

## Saskatchewan Whooping Cranes Itinerary

[Link: Saskatchewan Whooping Cranes](#)

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### Tour Overview

In the fall, Sandhill Cranes migrate by the thousands south across southern Saskatchewan, stopping at various localities to refuel before continuing their journey. With them are a handful of Whooping Cranes, coming south from breeding grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park in the Northwest Territories.

We have a good chance of finding Whooping Cranes on our birding tour as there is a fine network of field observers scouting the area for these legendary birds. Along with cranes, tens of thousands of Snow Geese and Canada Geese, with lesser numbers of Ross's, Greater White-fronted and Cackling Geese, are pouring through, as well as other waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and passerines, especially large flocks of Lapland Longspurs with Snow Buntings and possibly Northern Shrikes.

If time permits and we have seen Whooping Cranes well, we will venture to Prince Albert National Park and the boreal forest, where we will have chances for boreal specialties like Spruce Grouse, Pileated, Black-backed & American Tree-toed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Bohemian Waxwing, and occasionally Pine or Evening Grosbeak, or White-winged Crossbill. We also have the possibility to see Moose, Elk & sometimes River Otter.

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### Itinerary

#### Day 1: Arrival in Saskatchewan



Our Saskatchewan Whooping Cranes birding tour starts in Saskatoon with supper and an opportunity to discuss the upcoming adventure.

## Days 2 - 4: Whooping Crane Search



During the following three days, we travel to pothole country east of Saskatoon, Blackstrap lake, and boreal forests in and near Prince Albert National Park. It is almost guaranteed that one or more groups of Whooping Cranes will appear in the Saskatoon area during the tour period. Our schedule is flexible such that we can alter our itinerary to visit an area where the cranes have touched down. The habitat here is a mixture of grassland with potholes, saline wetland complexes and fresh water lakes. Lakes and potholes in the area are teeming with ducks and some lingering shorebirds can still be found. These areas also support thousands of Snow Geese each year; the actual fields that the birds occupy shifts from one year to the next, depending upon the type of crop grown the previous summer, but we should have little difficulty in locating the foraging areas for the flocks. Snow Geese will be the most abundant species in these flocks, but there are also groups of Greater White-fronted Geese, Ross's Geese and several species of ducks. Sandhill Cranes will also be gathering. Raptors of several species will be present, and we will scan for Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings as they are migrating south. Finally, both Sharp-tailed Grouse and Gray Partridge may be encountered in our travels. If time permits, we will venture to Prince Albert National Park and the boreal forest, where we will have chances for boreal specialties like Spruce Grouse, Pileated, Black-backed & American Three-toed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Bohemian Waxwing, and occasionally Pine or Evening Grosbeak, or White-winged Crossbill. We also have the possibility to see Moose, Elk & sometimes River Otter.

## Day 5: Departure

Our Saskatchewan Whooping Cranes birding tour ends today. You can depart anytime for flights home.

## What to Expect

We stay in just one location, Saskatoon, for our four nights, which is very convenient. During our Saskatchewan Whooping Cranes birding tour, we take day trips to the surrounding prairie-pothole habitat. Most days will begin with breakfast at about 6:30 a.m., and then we leave for the day with a picnic lunch, returning in the late afternoon to our accommodation, although this will vary according to the day's activities. Driving will be in moderate amounts except on the day we visit Prince Albert National Park, which is about 2.5 hours north of Saskatoon. We walk some side roads; however, most birding will be done near the vehicle.

We could have cold windy days with snow, and we could have fairly warm days with sunshine. Please dress warmly; bring layers, which can be added or removed as circumstances dictate. Bring warm headgear, scarves and gloves. Have footwear that is both warm and waterproof. We will not be on extended walks unless the weather is sunny and calm. Photographic opportunities could be excellent. Do not bring mosquito repellent - there won't be any mosquitoes! Each evening, the list of birds and other wildlife will be reviewed, and plans for the next day will be discussed.

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## What's Included

### **Tour Price Includes**

- All accommodation
- Breakfasts and lunches
- Ground transportation
- Guides
- All park, conservation and entrance fees

### **Tour Price Does Not Include**

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