



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

CAMP CASCADES

JULY 23 – AUGUST 3, 2025

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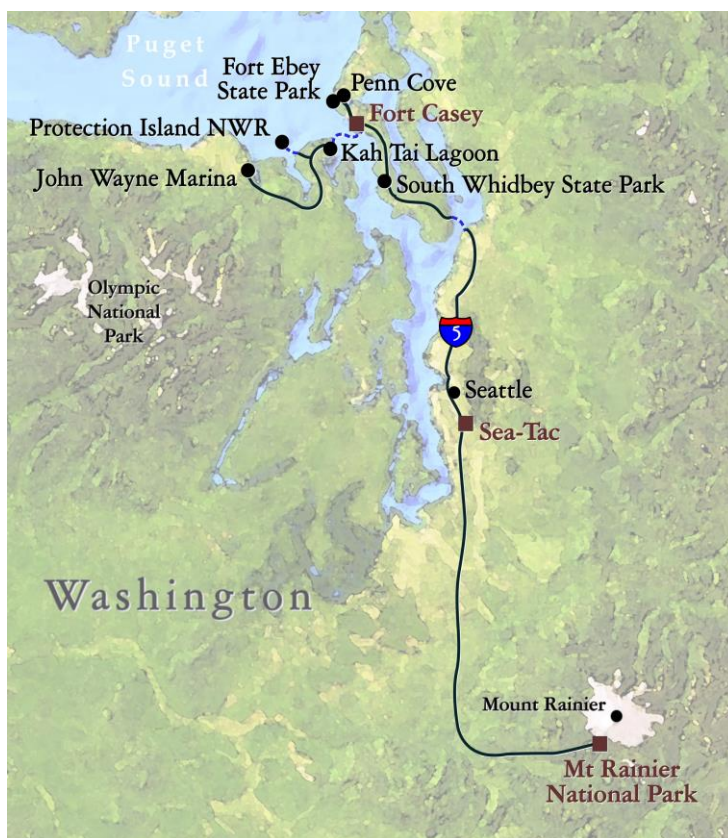


Skyline Trail, Mount Rainier National Park © Michael O'Brien

Camp Cascades, co-sponsored by Black Swamp Bird Observatory (Ohio), offers young naturalists between the ages of 14 and 18 the opportunity to explore and discover the unique ecosystems of the Puget Sound and Cascade Mountain regions. The primary focus is on the birdlife of this biologically rich state, but we will take time to observe all facets of the region's flora and fauna. The camp is set in a productive learning environment in which campers will be educated on ecology, habitats, and ecosystems, and on increasing observation skills. Daily activities are based on thorough exploration of each of the distinct regions we visit. Hikes, field trips, and discussions will complement free time, during which campers will have the opportunity to rest, study, or work on their journals. Campers do not need to be expert birders but do need to have an interest in nature.

From Seattle, we will travel to the big forests, thundering waterfalls, and spectacular alpine habitats of the Cascade Mountains. Our activities will center on Mount Rainier National Park, one of the country's best known and revered national parks. Harboring a splendid combination of natural wonders, wildlife, and scenery, Mount Rainier is a dream for photographers, nature lovers, and hikers. Featured activities include hikes to spectacular Comet and Narada falls; a visit to the park's Paradise visitor center and a hike on the sublime Skyline Trail and Sunrise area for some world-class alpine scenery and spectacular wildflowers.

For the second half of camp, we will stay at Whidbey Island on the shores of majestic Puget Sound. Our base for four nights is the Casey Conference Center, a restored military post now operated for youth groups and students by Seattle Pacific University. Old Fort Casey is a perfect location from which to discover the diversity of habitats and accompanying birds of the Puget Sound region. Morning walks in the nearby forest and hedgerows will turn up many of the characteristic birds of the Pacific Northwest. Nearby Crockett Lake typically hosts a variety of migrant waterfowl and shorebirds. We will take afternoon excursions to Penn Cove and other coastal locations north of the camp to experience the near-shore marine environment. We will spend another day on the Olympic Peninsula at the foot of the magnificent Olympic Mountains, searching for various shorebirds and seabirds at Kah Tai Lagoon, Dungeness Bay, and Ediz Hook.



Campers should expect to see many of the special coastal and mountain birds and animals of the Pacific Northwest including Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Black Oystercatcher, Sooty Grouse, Marbled Murrelet, Rhinoceros Auklet, three species of sapsuckers, White-headed Woodpecker, Pacific-Slope Flycatcher, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Varied Thrush, Townsend's Warbler, Hoary Marmot, American Pika, and Mountain Goat. With much luck, White-tailed Ptarmigan and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch are also possibilities.

The Pacific Northwest offers so much more than good birding, however, and our time in nature should produce an interesting assortment of amphibians, butterflies, trees, and wildflowers.

Camp Cascades presents a rare chance for young naturalists to be in the field with their peers and with expert leaders. Together we will all come to learn and appreciate more fully the complex and beautiful ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest.

Camp Cascades starts and ends in Seattle (Sea-Tac).

July 23, Day 1: Arrival at Sea-Tac; transfer to Mount Rainier National Park. Campers should plan to arrive at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (airport code SEA) no later than 1:00 p.m. today. Upon arrival, please proceed directly to the baggage claim area where you will be met by camp supervisors who will be holding signs displaying the word “VENT” in large letters. Please wear your VENT name tag (provided with your participant packet) so you will be easily recognized as being part of our group. Any campers arriving in Seattle by other means, or who will already be there, should contact our office for further instructions for meeting the group.

Once we are all assembled, we will head southeast toward Mount Rainier. Much of the drive will be typical highway driving, but the final leg of the journey will see us traveling through small towns and farm country before arriving at the national park entrance. The drive will take about two and a half hours, and, depending on our departure time from Seattle, we will likely make a birding stop along the way.

NIGHT: Deputy Ranger Station, Packwood WA

July 24-26, Days 2-4: Mt. Rainier National Park:

Paradise. We'll spend the next three days exploring the Longmire-Paradise region of iconic Mt. Rainier National Park. On the first two days we'll immerse ourselves in the forests, rivers, and waterfalls that grace the lower slopes of the mountain while the third day will be dedicated to experiencing the grand beauty of Rainier's subalpine and alpine life-zones.

Designated in 1899 as our fifth national park, Mount Rainier is a place of monumental beauty. The massive, glacier-laden volcanic dome that dominates the alpine life-zone is, at 14,411 feet, the park's most obvious feature, but lower down the mountain, below the permanent snow and ice, lies a fabulous mosaic of ecosystems. Towering forests, roaring rivers, breathtaking waterfalls, tranquil mountain ponds, and flower spangled meadows together make up the remainder of the park's natural wonders. The community of Longmire and the Jackson Visitor Center are the centers of human activity in the southern part of the national park and serve as a gateway to the renowned Paradise region. Because of the multitude of habitats found according to elevation, there is great variety to the bird, mammal, and plant communities which all occur here in a relatively compact area. Among the plants, it is worth noting that early August is a sublime time to be in the high country, when expansive mountain meadows and trail sides are a riot of color. A sampling of the profusion of wildflowers we should see during our visit includes purples (asters, gentians, Jacob's ladders, daisies, phlox, and lupines), whites (heathers, saxifrage, Avalanche Lilies, and bistorts), reds (spiraeas, penstemons, paintbrush, and columbines) and yellows (arnicas, cinquefoils, Glacier Lilies, and Monkeyflowers).



Sooty Grouse © Michael O'Brien

Featured destinations and activities on this portion of the camp may include:

Comet Falls and Van Trump Park – This, our first activity of our first full day in the park, involves a round-trip hike of 5.8 miles to view spectacular Comet Falls and a series of flower festooned mountain meadows at Van Trump Park. Comet Falls is the feature sight of our hike, and for good reason. At 320 feet it is one of the park’s tallest cascades. Remarkably, the trail takes us to the base of the falls where water thunders down on bare rock only feet away! Beyond the falls, the trail ascends for another mile, reaching a series of beautiful mountain meadows studded with Subalpine Fir, Salmonberry, and a range of wildflowers. If the weather is clear we’ll be treated to views of glaciers, surrounding peaks and ridges, and, in the distance, some of the other peaks of the High Cascades. Although the marvelous scenery will be a constant distraction for us, we’ll be on the watch for a variety of birds typical of the region, including Sharp-shinned Hawk, Sooty Grouse, Pileated and Hairy woodpeckers, Common Raven, Varied Thrush, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak. We’ll watch for American Dippers where the trail crosses Van Trump Creek. At Van Trump Park we’ll keep our eyes on the sky for Northern Goshawks, which occasionally pass through on silent watch.

Narada Falls – On the second morning we’ll embark on a 4.5-mile hike from Narada Falls to the community of Longmire. The trailhead lies a short distance up the road from the campground and promises an easy downhill grade past three waterfalls and through the heart of a deep forest of Western Red Cedar, Douglas Fir, and Western Hemlock. Gorgeous Narada Falls, which starts this hike off with a bang, is very different than Comet Falls. What this cascade lacks in height, it more than makes up for in volume and width. The trail snakes down from the top of the falls along its eastern side, offering superb views of the broad apron at the top and water crashing on to the jumble of boulders at the bottom. Photographic opportunities abound, and we’ll take time to simply enjoy the beauty of the place and appreciate nature’s awesome power.



American Dipper © Michael O'Brien

Below the falls, the trail winds through the forest more or less in the direction of Longmire, along the way passing smaller Madcap and Carter falls. Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Pacific-slope and Hammond’s flycatchers, Steller’s Jay, Vaux’s Swift, Pacific Wren, American Dipper, Varied Thrush, Yellow-rumped and Townsend’s warblers, and Western Tanager are all species that may be seen along the way. At one point, the trail crosses the Nisqually River. From this perspective, Mt. Rainier looms massive and spectacular against the northern skyline.



Hoary Marmot eating lupines © Michael O'Brien

Skyline Trail – We will allot an entire day to hike the 7-mile Skyline Trail, possibly the greatest day-hike available in the entire national park, offering glaciers, snowfields, wildflowers, and the majestic mountain itself. This ambitious route provides sensational scenery in such staggering proportions, not to mention an abundance of wildlife along the way, that we will need most of the day to take it all in. Access to the trailhead is from the Jackson Visitor Center where a paved, looped path traverses beautiful, flower-filled meadows and stands of Subalpine Fir before rising above tree-line and reaching the base of Rainier’s permanent snowline. Weather cooperating, the views of the mountain are bigger-than-life. Every twist and turn of the path

reveal glorious scenery around us and on every horizon. The wildlife sightings possibilities are amazing. Among mammals, we have a chance to see American Pika, Cascades Golden-mantled Ground-Squirrel, Hoary Marmot, Black Bear, Mule Deer, Mountain Goat, and Coyote. The birds that occur here include Prairie Falcon, Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, Sooty Grouse, Canada Jay, Common Raven, Violet-green Swallow, American Pipit, Horned Lark, and Pine Grosbeak. At the top of the route, where the trail reaches true alpine country, we have at least a slim chance to see two of the region’s greatest avian prizes: White-tailed Ptarmigan and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch.

NIGHTS: Deputy Ranger Station, Packwood WA

July 27, Day 5: East of the Cascade Crest. A short excursion east of the Cascade Crest will take us to much drier “rain shadow” habitats reminiscent of the Southwest, and home to a very different suite of birds. We’ll first visit Oak Creek Wildlife Area, with its steep rocky slopes surrounding an oasis of Oregon Oaks. Species we may encounter here include White-throated Swift, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Canyon Wren, and Lazuli Bunting.

At nearby Wenatchee National Forest, open Ponderosa Pine Forest is home to White-headed Woodpecker and Williamson’s Sapsucker, along with Dusky Flycatcher, Western Bluebird, and abundant Western Wood-Pewees.

NIGHT: Deputy Ranger Station, Packwood WA

July 28, Day 6: Mt. Rainier National Park: Sunrise. For the final leg of our Mount Rainier experience, we will visit the park's east side, including the vicinity of the Sunrise complex.



White-tailed Ptarmigan © Michael O'Brien

The Sunrise region of Mt. Rainier National Park sits at a higher altitude than Paradise, which means that more of the park's subalpine and alpine regions are easier to access. The whole area is laced with a fantastic network of trails, each of which brings the visitor face-to-face with extraordinary natural wonders that include glaciers, tarns, forests, mountain meadows, and other views of Mount Rainier.

The centerpiece of our activities will be a hike to **Mount Fremont Lookout**. This 5.4-mile out-and-back takes off from the Sunrise Visitor Center, ascends to Sourdough Ridge, and then angles northwest along the side of Mount Fremont, culminating at a fire lookout at an elevation of 7,200. The view from the lookout is supreme with arresting views available of Mount Rainier, Skyscraper Mountain, and Grand Park. At this elevation we are in prime country for observing alpine species such as White-tailed Ptarmigan, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, and Mountain Goat.

NIGHT: White Pass Village Inn

July 29, Day 7: Depart Mount Rainier; transfer to Whidbey Island. After some morning birding at White Pass, we will depart the mountains and head northwest to Whidbey Island, a drive of about four hours. From the town of Mukilteo, we will catch a ride to Whidbey Island aboard a state ferry that services this stretch of Puget Sound. The ride will take about 20 minutes and provides an exciting experience, especially for anyone who has never before ridden an automobile ferry. There will be time to visit the outdoor passenger deck and look for our first birds of the trip. The ever-present Glaucous-winged Gulls are to be expected along with a smattering of Pelagic Cormorants and Pigeon Guillemots.

We will arrive at Fort Casey in the late afternoon in time to settle in and relax a little after a day of traveling. Time permitting, we may do some sea watching from the bluff at Fort Casey.

NIGHT: Casey Conference Center, Whidbey Island



Sea watching at Fort Casey © Louise Zemaitis

July 30, Day 8: Exploring Fort Casey; afternoon at Penn Cove, Fort Ebbe, and Swantown. Situated at the top of Puget Sound, facing the Straits of Juan de Fuca, the Casey Conference Center will be our home for the next three days. Fort Casey is an old military post now owned and operated for students and youth groups by Seattle Pacific University. We will stay in one of the buildings on the property that offers full privacy including a kitchen where we will prepare our own meals (everybody is expected to help!).

On this, our first morning, we will explore the adjacent woods and fields starting right after breakfast. A trail through an older growth forest of Grand Fir, Douglas Fir, and Western Hemlock will provide a perfect introduction to the local forest type. West Coast specialty birds to look for include California Quail, Pacific-Slope Flycatcher, Hutton's Vireo, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Black-headed Grosbeak in the woods, and Bushtits and Bewick's Wrens in dense vegetation. We might also encounter Pacific Wrens and Pileated Woodpeckers, or perhaps a roosting Great Horned Owl at old Ft. Casey. Red Crossbills are common some years and occasionally fly overhead.



Chestnut-backed Chickadee © Michael O'Brien

Nearby are "birdy" hedgerows and mixtures of deciduous and coniferous woods—not to mention the old battlements to explore at adjacent Ft. Casey. Other birds we may encounter are Band-tailed Pigeon, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Black-capped Chickadee, and our first Steller's Jays.

The Fort Casey area can also be good for mammals, and we will likely encounter the "Columbian" Mule Deer, which displays an all-black tail above, and Douglas's Squirrel, or Chickaree as it is known locally. Interestingly, the bizarre banana slug, a specialty of the wet forests of the west coast, occurs throughout these damp woods and we will certainly make an effort to locate these distinct creatures.

We will spend the afternoon exploring more of Whidbey Island, visiting some sites between Fort Casey and the town of Oak Harbor in the center of the island. A few miles to the north is Penn Cove, a deep-water bay that attracts Common Loons, waterfowl, and a variety of gulls and terns. In some years, Red-necked Grebes and Surf and White-winged scoters may be found over-summering. Heermann's and California gulls are common post-breeding visitors, and there are sometimes a few Short-billed and Bonaparte's gulls around. This area is also a good place to study Glaucous-winged x Western gull hybrids, which are common here. On the pebbly shore at the west end of the lagoon we may locate migrating shorebirds such as Greater Yellowlegs, Black Turnstone, or even an early Surfbird. Waterfowl are often numerous in the small ponds fringing the cove. Careful searching may turn up Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead, American Wigeon, or Green-winged Teal.



Red-breasted Sapsucker © Michael O'Brien

Other likely destinations include Fort Ebey State Park, where towering Grand and Douglas firs, and even a few Sitka Spruce, are home to confiding flocks of Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Brown Creepers; Swantown Marsh and Hastie Lake, which often teem with other eclipse-plumage ducks that will test our identification skills, as well as various migrant shorebirds. This evening, we will take time to review our experiences to date and maybe spend the after-dinner hours enjoying a sunset over Crockett Marsh.

NIGHT: Casey Conference Center, Whidbey Island

July 31, Day 9: South Whidbey State Park; afternoon at Fort Casey and Crockett Marsh. We will have another full day to explore the diversity of habitats and ecosystems that make Whidbey Island such a rich place.

Our destination for the morning is South Whidbey State Park, located a mere five miles from Fort Casey, and one of the island's true natural treasures. A 348-acre tract of old growth forest serves as the park's centerpiece, where ancient Red Cedars, Western Hemlocks, and Douglas Firs tower over a garden-like understory forest of Red Alder, moss-covered Big Leaf Maple, and a collection of smaller plants and trees including Red Elderberry, Salmonberry, Stinging Nettle, and a variety of ferns.

Our primary objective is experiencing the special qualities of an old-growth forest. We'll walk the park's two deep-forest trails, the two-mile Forest Discovery Trail and the mile-and-a-half Wilbert Trail, which takes hikers through wooded uplands, down to bubbling streams and into the depths of the darkened forest, where ferns and rhododendrons thrive. We'll be on the watch for many of the birds that are typical of the woodland domains of the Pacific Northwest including Band-tailed Pigeon, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Pacific Wren, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. A forest as expansive as this is also a good place to search for a variety of species that are less common around Fort Casey, such as Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hutton's Vireo, Red Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak.



Western Sandpiper © Michael O'Brien

We'll return to the Casey Conference Center for lunch and some free time before resuming our activities later in the day. Around mid-afternoon we will dedicate time to searching the beautiful rocky shoreline and offshore waters bordering the west side of the camp. It is not uncommon to find Marbled Murrelets and Pigeon Guillemots

feeding and floating offshore, while farther out, Common Murres and Common Loons are occasionally visible. Harlequin Ducks and White-winged Scoters are often seen bobbing in the surf beneath the steep cliffs around us.



Pigeon Guillemots © Michael O'Brien

We'll then head to shallow Crockett Marsh on the east side of the camp for early migrant shorebirds and resident marsh birds. Baird's, Pectoral, Western, Least, and Semipalmated sandpipers (the last more uncommon here) can be closely compared, as the first juveniles should be arriving to join the worn, breeding plumaged adults that preceded them south. We should also be able to closely compare both species of yellowlegs and dowitchers in various plumages. Northern Harriers and Bald Eagles nest here, and their hunting activities can often be observed. Peregrine Falcons are occasionally seen strafing the shorebird flocks looking for a meal. We will also take time to investigate the densest areas of the marsh, the preferred domain of Virginia Rail and Marsh Wren.

NIGHT: Casey Conference Center, Whidbey Island

August 1, Day 10: Olympic Peninsula: Today we catch an early ferry across Admiralty Inlet to Port Townsend for a full day on the Olympic Peninsula. The ferry crossing is always birdy with lots of Rhinoceros Auklets, Pigeon Guillemots, and Pelagic Cormorants crossing in front of the bow.

Arriving on the Olympic Peninsula is always an exciting event. The lush, second growth coniferous forests lining the roadsides are composed primarily of Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, and Western Hemlock. Overall, the landscape across the north end of the peninsula is one of thick, dark forests interspersed with grassy pastures, stands of Red Maples, and quaint country homes. We'll kick off our activities with a visit Kah Tai Lagoon where Virginia Rails are often present, along with an assortment of ducks, and sometimes Pied-billed Grebe. From here it's on to Anderson Lake State Park, a 476-acre tract of woodland surrounding Anderson Lake. Western Red Cedar, Douglas Fir, and Red Alder mix with freshwater marshes to form habitats rich in birds and other wildlife. This lightly visited state park is often good for Red-breasted Sapsucker and a mix of other species including Rufous Hummingbird, Vaux's Swift, Cedar Waxwing, Townsend's and Wilson's warblers, and Western Tanager.



Black Oystercatcher © Michael O'Brien

Heading west, we'll visit Dungeness Bay, where several view points offer quality scenery and prime opportunities for a wide variety of migrant shorebirds. We'll also visit Ediz Hook, just outside Port Angeles. Essentially a manmade barrier against the open sea, Ediz Hook is a reinforced peninsula of rock, sand, and pavement that protects the nearshore waters of Port Angeles and serves as a base for the U.S. Coast Guard. The short drive out the length of the peninsula is essential for the visiting birder, as an interesting assortment of birds can be present at any time of year. During our visit, we are likely to encounter an array of waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, alcids, and possibly a few loons or grebes. Some species of particular interest here are Harlequin Duck, Pelagic and Brandt's cormorants, Black Oystercatcher, Black

Turnstone, Western Gull (here at about the northern limit of its range), Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Marbled Murrelet, and Rhinoceros Auklet. Less common species such as Surfbird, Wandering Tattler, and Black-legged Kittiwake have all been recorded on past Camp Cascades, so we'll keep our eyes open for any of these rarer possibilities.

NIGHT: Casey Conference Center, Whidbey Island

August 2, Day 11: Return to Sea-Tac. We'll have another full morning exploring Whidbey Island and environs. In the early afternoon, we'll begin the drive back to Sea-Tac. Our chosen route back to "civilization" will depend on our timing, but we expect to arrive at the hotel by 6:00 p.m.

NIGHT: August 3: Sea-Tac Airport Hotel, Seattle

August 3, Day 12: Departing flights home. Campers will be escorted to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) with plenty of time to check in for departing flights home. All campers should plan to depart Sea-Tac no later than 12:00 p.m. today.

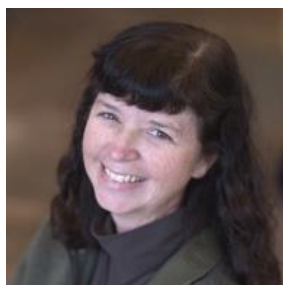
CAMP SIZE/AGE LIMIT: Camp Cascades is designed for boys and girls ages 14 through 18 who have an interest in birds and natural history. The camp will be limited to 14 participants.

TOUR LEADER(S): Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis



Michael O'Brien is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has a passionate interest in bird vocalizations and field identification, and a serious addiction to migration and nocturnal birding. His travels have taken him throughout North and Central America and beyond. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*, and is primary author of *Larkwire*, an online and handheld application for learning bird

sounds. His illustrations have been widely published in books and field guides, including the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the new Peterson field guides. Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies, leads several "Birds & Butterflies" tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis, and is coordinator of the Cape May Butterfly Count.



Louise Zemaitis is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey where she is a popular field trip leader teaching birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory. She also enjoys leading birding groups and lecturing at birding festivals and is known for her enthusiasm for all natural history subjects. Louise and her husband, Michael O'Brien, have been guiding young birders at birding events and conferences for many years. In addition to leading, Louise is field coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May, served as compiler of the Cape May Christmas

Bird Count for over 20 years, and owns Swallowtail Studio in West Cape May. An honors graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art, she enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published. Her proudest accomplishment has been the raising of her two sons, Bradley, a biologist and artist, and Alec, a library scientist and musician.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: The parents, or legal guardian, of all camp participants are **required** to purchase emergency/medical evacuation insurance for his/her son or daughter for this program, and will be asked to sign and return to the VENT office a waiver stating that this has been done. Such insurance should be available from any insurance company which provides trip cancellation coverage. Please refer to the **Trip Cancellation & Medical Evacuation Insurance** section of this itinerary for more information.

CAMP POLICIES: Summer youth camps operated by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours are designed to expose camp participants to the treasures of the natural world. The settings for VENT youth camps are selected for their biological richness and natural beauty. The staff of the camps designs programs that camp attendees will find exciting and educational. It is our expectation that campers will have the kinds of experiences that create memories that last for a lifetime. The success of our camps depends on the leadership and organization of the staff, but the level of enjoyment that an individual camper achieves will depend on his ability to demonstrate a willingness to cooperate and share. **Over more than 30 years of offering youth nature camps, a camp participant has never been sent home. In order to maintain a perfect record, campers must adhere to the following rules:**

In order to maintain a perfect record, campers must adhere to the following rules:

There will be no usage of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products permitted. We take a zero-tolerance approach.

- Any disputes that arise between campers will be mediated by staff members. Fighting will not be tolerated.

- Cooperation is essential. Every day brings a host of responsibilities to the staff members, from preparing meals to cleaning camp sites, vehicles, ice chests, and cooking supplies. Campers will be required periodically to help with these endeavors. Non-cooperation is not an option.
- Damage or destruction of the property of others is strictly prohibited and is considered grounds for dismissal.

Finally, Campers will NOT be permitted to attend a VENT Camp unless they, along with their parents or legal guardians read, sign and return the following documents. These documents will be included in materials the Camper will receive after registering:

1) To the Applicant: This document, signed by the Camp Cascades participant, certifies that the camper has read and understands the rules and regulations of the camp.

2) Release and Assumption of Risk: This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that participation in birding camp activities involves some degree of risk of injury from, but not limited to, the hazards of traveling, hiking in various types of terrain, accident, illness, and the forces of nature. A parent or guardian's signature holds VENT harmless from any and all liability. VENT is also granted permission to seek medical assistance for an ill or injured camper.

3) Tetanus Shot Certification Document: This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that the prospective birding camp participant is up to date with tetanus vaccination. Campers must provide proof of vaccination.

4) Acknowledgement of Receipt of Camp Packing List: This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges receipt of a packing list provided by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours.

5) Emergency/Medical Evacuation Insurance: This document signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges purchase of insurance that covers emergency evacuation and medical coverage.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the camp is **\$3,999** per person in double occupancy from Seattle. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 12, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and leadership services provided by the camp staff.

The fee does not include airfare from your home to Seattle and return, airport departure taxes, airline baggage fees or special assistance charges, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. **Also not included is the camping equipment (tent, sleeping bag and pad, and eating utensils) which must be brought by each camper.**

Partial camp scholarships MAY be available through the American Birding Association (ABA) and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours and awarded to campers who couldn't otherwise attend. Please contact the ABA and VENT for more information.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at <https://ventbird.com>) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second

deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days (February 23, 2025) prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Cancellation by Participant:

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants’ protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

<u>If participant cancels:</u>	<u>Participant’s refund will be:</u>
180 days or more before departure date	Participant’s deposit minus \$250*
179 to 151 days before departure date	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded
150 days or less before departure date	No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

Cancellation by VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a

bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, primary medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit:

<https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip cost in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

In line with the decision made by the federal government (including the CDC), Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a **Coronavirus FAQ** page on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ** page at the following link:

https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

BAGGAGE: As space in the vans is limited, campers should pack as carefully and efficiently as possible. Please avoid bringing any unnecessary items that may take up more room. We require that campers pack their clothing and equipment in a pliable, middle to large size duffel bag, and perhaps a smaller bag for camping gear. Campers may wish to bring a carry-on or other small travel bag for toiletries, personal items, or valuables. PLEASE DO NOT BRING HARD-SIDED SUITCASES OR FRAME BACKPACKS. **Campers who bring excess or oversized luggage may be required to ship some of their luggage home at the beginning of camp.**

The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

CLIMATE: The lofty ridges of the north-south running Cascade Range divides Washington into two very climate regimes. West of the Continental Divide, temperatures are moderated by the marine influence of Puget Sound. Summers are warm, but not hot, while winters can be wet and cold, but not frigid. East of the mountains, where considerably less precipitation falls, conditions are generally dry with cold winters and warm to hot summers.

While Washington is often associated with gloomy, overcast skies and rain, summer is a delightful time to visit in most parts of the state. For the first half of the camp, we will be in the area of Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula northwest of Seattle. Beautiful weather is expected, with clear to partly cloudy skies and daytime temperatures into the upper 70s (°F). Nighttime and morning temperatures may drop into the upper 50s. Precipitation is unlikely, but campers should be prepared for the possibility of rain if the summer is an unusually wet one.

Moving into the central Cascades for the second part of the trip, we will likely experience conditions similar to that of the coast, with plenty of sunshine and clear to partly cloudy skies. The days are likelier to be a bit warmer than on the coast and the nights a little cooler. Daytime temperatures could range into the 80s and the nights in the low 50s. But campers must be aware that weather fronts rolling in off the Pacific are possible in the late summer, and can produce heavy overcast, steady rain, and even mountain snow; some hikes above treeline could experience temperatures into the low 40s. Though such weather is highly unlikely, campers need to come to camp prepared.

CLOTHING: Summer is a pleasant time of year for most of Washington State. Short periods of rain are certainly possible, but mild, dry conditions are expected through much of the trip. **However, campers must be prepared for a wide range of conditions!** Our lengthier hikes in the Cascades could be cool-to-cold if the skies are overcast due to unsettled weather.

Campers will want to pack clothes associated with warm weather generally, yet be prepared for night and morning temperatures in the low 40s. Campers should pack several t-shirts, but making sure to avoid white and other bright colors. Long-sleeved t-shirts will come in handy for evenings and the early morning hours. Shorts will be fine, even preferred many days, but you must also pack a couple pair of long pants for chillier weather. Jeans are acceptable, but are not as comfortable as cotton or other lightweight materials. Long johns are essential for cold-weather hikes, and may be a welcome item for sleeping on chilly nights.

In addition to lightweight cotton socks, campers are advised to bring several pairs of socks made of heavier material, like wool, for maximum comfort on extended hikes, as well as thin liner socks to reduce friction and help prevent blisters. Light gloves are also essential for hiking in chilly weather. **The importance of having warm clothing should not be underestimated!**

A hat for protection from the sun is essential. A wide-brimmed hat is best, but campers should bring a baseball cap at the very least. As we will spend the majority of our time based out of a bungalow-type building (on the coast) and camping (inland), laundry service will not be available. Campers should be prepared for a week-and-a-half in the field without being able to wash clothes.

All campers should bring a heavy fleece, sweater, or packable insulated jacket for cool nights and mornings, or exposed mountain hikes. Campers should also bring some sort of sturdy waterproof shell jacket as an outer layer for hiking in inclement weather. For sleeping, campers should bring warm sleepwear, such as long johns or flannel pajamas, to ensure warmth is maintained while spending nights in tents. A swimsuit might come in handy if weather conditions and time permit a dip in a swimming hole.

FOOTWEAR: Campers should bring a good fitting, broken-in pair of hiking boots or trail shoes. There are several lengthy hikes planned, and campers will have a much better time if they do not have to cope with sore feet or blisters. Another pair of lightweight walking shoes will provide more comfort for most other situations. Some campers may wish to bring sandals for use during down time, but these are not recommended for any outings. For longer hikes, it is highly recommended that campers wear liner socks under their hiking socks; such liner socks go a long way toward preventing blisters.

CONDITIONS: A typical day will see us out bright and early to take full advantage of the long summer days. We will stay busy and active up to lunch, with most morning activities centering on a feature hike or area exploration. After lunch we'll take a break, during which time campers will have periods of down time to either relax or explore their surroundings in small groups. We will go out again in the mid-afternoon for either short hikes or vehicle trips to nearby areas. Since darkness does not fully descend until after 9:00 p.m., there will be post-dinner activities some days.

Meal times will usually fall within these time frames:

Breakfast:	6:00–7:00 a.m.
Lunch:	12:00–1:00 p.m.
Dinner:	6:00–7:00 p.m.

Accommodations at Fort Casey will be in a private large house owned and operated by the Casey Conference Center. The building consists of several large bedrooms with enough beds to accommodate 17 people. Meals will be cooked in the on-site kitchen.

We will camp for six nights between two sites in Mt. Rainier National Park in the central Cascades. Showers will not be available during our camping nights, but will be during our night at White Pass. The trip will conclude with one hotel night in the community of Sea-Tac, south of Seattle and a short distance from the airport.

Hiking is an important activity on this trip, and campers should expect to participate in day-hikes of varying lengths, some of which exceed five miles. The most challenging hike will be moderately difficult on an occasionally steep trail. The following hikes and corresponding distances should provide camp participants and their parents with information on what to expect in terms of physical requirements. Campers should expect to log up to 29 miles on foot.

Hike:	Distance (round-trip):	Difficulty:
Forest Discovery Trail	2 miles	Easy
Wilbert Trail	1.5 miles	Easy
Comet Falls and Van Trump Park	5.8 miles	Upper/moderate
Narada Falls	4.5 miles	Easy
Skyline Trail	7 miles	Moderate
Sunrise Rim	4.9 miles	Low moderate
Mt. Fremont Lookout	5.4 miles	Moderate

All vehicle travel will be in 15-passenger touring vans. We will make a round-trip visit to the Olympic Peninsula aboard the Washington state ferry system.

Campers will be encouraged to call home on a regular basis and keep their families informed of their activities (but note that cell reception is lacking in much of the Cascades). However, the use of cell phones should be limited to personal down time away from the group. **Use of cell phones (other than for photography or audio recording) during any group activity, either in the field or during checklist sessions, is prohibited.**

EQUIPMENT: Campers should pack a binocular in good repair, along with a belt pack or day-pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, two water bottles, notepads, extra clothing, cameras etc.). Your camp supervisors will have spotting scopes, but if you have one and wish to bring it, feel free to do so. **Two** one-quart water bottles are essential for lengthier hikes. Having one Hydro-flask type vacuum-insulated bottle may be desirable to keep drinks cold. Bicycle-type bottles are not a good choice, as they tend to leak, and may contain Bisphenol-A (BPA).

Other items to bring include a camera, towel, and flashlight and/or headlamp. Sunscreen is required for a trip to Washington in the summer, as the sun's rays are intense in the mountains and can easily burn exposed skin. A battery-powered travel alarm clock is also recommended. Other items to consider are personal toiletries and medications. Campers should bring a notebook and pens for field notes and field sketches. Some optional items are your favorite snack foods and extra batteries. Biting insects are not a problem on this trip, so insect repellent is not recommended. **Please refer to the packing list, which will be included in materials the Camper will receive after registering for a more complete listing of items to bring to camp.**

Note: As it is our intent to be immersed in the natural world, we prefer that you do not bring portable music devices, electronic games, etc. to camp.

A note about Cameras: Many campers may wish to bring a camera, and it is perfectly fine to do so. However, excessive camera gear is not appropriate for this camp, and **bulky, hard-framed camera cases are not permitted.** The camp experience is about being in nature and observing wildlife. An aggressive pursuit of photographs can get in the way of this, and is not appropriate. **Participants whose primary objective is photography should not sign up for this camp.**

HEALTH: We want your time at Camp Cascades to be as rewarding and memorable as possible. To ensure this comes to pass, we offer the following information and suggestions for health-related issues:

- Staff members are certified to perform standard first aid and CPR and carry an assortment of first aid supplies.
- Those campers on prescribed medication should remember to pack **it in carry-on luggage.**

- **VENT requires that all campers be up to date with his/her tetanus shot. Campers will not be permitted to attend a VENT Youth Camp unless the tetanus shot certification document has been returned to the VENT office, signed and dated by a parent or legal guardian.**
- Due to potentially high summer temperature, campers will always be provided with plenty of cool drinks in the forms of water, Gatorade, and juice.
- Staff members will do all the cooking, though campers may sometimes be enlisted to help with prep and cleanup. Campers should expect healthy meals that are low in fat, salt, and sugar, but high in protein, starch and vitamins. Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables will be available.

**** Campers with special dietary needs should notify our office upon registration.**

VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19> for our official statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of our tours. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

Insect Repellents – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- **DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide):** A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- **Picaridin:** A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- **Herbal insect repellents:** Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of

the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

TIME: Washington is on Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) during the summer months.

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

The bookstores of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, www.laaudubon.org and Tucson Audubon Society, www.tucsonaudubon.org also carry a fine inventory of books on birding and natural history. The bookstores can be accessed through their respected websites.

Bird Identification: Campers may bring any of the following field guides as primary resources for bird identification. All these guides adequately cover the birdlife of the region.

Kaufman, Kenn. *Kaufman Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000.

National Geographic Society. *Field Guide to North American Birds*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 7th edition, 2017.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf Publishing Company, 2014. Second edition.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Western Birds*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. This is a slimmed down regional version of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, second edition.

Mammals: Any of these three guides adequately covers the mammal life of the region. However, there are some key differences between them. The Princeton guide offers the most concise, easiest to use field

guide, with many well-illustrated plates featuring most of the recent taxonomic changes. A major drawback to the guide is a complete lack of accompanying text. The Kaufman guide is perhaps a better guide in that the color plates include good species accounts. Like the birding guide, Kaufman employs the use of digitally enhanced images rather than true illustrations to display each species. The Reid guide is the newest and probably best field guide of the lot. It includes the most up-to-date taxonomy available to casual observers and easily the best text descriptions. Some might consider the lack of color plates a drawback.

Kays, Roland W. and Wilson, Don E. ***Mammals of North America***. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009 (second edition).

Bowers, Nora, Rick Bowers, and Kenn Kaufman. ***Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America***. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 2007 (second edition).

Reid, Fiona A. ***Mammals of North America***. Peterson Field Guides. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 4th edition, 2006.

Butterflies:

Brock, Jim P. and Kenn Kaufman. ***Kaufman Focus Guides: Butterflies of North America***. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 2003. This is the best all-around North American butterfly identification guide currently available.

Glassberg, Jeffrey. ***Butterflies through Binoculars: The West***. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Reptiles:

Stebbins, Robert C. ***Peterson Field Guides: Western Reptiles and Amphibians***. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1985.

Trees:

Petrides, George A. and Olivia. ***Peterson Field Guides: Western Trees***. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1992.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect upon publication, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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