

Birding the Northwest Territories and Yellowknife

Birdwatching Breaks are pleased to offer you this wonderful birding tour to Canada. Our journey starts in Edmonton and then moves on to the boreal habitats and lakes around Yellowknife. The final section is in around the remote town of Cambridge Bay situated in the High Arctic and adjacent to the famous Northwest Passage.

■ Please note the following itinerary is subject to change due to flight schedules within Canada.

Day 1: Fly to Edmonton which is located in Alberta, Canada. Transfer to a hotel at Leduc for a two-night stay.

Day 2: Elk Island National Park is our main destination today for an introduction to the commoner birds of Alberta. Near the airport a visit to several lakes should provide us with sightings of Black-necked and Red-necked Grebes, Ruddy Duck, American Black Tern, American Avocet, Franklin's and California Gulls, Purple Martin and the localised Yellow-headed Blackbird. Birds of prey include the widespread Red-tailed Hawk and Swainson's hawk a summer visitor to Alberta. A search of the wetter areas may have Le Conte's Sparrow, Sedge Wren and in some years Bobolink. A diversion to Beaverhill Lake should produce Short-eared Owl quartering the fields and around the edges the possibility of Mountain Bluebird, Vesper and Clay-coloured Sparrows. Elk Island National Park is home to Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers and Boreal Chickadee which are joined in summer by Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos, Western Tanager, Nelson's Sparrow, Ovenbird and Mourning Warbler. On the marshland and small lakes we should encounter Trumpeter Swan, Forster's Tern and Ring-necked Duck.

Days 3-5: On Day 3 we fly to Yellowknife the main city of the Northwest Territories where we have a three-night stay. Yellowknife is located near the extensive boreal forest of the north and the vast expanse of the Great Slave Lake. Our main interest is the forest habitats where we may

Dates

Thursday June 27th – Sunday July 7th 2024

Leader: Mark Finn and local guides

Group size: 6

Birds: 140–160

find Sandhill Crane, Bonaparte's Gull, Northern Shrike, Bohemian Waxwing, Rusty Blackbird and the extraordinary sight of Lesser Yellowlegs singing and displaying in the top of pine trees. Other species we hope to encounter include Western Tanager, Canada Jay and a range of warblers including Orange-crowned, Blackpoll, Wilson's and Tennessee. In the undergrowth a search for White-crowned, White-throated, Swamp, Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows. On the extensive lakes and ponds we should find Great Northern and Pacific Divers plus the widespread Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes. On one day we take a boat trip on the Yellowknife River which regularly holds Western Osprey, Bald Eagle, Surf Scoter, Common Merganser and at least three tern species in the summer months.

Day 6: This morning a flight to Cambridge Bay an outpost and largest settlement on Victoria Island a part of Nunavut. On arrival we transfer to our hotel for a five night stay. The common 'town' birds in Cambridge Bay are Snow and Lapland Buntings.

Days 7-10: We spent the next four days birding around Cambridge Bay to a variety

American Woodcock
Simon Papps



of locations which are a summer home to some spectacular and sought after species. Mount Pelly is a short distance away and accessible by road (in some years the road is not drivable). Typical shorebirds breeding on the tundra and small pools include American Golden, Grey and Semipalmated Plovers, Semipalmated, Baird's and Stilt Sandpipers, Red-necked Phalarope, Long-tailed Skua, Arctic Tern and Horned Lark. On the lower slopes of Mount Pelly we should find American Pipit. White-billed Divers nest on the larger expanses of water and in lemming years we have excellent chances of Pomarine Skua and Snowy Owl. On another day we drive into the interior where we have a chance of locating breeding Grey Phalarope, Sabine's Gull and Arctic Skua. Cambridge Bay has a rubbish dump and water treatment works which act as a magnet for Glaucous and Thayer's Gulls, Common and Arctic Redpolls and always a possibility of a vagrant species from further south. On our final day we aim to visit the West Arm to Dease and Simpson Straits which overlook the Northwest Passage. Walking out on the tundra we have a good chance of finding Pomarine, Arctic and Long-tailed Skuas, Short-eared Owl and Rough-legged Buzzard. The whole area is alive with divers, wildfowl and waders

which may include Greater White-fronted and Cackling Geese, Tundra Swan, Common and King Eiders and Long-tailed Ducks in their dapper breeding dress. Other species of interest include Red-throated and Pacific Divers, Buff-breasted, Pectoral and White-rumped Sandpipers.

Day 11: After breakfast we make the short trip to the airport for our flights back to Edmonton and connections back to Europe. Arrival is on the following day

Prices

Ground Price: £4,595

Single room: £400

Deposit: £500

*Air Fare: £1,995

This holiday is fully inclusive of accommodation and meals, transport, permit fees, guidance, tips and taxes.

Not included: Visa to enter Canada, drinks, insurance, and items of a personal nature.

*please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights