Eagle-Eye Tours

Canadian Rockies: Waterton Lakes Itinerary

Link: Canadian Rockies: Waterton Lakes

Tour Overview

Join us as we explore Waterton Lakes National Park, truly one of the most beautiful mountain parks in North America. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995, Waterton has a great combination of stunning mountain vistas, clear lakes, thundering waterfalls and rainbow coloured streams. Known as the place where the mountains meet the prairies, the unique environments present in the park make it one of the most ecologically diverse regions in the Rocky Mountains. Breeding season will be in full swing and birding will be the focus each day on our Canadian Rockies birding tour. The bulk of our days will be spent exploring the foothills and mountains of Kananaskis and Waterton, along with stops to explore prairie sloughs and the culturally significant Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. In addition to birding we will have the opportunity to see lots of mammals including Elk, Bighorn Sheep and perhaps even Grizzly Bears.

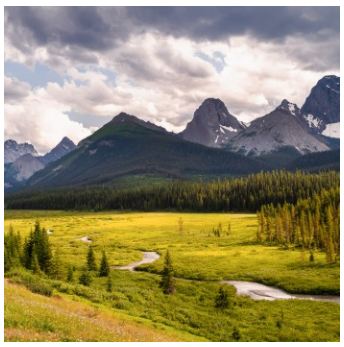
Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Calgary



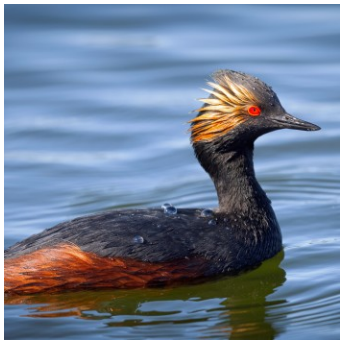
Our Canadian Rockies birding tour begins today. Participants will arrive in Calgary throughout the day. The group will meet in the evening at our hotel for a get-together and a discussion of the next day's activities. Night in Calgary. For those arriving early, there are opportunities for birding in 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.

Day 2: Kananaskis and the foothills west of Calgary



The fantastically beautiful Kananaskis Valley, on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, consists mainly of Lodgepole pine and spruce forest, with aspen and willow near water. Several large lakes and extensive wetlands dot the valley. The diverse habitats at the low elevations along the highway support a great variety of bird species. During the day we visit several locations including Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, where we look for Boreal and Mountain Chickadees, Townsend's Warbler and Barrow's Goldeneye. We will also be exploring a couple of sites in the foothills west of Calgary to search for LeConte's and Nelson's Sparrows. Night in High River.

Days 3: Frank Lake and Waterton Lakes National Park



After breakfast we head east to the extensive and bird rich wetlands of Frank Lake. Here we will find many prairie waterbirds including both Eared and Western Grebes, Canvasbacks, and Cinnamon Teal. We will also spend time looking for the exotic looking White-faced Ibis. From here we will drive south to the town of Waterton within the National Park which will be our home base for the next two nights. Night in Waterton

Day 4: Waterton Lakes National Park



Our days in Waterton will be spent exploring various trails and scenic drives looking for a diverse array of birds and mammals. This region of Alberta is home to several species of birds that are quite difficult to find elsewhere in the province. Depending on the weather we will take several short hikes to look for target species such as Cassin's Finch, Townsend Solitaire, Black-headed Grosbeak and Western Tanager. Calliope and Rufous Hummingbirds will be visiting feeders around the town site and elk and bears are found quite easily by driving the up the valley. Night in Waterton.

Day 5: Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, return to Calgary



After breakfast we will leave our mountain paradise and head north to Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is situated in an incredibly scenic part of the foothills. We will spend time exploring the world class visitor centre learning about this culturally significant part of Canada. Outside we will take a short hike to the Buffalo Jump and keeping our ears tuned for displaying Sprague's Pipits overhead. From here we will drive back to Calgary. If time permits we will endeavour to round up any species we may have missed on Day 1. Night in Calgary.

Day 6: Departure

Our Canadian Rockies birding tour ends today, you can depart anytime today.

What to Expect

Overview

The Canadian Rockies: Waterton Lakes is a moderately paced birding tour, focused on finding a diversity of birds. You can expect some early mornings and the occasional post-dinner walk.

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. Most hotels we stay at have laundry facilities.

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 – 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

The weather in Alberta is usually dry and sunny in Spring, but can be windy and rain is a possibility. Early mornings can be quite cold. It is best to check the weather the week before the tour starts and pack layers! These areas often have high pollen levels in spring, so we recommend bringing antihistamines if you're prone to seasonal allergies.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

• All accommodations (Good quality)
• All meals and soft drinks
• Ground transportation (15 passenger vans)
• 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 start/end location
• Travel Insurance
• Items of a personal nature
• Taxes (5% GST)
• Alcoholic beverages