredibly important stopover site for shorebirds. We then head east and drive into the Cascade Mountains. Night at Manning Park Lodge.

Days 4 - 6: The Okanagan



Manning Park is a stunning, mountainous area. Depending on the snowpack in the mountains, we may be able to drive fairly high up into the montane zone to pick up some higher elevation species such as Boreal Chickadee, Pine Grosbeak, Clark's Nutcracker and Spruce Grouse. We often see Black Bears eating grass on the roadsides. At Lightning Lake we'll have a look in the Engelmann Spruce forest for both species of Crossbill, Canada Jay and Northern Goshawk. We visit a roadside site where American Dipper nests. After lunch we'll continue east and soon enter the Great Basin ecosystem. Nighthawk Road is a great introduction to sagebrush habitat where hopefully we'll catch Brewer's and Lark Sparrows singing in the evening and with much luck we could encounter something rare such as a Sage Thrasher. These birds seem to arrive annually from south of the border, which is just over the hill. We arrive in the splendid Okanagan Valley in early evening and prepare for two final days of birding— possibly the best yet. While in the Okanagan we'll explore the best options for sagebrush and dry forest birding. Small lakes will hold plenty of ducks including Cinnamon Teal and Redhead. Near Oliver we'll watch breeding Wilson's Phalaropes try to out-compete Bobolinks for our attention while we search grasslands and patches of water birch for more amazing birds. At Vaseux Lake we'll investigate the riparian areas for migrant surprises while listening to Canyon and Rock Wren both singing from the cliffs above (Marsh, House, Bewick's and Pacific Wrens are also present!). California Bighorn Sheep have a stronghold here. We'll scan for large and small birds alike, including Golden Eagles across the lake and Rufous, Black-chinned and Calliope Hummingbirds in the forests. Lewis' Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Lazuli Bunting and Pygmy Nuthatch each have their favourite tree species to cling to, and Great Gray Owl is a possibility, offering those "Nat Geo" photo opportunities. At White Lake we'll look and listen for Grasshopper Sparrow and Gray Flycatcher. If we need a breather there's always a nearby winery to lunch at, or we can dip our feet into the warm waters of Osoyoos Lake nearby our hotel. Two nights in Osoyoos, final night in Kelowna near the airport.

Day 7: Departure from Kelowna



Our British Columbia birding tour ends today. Breakfast is available, but you can depart for flights home anytime today from the Kelowna airport. There are regular flights to several Canadian destinations from here.

What to Expect

Overview

The British Columbia Birding with Canadian Geographic tour is a moderately paced birding tour,

focused on finding a diversity of birds. The daily schedule will vary to account for weather, and reported bird sightings. You can expect some early mornings and the occasional evening owling expeditions.

Food

We usually 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. When we have two leaders, we sometimes split into "faster" and "slower" groups.

Driving

Driving times will vary from 1 – 4 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

The weather in British Columbia in June can be highly variable. It can range from cool and wet on the coast to warm and dry in the interior. It is best to check the weather the week before the tour starts and pack layers!

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All accommodation (Good quality)
- All meals and soft drinks
- Ground transportation (15-passenger vans)
- 1 EET guide and an ambassador with 5 - 7 participants, 2 EET guides and an ambassador in 2 vehicles with 8 - 12 participants
- All park, conservation and entrance fees

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to/from start (Vancouver) or end (Kelowna)
- Travel Insurance
- Items of a personal nature
- Taxes (5% GST)
- Alcoholic Beverages
