



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

COLORADO GROUSE

APRIL 2–12, 2026

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Sharp-Tailed Grouse © Erik Bruhnke

Five species of lekking grouse inhabit the prairies and northern valleys of North America—the Greater and Gunnison sage-grouse, the Sharp-tailed Grouse, and the Greater and Lesser prairie-chickens. All are noted for their spectacular mating displays, and all can be exceedingly difficult to find away from their “leks” or display grounds. This tour will focus on observing these birds and their mating rituals. From the sandhills of western Kansas to the high sagebrush parklands of the mountains of Colorado, we’ll be spectators at some of the most fascinating displays in the bird world, such as the “booming” of the prairie-chickens, the wild dance of the Sharp-tails, and the strutting of the huge sage-grouse. We also seek out

more secretive denizens of Colorado, the Dusky Grouse and White-tailed Ptarmigan, but these birds are always a challenge and have been missed.

There are more birds to see in Colorado at this season than grouse. Possibilities will include Golden Eagle; Ferruginous, Rough-legged and Swainson's hawks; Prairie Falcon; Sandhill Crane; Mountain Plover; Lewis's Woodpecker; Mountain Bluebird; Chestnut-collared and Thick-billed longspurs; as well as a host of waterfowl, shorebirds, and prairie and montane specialties. Mammal viewing should also be excellent, and the scenery will be breathtaking. Although the tour will require considerable daytime driving, we'll make frequent stops.



April 2, Day 1: Arrival in Denver. Participants should make arrangements to arrive today and take the complimentary shuttle to our hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. We will gather early this evening for a short orientation followed by dinner.

NIGHT: Courtyard Denver Airport, Denver

April 3, Day 2: Depart Denver; Birding Loveland Pass and Silverthorne; Drive to Gunnison. This morning, we will meet in the hotel lobby at 6:00 a.m. to depart for the west side of town where we will have breakfast. We will then head into the mountains for our first attempt to see the White-tailed Ptarmigan at Loveland Pass at 12,000 feet. Nearby in Silverthorne we will hunt Rosy-Finches and other high elevation birds before heading southwest to Gunnison.

NIGHT: Holiday Inn Express, Gunnison



White-tailed Ptarmigan © Erik Bruhnke

April 4, Day 3: Gunnison Area; Drive to Montrose. A pre-dawn start will take us to the first of our five grouse leks, this one for the recently described and declining Gunnison Sage-Grouse. With its strange filoplume crest, more prominently banded tail, smaller size than the Greater Sage-Grouse, and tiny range (basically restricted to southwestern Colorado), this new species has instantly become one of the most endangered birds of North America. Though this lek is not close, we should have scope views of the Gunnison Sage-Grouse in their outrageous display. After the morning display by the sage-grouse, we will have an opportunity for additional birding throughout the day. Some years we have gone back east into the mountains for a chance for rosy finches, grosbeaks, and on rare occasions, American

Three-toed Woodpecker; While other years we have birded directly west towards Montrose, visiting several waterways home to a wide array of waterfowl and scattered gulls among various other sightings. An afternoon visit to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park may ensue with the day's short drive, for a brief chance for Dusky Grouse (which we will also be looking for with greater time allotted, in the morning to follow). Note: Viewing the Gunnison Sage-Grouse will be from a blind and we will be inside from around 5:00 a.m. until the grouse leave (sometimes not until after 8:00 a.m.)

NIGHT: Hampton Inn, Montrose

April 5, Day 4: Montrose to Grand Junction. The spectacular Black Canyon of the Gunnison will be a wonderful backdrop as we survey this little-known national park for the hulking Dusky Grouse along the roads, in the campgrounds, and scenic overlooks, with the Dusky Grouse being a focus species of our morning. Fox Sparrow, Woodhouses's Scrub-Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, and Spotted Towhee make up just a few of the additional potential birds while visiting the national park. We will then bird our way up to Grand Junction while taking in the scenic splendor of the arid canyonlands. Lewis's Woodpeckers may be flycatching from ancient gnarly cottonwoods along the way.



Brown-capped Rosy-Finch © Brian Gibbons

NIGHT: Holiday Inn Express and Suites, Grand Junction

April 6, Day 5: Grand Junction to Craig. In the morning, we will explore the red rock canyonlands of Colorado National Monument searching for Pinyon Jays, Juniper Titmouse and Black-throated Sparrows among the junipers and pinyon pines of this beautiful, stark landscape. The morning's visit to the Colorado National Monument is often a tour-highlight experience for many participants over the years, noting the special scenery we explore and bird among. While challenging to find on a single morning, we will also be in the realm of the introduced Chukar. Perhaps we'll have some luck with this species.

NIGHT: Best Western Plus Deer Park Hotel and Suites, Craig,

April 7, Day 6: Craig to Walden. Another early morning will have us starting out at a Sharp-tailed Grouse lek. Although smaller and less physically imposing, they have the most arresting dance. With tails held high, wings bowed out to the sides, and feet propelling them in circles, they resemble wind-up toys run amok. Imitated by the Plains Indians, this dance is an integral part of spring on the northern prairies. In the rolling grasslands nearby, Sandhill Cranes and Western Meadowlarks may enliven the scene. Along the way to Walden, we will search a few spruce forest areas for American Three-toed Woodpecker, Pine Grosbeak and Clark's Nutcrackers before continuing towards Walden. After crossing Rabbit Ears Pass, we'll descend into North Park, a region of sweeping vistas where snow-covered mountains provides a backdrop for marshy meadows and mint-green sagebrush hills. Sage Thrashers dart between shrubs; Mountain Bluebirds add dazzling touches of color to the landscape; and in some years, roadside snowbanks or local feeders may hold lingering rosy-finches. Raptors (particularly Golden Eagle, Rough-legged and Swainson's hawks, but also an occasional Prairie Falcon) should be evident. Mammal possibilities for the day include Moose, Pronghorn, Mule Deer, and White-tailed Prairie Dog.

NIGHT: North Park Inn and Suites, Walden

April 8, Day 7: Walden to Fort Collins. Today we will travel from Walden to Fort Collins, but only after we have watched, the spectacular and impressive Greater Sage-Grouse on their lek. We will also spend time searching through the piles of birds at Walden Reservoir; fifteen species of ducks are possible. The grebes, shorebirds and local Bald Eagles will keep us busy for a couple of hours. We'll spend any available time searching for other birds in the foothills, including various raptors, Sandhill Cranes, Green-tailed and Spotted towhees, and Vesper Sparrows. Cameron Pass will afford a final chance for any boreal forest birds



Greater Sage-Grouse display © Brian Gibbons

we've not tracked down yet. Pine Grosbeak, Cassin's Finch, Canada Jay, and American Three-toed Woodpeckers are all possibilities if we have good weather. As we descend Poudre Canyon towards Fort Collins, we will encounter stunning scenery along the Poudre River, where dippers roam and Common Mergansers nest.

NIGHT: Hilton Garden Inn, Fort Collins

April 9, Day 8: Fort Collins to Wray. We will enjoy one of our later starts this morning before we head east to the Pawnee National Grassland, where we will be looking for Ferruginous and Swainson's Hawks among the fields. With some searching, our chances are quite good for finding Mountain Plover at select fields, as well as Chestnut-collared and Thick-billed longspurs, all in high breeding plumage. The rolling plains of shortgrass prairie with its tiny prickly pear cactus will contrast with the rugged mountains we've just departed. The vast Pawnee National Grasslands has a charm unto itself, explored well on our tour, including flora and fauna alike.

NIGHT: Cobblestone Inn and Suites, Wray

April 10, Day 9: Wray to Oakley, Kansas. We will hear the Greater Prairie-Chickens before we can see them. On cue the males start cooing in unison; whoops, cackles, and foot stomping ensue. With the morning sun, the golden-orange air sacs of the males glow with a lavender rim. With pinnae erect, the



Greater Prairie-Chicken in display © Brian Gibbons

males display for any females that may wander through the lek. After this spectacular morning show we will head southeast, birding our way into Kansas for our second prairie-chicken, the Lesser.

NIGHT: Best Western El Quartejeo Inn and Suites, Scott City

April 11, Day 10: Oakley to Denver. Our final early morning will find us on a Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek. While they look similar when not displaying, the calls are different. More gurgling pops and the smaller brick red air sacs distinguish the Lesser from the Greater. They are a small and spectacular species! After this last dance we will make our way back to Denver, searching along the way for any missing prairie birds like Mountain Plover, Burrowing Owl, and longspurs. It's a day of vast possibilities as our tour concludes. We will have our final group dinner and checklist session at the hotel.

NIGHT: Courtyard Denver Airport, Denver

April 12, Day 11: Departure for Home. Participants may make arrangements to leave Denver anytime today.

TOUR LEADERS: Erik Bruhnke and Kevin Burke



Erik Bruhnke has loved birds since he was a child looking at chickadees. In 2008 he graduated from Northland College in Wisconsin with a Natural Resources degree. Erik taught field ornithology at Northland College for three semesters. Between 2009 and 2014, he spent his summers conducting field research focused on breeding bird transects in Upper Michigan, point counts for a breeding bird atlas in Minnesota and Wisconsin's Northwoods, vegetation and breeding bird surveys throughout wind farms in North Dakota's prairie potholes, and cavity-nesting surveys in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon. A devoted raptor nerd, he is drawn to hawkwatches. He worked as an interpreter for six seasons at Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in Duluth, Minnesota; counted migrating raptors at the Corpus Christi HawkWatch in Texas in 2015; and was the 2016, 2017, and 2018 hawk counter at

the Cape May Hawkwatch in New Jersey. Erik's wildlife photography has won national awards, and he's written for the American Birding Association's Birder's Guide, BirdWatching magazine, and Bird Watcher's Digest. When not leading birding tours, Erik often leads field trips and speaks at birding festivals. He also enjoys hiking, kayaking, cross-country skiing, and just being out in the snow. In his free time he loves to cook and bake.



Kevin Burke is originally from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. He grew up running around in the woods and trails of Shenandoah National Park. His family spent many summers camping and hiking in the park. One of Kevin's favorite activities was jumping in the river and turning over every rock to see what was underneath. This eventually earned him the nickname "Hellgrammite Kid." This early exposure to the natural world has vaulted into a lifelong obsession with the outdoors. Kevin was introduced to birding while spending summers in Rhode Island at his grandmother's house. She would point out all the feeder birds and help him identify them. These early encounters helped foster a love for birds.

An early Ornithology class at Hocking College in Ohio rekindled his love for birds. He has been birding every day since. He went on to get a Bachelor of Science in Ecotourism and Conservation Ecology from the University of Idaho. Kevin has been involved with leading bird trips in some capacity for almost 20 years. He has led birding trips all throughout the United States,

Costa Rica, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic. His birding journeys have also taken him to some spectacular locations such as Portugal, Colombia, The Bahamas, and Canada. This is truly a lifelong obsession. He currently resides with his family in Hendersonville, North Carolina. Kevin’s wife and two kids also enjoy birding. They have fun kayaking, hiking, and camping in the mountains that surround their home. One of their favorite activities is jumping on the paddle board and kayaks and leisurely floating the French Broad River near their house.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 12 participants.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$5,885** per person in double occupancy from Denver. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to dinner on Day 10, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare between your home and Denver, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$850**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. We accept MasterCard and Visa. If you choose not to register online, you may pay your deposit by credit card, check, money order, or bank transfer. If not paying online, or by card, your tour space will be held for 10 days pending receipt of your deposit.

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 (November 3, 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 from the date of participant tour cancellation, 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 from the date of participant tour cancellation, 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 comprehensive **Ripcord** plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Ripcord

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; 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):

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.

About MedjetAssist

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company's primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: [Medjet.com/VentBird](https://medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

NOTE: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is an equal opportunity service provider and authorized permittee of the Pawnee National Grassland, Colorado National Monument and Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park.

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. Per-person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air

arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline

INTERNET AVAILABILITY: Wi-Fi is offered at all hotels on this tour.

BAGGAGE: As space in the vehicles is limited, please restrict your luggage to one medium-sized bag and one carry-on bag.

CLIMATE: Temperatures will range from very warm in the lowland prairies to very cold in the mountains. Daytime highs in the plains could reach the mid-80s, while nighttime lows in the mountains may dip below 20°F. Temperatures ranging from the low 30s to mid-60s would be closer to the norm. Spring snow storms are not uncommon in Colorado in April, so be prepared. Note that several nights are spent in towns near 7,000 feet and above (Gunnison 7,700 feet, Walden 8,100 feet and Steamboat Springs 6,800 feet). We will drive over mountain passes exceeding 10,000 feet on three days and some birding at these elevations will take place. Loveland Pass for White-tailed Ptarmigan is at 12,000 feet.

CLOTHING: We suggest lightweight field clothing, a warm jacket (possibly down), thermal underwear, hat, and gloves. You should bring a comfortable pair of walking shoes or hiking boots and a second pair of light shoes. Dress will be casual throughout. Sitting in vans on the leks in pre-dawn darkness can at times be chilly, so be prepared with layers of warm clothing. Small disposable chemical hand warmer packs have been widely employed on the frigid mornings.

EQUIPMENT: Pack a pair of binoculars in good condition, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, camera, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leaders will have a spotting scope; but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. Other items should include an alarm clock, as well as a good flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries.

MISCELLANEOUS: Among the array of nice restaurants we visit throughout the tour, please note the restaurant options/quality are limited at times throughout smaller towns. On early mornings with lek-viewing, we will partake in breakfast after the leks conclude. An array of early morning snacks will be offered before leaving for lek-viewing, for those interested.

HEALTH: 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.

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 <https://www.amazon.com> which has a wide selection <https://www.buteobooks.com/> and <https://www.nhbs.com/> which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and <https://www.abebooks.com/> for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

Andrews, Robert, and Robert Righter. *Colorado Birds*. Denver: Denver Museum of Natural History, 1992. An

excellent reference on bird distribution and habitats within the state.

Bailey, Alfred M., and Robert J. Niedrach. *Birds of Colorado*. Denver: Denver Museum of Natural History, 1965. Large and very expensive but may be available through your local library.

Bailey, Alfred M. and Robert J. Niedrach. *Pictorial Checklist of Colorado Birds*. Denver: Denver Museum, 1967. Available through Audubon House, Buteo Books and other dealers.

Bowers, Nora, Rick Bowers and Kenn Kaufman. *Mammals of North America*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

Connelly, J.W., M.W. Gratson, and K.P. Reese. Sharp-Tailed Grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 354. (A. Poole and F. Gill Eds.) Philadelphia, PA: The Birds of North America, Inc., 1998. [Excellent life history account.]

Craighead, Craighead, and Davis. *A Field Guide to Rocky Mountain Wildflowers From Northern Arizona and New Mexico to British Columbia*. Peterson Field Guide Series. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.

Floyd, Ted. *American Birding Association: Field Guide to the Birds of Colorado*. Scott & Nix, 2014.

Giesen, K.M. Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 364. (A Poole and F. Gill Eds.) Philadelphia, PA: The Birds of North America, Inc., 1998. [Excellent life history account.]

Holt, Harold. *A Birder's Guide to Colorado*. American Birding Association, 1997.

Johnsgard, Paul. *The Grouse of the World*. University of Nebraska Press, 1984. [See especially pages 109-127 (Sage Grouse); pp. 316-341 (Pinnated Grouse); and pp. 342-360 (Sharp-Tailed Grouse). Excellent discussions of displays and their interpretation.]

Michener, James. *Centennial*. New York: Random House, 1974.

National Geographic. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. (Seventh Edition.) Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2017.

Schroeder, M.A., and L.A. Robb. Greater Prairie Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 36. (A Poole and F. Gill Eds.) Philadelphia, PA: The Birds of North America, Inc., 1993. [Excellent life history account.]

Schroeder, M.A., J.R. Young, and C.E. Braun. 9. Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 425. (A Poole and F. Gill Eds.) Philadelphia, PA: The Birds of North America, Inc., 1999. [Excellent life history account.]

Sibley, David. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, 2nd Edition. Knopf, 2014.

Zimmer, Kevin J. *Birding in the American West*. Cornell: University Press, 2000.

TIPPING: An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, \$5 to \$10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) \$15 to \$20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

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 on June 19, 2025, 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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04/19/19-BG
06/12/24-EB
06/28/24-PS/SB
6/5/25-EB
06/30/25-PN