



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

## GRAND ALASKA

### GAMBELL & NOME

JUNE 2-12, 2025

### UTQIAGVIK EXTENSION

JUNE 11-16, 2025

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Horned Puffins, Thick-billed Murres & Crested Auklets commuting past Northwest Cape, Gambell, AK (© Kevin J. Zimmer)

***Our Grand Alaska program offers participants the option of taking any combination of several individual sections. Those taking either pre-trip (Ultimate Nome or Pribilofs & Anchorage Pre-Trip) plus Gambell & Nome, Utqiagvik Extension and Part II will have an***

***Alaska tour experience that is truly comprehensive in scope. Those desiring a shorter trip may select one or more of the tours and still enjoy excellent birding in a more relaxed visit to some of the most beautiful and remote areas in North America. This itinerary covers Grand Alaska: Gambell & Nome and Utqiagvik Extension. Ultimate Nome, the Pribilofs & Anchorage Pre-Trip, and Grand Alaska Part II: Anchorage, Denali & Kenai Peninsula (along with an optional Nome Pre-Trip), are covered in separate itineraries.***

***When spring suddenly arrives on the adjacent shores of Alaska and Siberia, and thousands of birds rush northwards to claim nesting territories, some of these small navigators make big mistakes. Because of this, every year a number of Asian migrants wind up on North American soil, and a few have even colonized Alaska as breeding birds. Birders have learned that they can intercept some of these strays by positioning themselves at strategic points in western Alaska. The Gambell and Nome Tour is designed to do exactly that, and at the same time it will familiarize us with the multitude of Bering Sea and northern mainland (sub-Arctic) breeding specialties.***

***Gambell birding can be quite fabulous; remarkable strays that have occurred here include White-tailed Eagle, Black-tailed Gull, Oriental Pratincole, Green Sandpiper, Jack Snipe, Taiga Flycatcher, Siberian Stonechat, Siberian Rubythroat, Dusky Thrush, Eurasian Bullfinch, and many others. Our 2012 tour discovered and documented a Common (“Siberian”) Chiffchaff, a first record for North America at the time, and one that has now been seen by three of our last twelve groups to visit Gambell! Our 1989 tour discovered a Little Curlew here—a first record for Alaska and only the third ever for North America—and our 1995 tour found a Tree Pipit, only the second ever to that point for North America. Regular here are Common Ringed Plover and Dovekie (both of which annually nest in small numbers), while Red-necked Stint, Slaty-backed Gull and Red-throated Pipit are nearly annual in occurrence. Even on days when no vagrants show up, the birding is exceptional. Tens of thousands of murrelets, puffins, guillemots and auklets that nest east of the village or on other cliffs on the island, are constantly moving just offshore, as are smaller flocks of scoters, eiders, and Harlequin Ducks. Migrants passing the point often include Stejneger’s Scoter; Emperor Goose; King, Common, Steller’s and Spectacled eiders; Arctic, Pacific, and Yellow-billed loons; all three jaegers; and even Ivory Gull (now very rare) and Ross’s Gull.***

***Following our time at Gambell, we will have three days to explore the varied habitats to be found in the Nome region. Nome, the old gold-rush capital of Alaska, still retains much of the frontier character that typifies the Alaskan bush. Here, amidst wonderful examples of alpine and coastal tundra, we will search for some of the most special of Alaska’s breeding birds including Arctic Loon, Rock and Willow ptarmigan, Gyrfalcon, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Rock Sandpiper, Aleutian Tern, Bluethroat, Northern Wheatear, Eastern Yellow Wagtail and others. We can also expect a nice cross-section of large mammals with Muskox, Moose, Brown Bear (Grizzly) and Reindeer (an introduced subspecies of Caribou) among the possibilities.***

***The Gambell & Nome concludes with a day of birding around Anchorage, with chances for a number of boreal forest birds impossible or unlikely to be seen elsewhere on the trip, possibly including Barrow’s Goldeneye, Trumpeter Swan, Red-necked Grebe, Hudsonian***



**Godwit, Spruce Grouse, American Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee and White-winged Crossbill, among others.**

***Utqiagvik (formerly known as Barrow) is an entirely different world! In a setting of 24-hour sunlight, the bird life is unmistakably High Arctic. Three species of eiders nest here (the magnificent King, the beautiful Steller's, and the bizarre Spectacled), with the males resplendent in their breeding dress, and there is no more accessible place in all of North America to see them. Displaying sandpipers are everywhere—Pectorals with their ruffs distended as they perform their strange hooting flights, dressy Dunlins singing shrill "songs" from atop moss-covered hummocks, and ponds alive with gorgeous Red and Red-necked phalaropes. Brilliant Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs are the common passerines! Yellow-billed Loon and Sabine's Gull are regular migrants that are seen in most years by our groups, Buff-breasted Sandpipers are present and displaying in some years, and there is always the very real chance of some Asiatic vagrant showing up (vagrants seen on our past visits have included Red-necked, Little and Temminck's stints, Gray-tailed Tattler, and Spoon-billed Sandpiper). If the lemming population is not in a crash year, we should be treated to the sight of Snowy Owls and Pomarine Jaegers cruising over the tundra. Even Polar Bear (seen by several of our past tours) is a possibility here!***

## **GRAND ALASKA: GAMBELL & NOME JUNE 2-12, 2025**



**Red-necked Stint, Gambell, St. Lawrence Island (© Kevin J. Zimmer)**

**June 2, Day 1: Anchorage.** Participants should arrange to arrive in Anchorage this afternoon and take the complementary shuttle to our hotel, where a room will be reserved in each person's name. We'll meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 p.m. for a get-acquainted dinner and to discuss plans for tomorrow.

NIGHT: Coast Inn at Lake Hood, Anchorage

**June 3, Day 6: Anchorage to Nome, and on to Gambell.** This morning we'll fly from Anchorage to Nome. Upon arrival in Nome, we will need to transfer all of our luggage and gear from the Alaska Airlines terminal over to the Bering Air terminal, in advance of our charter flight to the Yupik village of Gambell (flying time about one hour), at the northwestern tip of St. Lawrence Island. Regardless of the scheduled flight time, please note that we may experience weather delays in getting out to Gambell. Accordingly, this is a day when we need to remain particularly flexible in our plans. If the weather cooperates, we should be on the ground at Gambell by mid-day or early afternoon, ready to take on a whole new set of birds and birding experiences!

NIGHT: Sivuqaq Inn, Gambell

**June 4-6, Days 3-5: Gambell.** A visit to Gambell can rightly be considered an adventure. The friendly villagers are subsistence hunters and wonderful workers of ivory. The opportunity to stay amongst these Bering Sea people provides a unique glimpse into an ancient culture that few outsiders ever experience. Our accommodations are in a community-owned facility with simple double-occupancy rooms. The building is heated and has plumbing with five shared bathrooms complete with flush toilets and hot showers (in 4 of the 5 bathrooms). Self-service, coin-operated laundry facilities are available within the building. Our birding here is done on foot (average hikes of about three miles round trip), often over slush and loose gravel, but generally over flat terrain. **A recently added network of hard-packed gravel roads through the village eliminated much of the need for sloggng through loose gravel, allowing us to reach most of the closer birding sites within 20-30 minutes of easy walking. For more distant locales (e.g. North Beach or the south end of Troutman Lake and beyond), or for rare bird chases (where speed may be of the essence), your leaders will arrange and pay for group "taxi" rides in carts towed by ATVs. These rides are provided by villagers who are accustomed to driving the ATVs, and who are responsible for maintaining their own vehicles.** Participants, at their own discretion, may also opt to utilize this "taxi" service, in lieu of hiking, at any time for one-way or roundtrip rides to and from closer birding sites (Northwest Cape, the boatyards, airstrip, near and far boneyards, marsh at the northeast corner of Troutman Lake). A typical one-way ride to most birding locations is \$10, and is solely at the discretion of the individual participant, who will be responsible for paying directly for these services. Your leaders will be happy to facilitate contacts with the taxi drivers, most of whom post their telephone numbers on the lodge bulletin board, and some of whom we've known for many years. Rides can usually be arranged on very short notice, and the drivers routinely arrange to drop people off at a birding site and return at a specified time to pick them up. We also carry radios in the field, further facilitating rides on demand. We have found this system to work very well, and it allows participants the option of hiking or riding depending on conditions at the moment. At the same time, it is much less expensive than charging each participant for full-day ATV rental (going rate of \$90/day, or more than double what you would expect to pay for three round trip taxi rides), and avoids the inevitable frustration and inconvenience of having to swap out or repair rented ATVs that develop mechanical problems or break down (a regular occurrence).

The weather conditions are often harsh—temperatures are often just above freezing, with frequent fog, drizzle, or even occasional snow. In spite of this, the birding can be fabulous! Remarkable spring strays that have occurred here include White-tailed Eagle, Black-tailed Gull, Oriental Pratincole, Green Sandpiper, Great Knot, Eurasian Dotterel, Jack Snipe, Siberian House-Martin, Taiga Flycatcher, Dusky Warbler, Siberian Stonechat, Dusky Thrush, Eurasian Bullfinch, Common Rosefinch, Pallas's Bunting and

many others. The 1989 VENT group discovered a Little Curlew here—the first for Alaska and only the third ever found on the North American continent! The 1995 VENT group discovered a Tree Pipit—only the second found in North America. Our 2011 group found a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, which represented not only a first island record, but a first record for the entire Bering Sea region of that North American breeder. Our 2012 group turned up a Common (“Siberian”) Chiffchaff, which represented the first confirmed (photographically documented) record of that species for North America! Amazingly, we have now seen this species on three of our last twelve visits! Our 2013 tour enjoyed a number of vagrants, topped by a Little Curlew (only the second Alaskan record) that we found on our last morning on the island. Common Ringed Plover, Red-necked Stint, Bluethroat, Red-throated Pipit and McKay’s Bunting (exceedingly rare in recent years) occur with varying degrees of regularity. **Of course, the ultra-rarities are never to be expected, and one cannot count on seeing Siberian vagrants on any single visit.** Nonetheless, our daily checks of the marshy ponds south of the village, the boneyards, and the lower slopes of Sivuqaq Mountain will be tinged with excitement and anticipation—practically anything is possible.

Even on days when no vagrants turn up, the birding is exciting. Tens of thousands of alcids nest on the cliffs just east of the village, and flocks are constantly passing very close to shore at Northwest Cape. Alcid diversity reaches its zenith in the Bering Sea, and we can expect to see as many as 10 species. Eight of these (Crested, Least and Parakeet auklets; Horned and Tufted puffins; Common and Thick-billed murre; and Pigeon Guillemot) should be present in numbers, whereas some searching may be required to find the Black Guillemot and Dovekie. Each year, small numbers of Dovekies are found (and are presumed to nest) on the mountain slopes above the village. Regular migrants often seen at Gambell include Yellow-billed and Arctic loon, Emperor Goose, all four species of eiders, Red Phalarope, Slaty-backed Gull, Sabine’s Gull, and all three species of jaegers. There are typically a few scattered nesting pairs of Rock Sandpipers and White Wagtails in the area as well. Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur are the two common breeding passerines at Gambell! In years when the concentrations of sea ice offshore are still present (sadly, an increasingly rare occurrence over the past 20 years), occasional Ross’s Gulls and Ivory Gulls may be seen moving past Northwest Cape – our 2023 group was treated to a fabulous Ross’s Gull encounter, and our 2024 group bore witness to a passage of at least 68 in 24 hours, exceeding the historical total of all previous spring records in a single day!

NIGHTS: Sivuqaq Inn, Gambell



Ross's Gull, Gambell, St. Lawrence Island (© Kevin J. Zimmer)

**June 7, 2025, Day 6: Gambell to Nome.** Sometime this morning, we'll fly back to the relative comfort and civilization of Nome, ready to experience a whole new set of birds and mammals. After lunch, we'll begin birding along the Council Road, which hugs the coastline south and east of town. Nome is the ivory capital of Alaska and was its gold capital in years gone by. Today the town is a major center for the native people of the region. Once a part of the Bering land bridge, the Seward Peninsula has been colonized by several Old-World species. Our first afternoon in this rich area will introduce us to some of these Siberian colonizers, as well as to some familiar birds in decidedly unfamiliar settings. Here, pairs of colorful Eastern Yellow Wagtails (formerly common, but scarce in recent years) and Lapland Longspurs enliven the brown tundra, while Fox Sparrows and Gray-cheeked Thrushes sing from the willow thickets. Long-tailed Jaegers cruise tirelessly over the tundra, their approach noisily protested by pairs of Whimbrels or Pacific Golden-Plovers. The edges of the vast Safety Lagoon complex are a gathering spot for hordes of shorebirds, sometimes including numbers of bickering Bar-tailed Godwits. Farther out, at Safety Sound, are masses of resting gulls (mostly Glaucous, Short-billed, and Black-legged Kittiwakes), which we will check carefully for the occasional Slaty-backed, Sabine's, or Black-headed gull. Flocks of Brant and smaller clusters of Common Eiders are scattered liberally across the Sound, and jaegers of all three species can be seen harassing the Arctic and Aleutian terns. Red-throated and Pacific loons are frequent sights, as are groups of Tundra Swans and Sandhill Cranes. One or two pairs of Arctic Loons are typically present (and presumably nest) in the coastal lagoon complex between Safety Sound and Solomon, and seeing these rare birds will definitely be among our top priorities. There is more than enough to keep us busy this first day, and we will be sure to return to this dynamic area on one or more of our days in the Nome region.

NIGHT: Aurora Inn, Nome





Siberian Sand-Plover, Gambell, Alaska © Kevin J. Zimmer

**June 8-9, Days 7-8: Nome.** We will have two full days to explore the area around Nome. Increased coverage over the past three decades has yielded a number of discoveries from this region, including the presence of breeding Bristle-thighed Curlews and Bluethroats, as well as such vagrants as Eurasian Wigeon, Lesser Sand-Plover, Great Knot, Gray-tailed Tattler, and Black-headed Gull. Red-necked Stint, Emperor Goose, and Slaty-backed Gull are seen with some regularity, and it's a rare stay here that doesn't produce something unexpected. In the absence of "staked-out" rarities, we will search such standard hotspots as Safety Lagoon and the Nome River mouth, or devote more time to the exploration of the outer reaches of the area's three roads. Road conditions permitting, we'll spend one of our full days working the Kougarok Road. Although our biggest "quest" bird out here is the Bristle-thighed Curlew (which typically requires a roundtrip hike of at least a few hours over some difficult terrain, with no guarantee of success), there is much more to this day. The Kougarok Road is arguably one of the best birding roads in North America! Harlequin Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Rock and Willow ptarmigan, Gyrfalcon, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Wandering Tattler, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Bluethroat, Northern Wheatear, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Redpoll are just a few of the many birds that we regularly see on this road. Additionally, mammal-viewing opportunities abound (Moose, Grizzly and Muskox are all regularly seen), and the scenery is exceptional. Regardless of our exact course of action over the two days, we're certain to see a number of typical breeding birds of the region, usually including Pacific and Red-throated loons, Brant, Common Eider, Bar-tailed Godwit, Long-tailed and Parasitic jaegers, Aleutian Tern, Willow and Rock ptarmigan, Gyrfalcon, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Bluethroat, Northern Wheatear, Gray-cheeked Thrush, American Tree Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Redpoll (both Common and Hoary types). In some years, White Wagtails or early arriving Arctic Warblers may be present.

NIGHTS: Aurora Inn, Nome



Muskox, Nome, Alaska © Kevin J. Zimmer

**June 10, Day 9: Nome to Anchorage.** Depending on our actual flight departure time, we may have time this morning to check vantage points along the Nome coastline before returning to Anchorage. Migrants like Brant, sea ducks, and jaegers may still be moving offshore, and there's always a chance for a rare migrant like Emperor Goose, King Eider, or Sabine's Gull. At some point in the day we will fly back to the bustling big city of Anchorage. Depending on flight schedules, we should have time for a late afternoon or post-dinner visit to nearby Westchester Lagoon, where water birds abound. Westchester Lagoon is typically dotted with nesting pairs of Red-necked Grebes, and the adjacent tidal mudflats offer foraging sites for Hudsonian Godwits, Short-billed Dowitchers, Surfbirds and a variety of other shorebirds, some of which regularly roost on islands in the lagoon during high tides. Both Greater and Lesser scaup are typically present on the lagoon, which also frequently hosts scoters, goldeneyes, Common Loons and Bonaparte's Gulls.

NIGHT: Coast Inn at Lake Hood, Anchorage

**June 11, Day 10: Anchorage.** We'll likely spend our day in one or more of the wonderful parks right in Anchorage, where opportunities for seeing such boreal forest birds as Spruce Grouse, Merlin, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Alder Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Swainson's and Varied thrush, Townsend's and Orange-crowned warblers, Pine Grosbeak and White-winged Crossbill are excellent. We may also revisit Westchester Lagoon, Potter Marsh and/or other dynamic spots for waterfowl, shorebirds and other water birds. The tour will conclude with a final dinner and checklist session.





**Bluethroat (male), Teller Road, Nome, Alaska (© Kevin J. Zimmer)**

NIGHT: Coast Inn at Lake Hood, Anchorage

**June 12, Day 11: Departure for Home.** Participants not continuing on the **Utqiagvik Extension** can plan to depart Anchorage at any time today.



Spruce Grouse (male), Anchorage, AK (© Kevin J. Zimmer)

## UTQIAGVIK EXTENSION

### JUNE 11-16, 2025

**June 11, Day 1: Arrival in Anchorage.** Participants not continuing from **Gambell & Nome** should arrange to arrive in Anchorage this afternoon and take the complementary shuttle to our hotel, where a room will be reserved in each person's name. We'll meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 p.m. for a get-acquainted dinner and to discuss plans for tomorrow.

NIGHT: Coast Inn at Lake Hood, Anchorage

**June 12, Day 2: Anchorage to Utqiagvik.** A mid-afternoon flight (subject to change) will take us from Anchorage up to Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow). Lying well above the Arctic Circle, with sunlight 24 hours a day in summer, Utqiagvik is High Arctic—quite different from other areas we will have visited in Alaska. Our late afternoon arrival time (subject to change), will likely preclude any opportunities for birding until after hotel check-in and dinner. Following dinner, we will plan on our first birding excursion – we will not have to worry about running out of daylight here!

NIGHT: Top of the World Hotel, Utqiagvik





King Eider, Utqiagvik, AK (© Kevin J. Zimmer)

**June 13-14, Days 3-4: Utqiagvik.** The remarkably flat coastal tundra here is pockmarked with shallow surface lakes and puddles and supports a different set of breeding shorebirds. Baird's Sandpipers are regular, Red Phalaropes are common, and Pectoral Sandpipers are everywhere, performing their odd hooting flight displays. In some years, one or more Buff-breasted Sandpipers, White-rumped Sandpipers, or Red-necked Stints have also been present and occasional rare vagrants like Gray-tailed Tattler and Little Stint have sometimes been found. Utqiagvik is ***the place to see eiders in full breeding plumage***. We should see flocks of Kings and lesser numbers of Commons migrating along the coast, and pairs of spectacular Kings, elegant Steller's (declining remarkably in the last few decades) and bizarre Spectacleds (also declining and considered threatened) on the inland lakes.





**Spectacled Eider (male), Utqiagvik, AK (© Kevin J. Zimmer)**



**Red Phalarope pair (duller male at top, brighter female below), Utqiagvik, AK (© Kevin J. Zimmer)**





**King Eiders (males), Utqiagvik, Alaska © Kevin J. Zimmer**



**Buff-breasted Sandpiper displaying, Utqiagvik, AK © Kevin J. Zimmer**

Although the numbers of predators here vary (in concert with the local population cycles of lemmings), we are almost certain to see at least a few Snowy Owls, and perhaps some Short-eared Owls. In good lemming years, Snowy Owls are common, and Pomarine Jaegers can be downright abundant (Although, it must be

said, that we haven't experienced a good lemming year for several years now.)! Our stay at Utqiagvik will allow us ample time to explore all the roads out of town as well as the base of Point Barrow itself, a long gravel peninsula extending north into the ice-choked Arctic Ocean.



**Snowy Owl (female), Utqiagvik, Alaska © Kevin J. Zimmer**

Other regular species around Utqiagvik include the likes of Pacific Loon, Tundra Swan, Brant (the western subspecies *nigricans*), Greater White-fronted Goose, Long-tailed Duck, American Golden-Plover, Dunlin, Red-necked Phalarope, Glaucous Gull, Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspur, and Redpoll. We might encounter migrant Sabine's Gulls on the tundra ponds or fly-by or resting Yellow-billed Loons along the coast. With real luck, we could even see a Ross's Gull or a Polar Bear!

NIGHTS: Top of the World Hotel, Utqiagvik

**June 15, Day 5: Day in Utqiagvik: Return to Anchorage.** After a third day of birding in Utqiagvik, our flight will depart for Anchorage in the late afternoon or early evening (subject to change). Our tour will conclude in Anchorage with a farewell dinner and final checklist session.

NIGHT: Coast Inn at Lake Hood, Anchorage

**June 16, Day 6: Anchorage.** Participants not continuing on **Grand Alaska Part II: Anchorage, Denali & Kenai Peninsula** can depart Anchorage anytime today.

This will serve as a transition day between tours for participants continuing on **Grand Alaska Part II**, providing what will no doubt be a welcome "sleep-in" morning (after two weeks of long days in the field) and opportunity for relaxation or sightseeing around Anchorage.

**TOUR SIZE:** Both sections will be limited to 12 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Kevin Zimmer and Brian Gibbons.





**Kevin Zimmer** has authored three books and numerous papers dealing with field identification and bird-finding in North America. His book, *Birding in the American West: A Handbook*, deals with finding and identifying birds in the western United States. Living in Alaska contributed to his affection for the Far North, where he has anchored VENT's tour program since 1986. For the past 30 years he has concentrated his attention on the Neotropics, particularly on Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela. He has directed VENT's Brazil program since 1991. Kevin has a PhD in biology (research emphasis in Avian Evolutionary Ecology) from New Mexico State University, and is a Research Associate of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, an elective

member of the American Ornithologists' Union, a longtime member of the A.O.U. South American Classification Committee (SACC), and a former two-term member of the American Birding Association (ABA) Check-list Committee. He is a regular contributor to Cornell's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds. He has authored numerous technical papers on the taxonomy, distribution, and behavior of Neotropical birds, particularly those of the Amazon Basin. In 2003 he completed (with co-author Mort Isler) the major chapter on the *Thamnophilidae* (antbirds) for the prestigious *Handbook of Birds of the World* series. In 2006, he and Curtis Marantz coauthored a six-CD compilation of *Bird Voices of Alta Floresta and Southeastern Amazonian Brazil* (produced by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds) that represents the most comprehensive set of commercially available bird recordings for any part of the Amazon Basin. He and Andrew Whittaker are currently at work on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil, to be published by Princeton University Press. Kevin lives in Atascadero, California with his wife, Susan. Their daughter, Marina, is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT). She and her husband, Ryan, and their daughter, Brinn, are now living in Napa, California.



**Brian Gibbons** grew up in suburban Dallas where he began exploring the wild world in local creeks and parks. Chasing butterflies and any animal that was unfortunate enough to cross paths with the Gibbons boys occupied his childhood. A wooden bird feeder kit sparked a flame that was stoked by a gift of the *Golden Guide* and family camping trips to Texas state parks. Twenty-five years ago Brian attended two VENT camps for young birders. Birds are now his primary interest, but all things wild continue to captivate him. After college, Brian undertook a variety of field biology research jobs that have taken him to the Caribbean, the Bering Sea, and the land of the midnight sun, arctic Alaska. He enjoys working with kids, hoping to spark environmental awareness through birds. For many years Brian's field research has involved bird banding.

His most amazing recoveries were a female Wilson's Warbler that had been banded in Alaska and was captured by Brian in Colorado, and a Sooty Tern that perished after a hurricane on the Texas coast; it had plied the Gulf of Mexico and the oceans of the world for 24 years. Brian's recreational bird-seeking has taken him to Machu Picchu in Peru, the Great Wall in China, the plains of East Africa, and the Himalayas in Nepal. Brian leads birding trips in the United States, Central America, the Caribbean, and Europe. As well as being a fanatical birder, he loves capturing birds with photography. He lives in Tucson, Arizona with his wife, Lacreia Johnson, and their son, Grayson.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the **Grand Alaska: Gambell & Nome** is **\$9,695** per person in double occupancy from Anchorage. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to dinner on Day 10, all lodging as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation, the flights between Anchorage and Nome, the flights between Nome and Gambell, and guide services provided by your tour leaders. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Anchorage and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for **Grand Alaska: Gambell & Nome** is **\$1,295**. 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.

Rooms are limited at the Sivuqaq Inn in Gambell and you may be asked to share. If so, you will be credited appropriately.

The fee for the **Utqiagvik Extension** is **\$4,725** per person in double occupancy from Anchorage. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to dinner on Day 5, all lodging as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation, the flights between Anchorage and Utqiagvik, and guide services provided by your leaders. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Anchorage and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the **Utqiagvik Extension** is **\$745**. 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.

Participants combining **Grand Alaska: Gambell & Nome** with the **Utqiagvik Extension** in double occupancy will receive a discount of **\$200**.

Participants combining **Grand Alaska: Gambell & Nome** with the **Utqiagvik Extension** in single occupancy will receive a discount of **\$400**.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person per section. 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 prior to the tour departure dates (January 3, 2025 for Grand Alaska: Gambell & Nome; January 13, 2025 for the Utqiagvik Extension).

**BAD WEATHER/ADDITIONAL EXPENSE RESPONSIBILITY:** Our Alaska tours operate in the late spring/early summer period. The weather is highly changeable at this time of year and our tours typically experience a range of conditions, from sunny and clear to overcast and rainy. From time to time, dense fog is a problem at the coastal outpost locations of St. Paul (Pribilof Islands), Nome, and Gambell (St. Lawrence Island), all places visited by our tours. Exceedingly foggy conditions occasionally lead to flight cancellations. Under such circumstances, tour participants will be responsible for any additional expenses that result, principally additional hotel nights. If a flight is cancelled due to bad weather, there will be no refund available for the unused rooms at the intended destination. Most hotels used on this tour have a 30-day cancellation policy for group bookings during the high season. In case of flight cancellation, the VENT office or your tour leaders will make arrangements for additional room nights at the location at which your departure is delayed. Tour participants will either need to pay for the additional nights directly, at the time reservations are made, or, depending on the location, upon receipt of invoice from our office

after the tour. VENT cannot be responsible for delays or changes in the itinerary due to weather-related problems.

**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 **\$500** 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 \$500*
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 **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, 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/](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. 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.

**NOME LODGING:** Due to a shortage of rooms, there is a chance the group will be spread out to various locations in central Nome. Specific details will be provided to each participant closer to departure.

**INTERNET ACCESS & CELLULAR SERVICE:** Expect Wi-Fi to be available in all locations except the Sivuqaq Inn (Gambell.) Wi-Fi is typically excellent at the hotel in Anchorage; reliable at both Nome and Utqiagvik. Participants with AT&T as their cellular provider can expect to have cellular service everywhere except Gambell; those with Verizon as their carrier cannot expect service in Nome or Utqiagvik (Barrow). For cellular service at Gambell, you will need to purchase a GCI sim card (available in Nome, possibly also in Anchorage, for \$40 for a month with 2GB data). Verizon customers will need a GCI card for cellular service in Nome and Utqiagvik also.

**BAGGAGE:** In case your checked luggage is delayed, it's recommended that you pack all documents, medications, a change of clothes, your binoculars, and toiletry items in a carry-on bag. **Flights between Anchorage and Nome, and between Anchorage and Utqiagvik are on large jets, with industry standard baggage regulations.** The smaller planes used to fly between Nome and Gambell have more restrictive baggage regulations (see below). Please use a VENT luggage tag (which will be mailed to all participants a few months prior to departure) to aid leaders in recognizing your baggage during our airport and hotel transfers.

**An additional small duffel bag is recommended, either for storing items in Anchorage or Nome, or for use as your main piece of luggage during our time in Gambell (allowing you to store your large bag).**

All baggage will also be weighed prior to our flight between Nome and Gambell. Participants will be charged excess baggage fees for each pound over the 100-pound limit (includes what you carry on the plane). As of 2024, Bering Air does not technically allow carry-on luggage, because there are no overhead baggage compartments, and the space beneath the seats is extremely minimal. Passengers are allowed to carry binoculars and limited camera gear onto the plane, but no large gear bags are permitted. Traditional carry-on bags will need to be checked, along with other checked baggage, and will count toward your 100-pound limit. Gear not needed for Gambell or Nome can be stored at the hotel in Anchorage. Gear required for Nome but not for Gambell can be stored in Nome.

**WEATHER:** Normally it is 25 to 45 degrees Fahrenheit at Gambell and Utqiagvik, and anywhere from the 30s to 50s at Nome; however, all of these places are often windy with drizzle and fog. Elsewhere on the mainland, temperatures tend to be warmer and may reach the upper 60s or higher.

**CLOTHING:** The weather in Alaska in May and June is notoriously unpredictable and can still be quite cold. The "layered" technique is your best defense against the variable weather. We suggest you combine a

thermal undershirt, shirt, sweater, and coat or jacket. Medium-weight wool or synthetic equivalent for shirts, pants, and sweaters is ideal. Cold-weather gear is essential and should include a warm coat or down jacket, warm hat, gloves, thermal underwear (both tops and bottoms), wool or synthetic equivalent socks, and warm shirts. A rain jacket or poncho is also essential for times when the weather turns misty. Since it can be surprisingly warm too, you should bring some lighter field clothing as well.

**FOOTWEAR:** Birding around Nome and on day-trips in and around Anchorage does not require such footwear, because most walking in these locations will be along gravel roads or well-maintained trails, where comfortable hiking shoes should suffice. The one possible exception is the hike for Bristle-thighed Curlews in Nome, where we will be hiking off-road without benefit of trails, and where the tundra can vary from reasonably dry to fairly wet or muddy in spots, depending on local variations in weather. Utqiagvik Extension participants should bring rubber boots, waterproof boots, or N.E.O.S. Overshoes that extend to calf height for walking off-road on the wet tundra.

**ALCOHOL:** Gambell is officially a “dry” village, meaning that not only is alcohol not available, but that it is a crime to bring alcohol to the village. Please respect local laws, and do not carry alcohol to Gambell. At the time of this writing, Utqiagvik was also a dry community—the alcohol laws there have changed back and forth over the years.

**OTHER ITEMS:** We recommend you bring insect repellent, an alarm clock, sunglasses and sunscreen. The leaders will have a spotting scope and some reference books, but you may wish to bring your own. **Having your own spotting scope is particularly useful at Gambell, where we spend much time sea watching from shore. Most of the birds seen in any given sea watch are seen only in flight, making it difficult to share the “group” scopes to any meaningful extent. You should also bring your own spotting scope if you are planning on doing digiscope photography, both to avoid monopolizing the group scope(s), and to avoid any chance of scratching the eyepiece of the group scope(s) due to a mismatch in diameter of your camera lens versus the scope eyepiece.** A good North American field guide to the birds is the one reference that each participant should plan on carrying for their own personal use.

For Gambell, participants should bring a bar of soap and a towel (these items are usually provided by the lodge, but we have been unpleasantly surprised from time to time) and also may wish to bring ample cash (preferably in small, \$5, \$10, and \$20 denominations) to pay for ATV rides and/or native crafts, such as ivory carvings. Credit cards are not accepted for these activities/items. Individual ATV rides at Gambell typically cost \$15-20 round trip. Participants may find it helpful to carry two-way Walkabout radios to increase communication in the field as well as their own scopes for sea watching.

**LAUNDRY:** There is a self-serve laundry in Gambell, Nome and Utqiagvik. The Coast Inn at Lake Hood in Anchorage has both self-service and send-out laundry service.

**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.

**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).

**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](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which

specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

**Field Guides—Birds:**

Armstrong, Robert H. *Guide to the Birds of Alaska*. 4th edition. Bothwell, WA: Alaska Northwest Books, 1995.

Brazil, Mark. *Birds of East Asia*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009. This is the best field guide for illustrating any of the possible Siberian vagrants that could turn up at Gambell, St. Paul or elsewhere.

Dunn, Jon L. and Jonathan Alderfer. *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. Seventh edition. Washington, D. C.: National Geographic Society, 2017. The recommended field guide.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. This classic field guide has been greatly expanded to cover many of the Eurasian vagrants that we could encounter at Gambell, St. Paul or elsewhere.

**Reference—Birds:**

Gabrielson, I. N. & F. E. Lincoln. *The Birds of Alaska*. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 1959. Outdated now, but has a lot of information on the life histories of Alaskan birds. Try [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).

Grant, Peter J. *Gulls: A Guide to Identification*. Academic Press, 1997.

Harrison, Peter. *Seabirds: An Identification Guide*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1991 (reprint).

Hayman, Peter, John Marchant & Tony Prater. *Shorebirds: An Identification Guide to the Waders of the World*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1991 (reprint).

Kessel, Brina. *Birds of the Seward Peninsula, Alaska: Their Biogeography, Seasonality and Natural History*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1996.

Kessel, Brina & Daniel D. Gibson. *Status and Distribution of Alaska Birds*. Studies in Avian Biology No. 1, 1978. Try [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).

Zimmer, K. J. *Birding in the American West: A Handbook*. Cornell University Press, 2000.

**General Background Reading:**

Freuchen, Peter. *Book of the Eskimos*. Fawcett Books, 1981. An easy-to-read classic account of Eskimo life, written in 1931. Out of Print, but appears on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). Other Freuchen titles are available as well: *Arctic Adventure* (AMS Press, 1995) and *Ivalu, the Eskimo Wife* (AMS Press, 1935).

Lopez, Barry. *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape*. Vintage Books, 2001.

McGinniss, Joe. *Going to Extremes*. Plume, 1989 (reissue edition). Raw non-fiction about the people and places of America's last frontier.

McPhee, John. *Coming into the Country*. Noonday Press, 1991 (reissue). Published in 1976, this chronicles a remarkable journey by kayak into the last frontier.

*Audubon* (May 1988). The entire issue is devoted to Alaska. Especially worthwhile is “Exploring Literature of the Far North,” a great bibliography of interesting books on the region.

*National Geographic* (October 1982). “A New Day for Alaska’s Pribilofs.”

**Alaska Guidebooks:**

Rennick, Penny (ed.) *Mammals of Alaska*. Alaska Geographic Guides. Alaska Geographic Society, 1996.

A variety of books on Alaska are available through the Alaska Geographic Society: (907) 274-0521. Alaska Geographic Online is found at [www.akgeo.com](http://www.akgeo.com). Some of these resources include: Alaskan Native Peoples, Mammals of Alaska, and National Parks and Monuments of Alaska. On the tour a number of local guide books and pamphlets can be picked up at local gift shops, including: Louise Potter’s Wild Flowers Along Mt. McKinley Park Road (Camp Denali Publishers, n.d.). Although out of print, Potter’s book is possibly available in Denali National Park; it is also found on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

**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 December 11, 2024, 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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