

Wilderness Birding Adventures

Tour Information Packet

Barrow (Utqiagvik) in Spring

June 10-13, 2018

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Please print, sign and date the last page of this packet for each person on the trip.

Mail your signed form(s) to:

Wilderness Birding Adventures
40208 Alpenglow Circle
Homer, AK 99603

You may also scan and email your form to info@wildernessbirding.com

Thanks for choosing Wilderness Birding Adventures! We'll be in touch with pertinent updates as your trip approaches. Please let us know if we can help with anything at all as you prepare for your trip.



A Snowy Owl watches from prey from a tussock. Photo Aaron Lang.

Wilderness Birding Adventures

Barrow (Utqiagvik): Spring in the Arctic

There are so many reasons to bird the high arctic tundra of Barrow in the springtime. Steller's and Spectacled Eiders, as well as the more abundant King and Common Eiders, are all possible. Yellow-billed Loons migrate by the point and are in small numbers on freshwater. Snowy Owls and Pomarine Jaegers patrol the tundra in search of lemmings. And the tundra itself hums with the cacophony of displaying shorebirds, including Red Phalarope, Long-billed Dowitcher, Pectoral Sandpipers, and American Golden Plover. On this tour we'll also search for less common waders like White-rumped and Buff-breasted Sandpiper. Most years a rarity or two can be found as well. Past surprises have included Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Little Stint, and Common Ringed Plover. Of course the chance of seeing a polar bear and birding in the midnight sun are top attractions as well. Follow the most intrepid avian breeders to the northernmost city in the U.S., where the 24-hour sunlight of mid-June thaws the tundra in fast forward, ice and snow rapidly giving way to an eruption of tundra plants and just as the birds arrive to breed.

The Town and Traditions

Barrow was named for Sir John Barrow, 2nd Secretary of the British Admiralty. However, the area's Inupiat name is Utqiagvik (place for gathering wild roots), and in 2016 the city voted to officially change the name of the city to its traditional name. Currently, both names are still in common local usage to refer to the city. Barrow is the northernmost city in the U.S. Situated well above latitude 71N, the sun doesn't set from May 10 to August 2. The town sits on the Chukchi Sea side of Point Barrow, the geographic landmark separating the Chukchi Sea to the west and the Beaufort Sea to the east, both within the Arctic Ocean. The average summer temperature in Barrow is 40 degrees F and the minimum daily temperature is below freezing 324 days a year. We should plan for fog, rain, wind, and snow while hoping for sun!

The nomadic Inupiat Eskimo peoples of the North Slope used this location seasonally for hundreds of years. Archaeological sites in the area indicate habitation from 500 to 900 A.D. Inupiat traditionally depend on subsistence marine mammal hunting, supplemented by inland hunting and fishing. Archaeological remains of sixteen dwelling mounds from the Birnirk culture exist today. In 1881, the U.S. Army established a meteorological and magnetic research station near Barrow and the town became a permanent community when Yankee whalers established the Cape Smythe Whaling and Trading Station there in 1893. A Presbyterian Church was established in 1899, and a post office was opened in 1901. Exploration of the Naval Petroleum Reserve Number 4 (now National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, NPR-A) began in 1946 and the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory, three miles north of Barrow, soon followed. The city was incorporated in 1958. Formation of the North Slope Borough in 1972, the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, and construction of the Prudhoe Bay

oil fields and Trans-Alaska Pipeline have each contributed to the development of Barrow. Today, tax revenues from the North Slope oil fields fund borough-wide services.

In the late 1800s, the Yankee whalers hired the local Inupiat, who had generations of whaling experience, to work on their whaling crews. Over 30 Barrow Inupiat whaling crews continue to hunt the bowhead during the whale's spring and fall migrations. Residents also hunt caribou, walrus, bearded and spotted seals, ducks and geese, and catch many species of fish. Subsistence activities are an important cultural and economic element of the local community. The community now numbers 4,600 residents, over half of whom are Inupiat Eskimo.

Tour Details

Our trip begins and ends at the Barrow Airport, which is served by regular jet service (Alaska Airlines) from Anchorage. Participants arrive throughout the day on June 10th and will be picked up at the airport in Barrow by the tour leader. There are several flights daily from Anchorage. The tour ends on June 13th with an evening flight back to Anchorage.

Our days and evenings will be spent birding along the road system, stopping as we see birds or places that look good to explore a bit on foot. Most of our birding will be from on or near the roads, however, we will take several shorter walks around ponds and wetlands in search of shorebirds and waterfowl. We may also take a walk across a section of upland tundra to search for Buff-breasted Sandpiper and upland other tundra nesters. The terrain around Barrow is wetland tundra and at this time of year even the "drier" areas will be wet from fresh snow melt. Expect muddy walking conditions when we're off of the gravel roads; rubber boots, Neos overshoes, or rubber-footed boots are very strongly recommended.

In Barrow, we'll travel in a rental vehicle and we'll stay in a local hotel. Meals will be taken at local restaurants. Most of the rooms at our hotel have kitchenettes, and all will have microwave ovens and refrigerators. Barrow also has a couple of grocery stores, making it convenient for us to grab picnic lunches for the field if the group prefers. Please note that Barrow is a "damp" town, meaning the sale of alcohol is prohibited, but importation for personal use is permitted.

The tour price includes: three nights lodging in Barrow; breakfasts; ground transportation in Barrow; all permits; any group gear (e.g., first aid kit, reference books, etc.); WBA guide.

Not included in the tour price: Airfare to/from Barrow; lunches and dinners in Barrow; any pre or post trip expenses; personal gear or expenses (laundry, phone calls, etc).

Additional costs incurred due to factors beyond the control of WBA will be the participants' responsibility (e.g., weather delays, sickness, strikes, evacuations, political crises, etc.). We strongly recommend travel insurance.

Price is based on double occupancy.
Single supplement is \$255 (\$85/ night).



A Polar Bear at Point Barrow. Photo Aaron Lang

Wilderness Birding Adventures

Barrow

Cumulative Bird Species Observed on Previous Tours

1. Greater White-fronted Goose
2. Snow Goose
3. Brant
4. Cackling Goose
5. Tundra Swan
6. Gadwall
7. American Wigeon
8. Mallard
9. Northern Shoveler
10. Northern Pintail
11. Garganey
12. Green-winged Teal
13. Redhead
14. Greater Scaup
15. Steller's Eider
16. Spectacled Eider
17. King Eider
18. Common Eider
19. Long-tailed Duck
20. Red-breasted Merganser
21. Willow Ptarmigan
22. Red-throated Loon
23. Pacific Loon
24. Yellow-billed Loon
25. Horned Grebe
26. Red-necked Grebe
27. Bald Eagle
28. Northern Harrier
29. Peregrine Falcon
30. Sandhill Crane
31. Black-bellied Plover
32. American Golden-Plover
33. Semipalmated Plover
34. Killdeer
35. Bar-tailed Godwit
36. Ruddy Turnstone
37. Red Knot
38. Sanderling
39. Semipalmated Sandpiper
40. Western Sandpiper
41. Red-necked Stint
42. Temminck's Stint
43. White-rumped Sandpiper
44. Baird's Sandpiper
45. Pectoral Sandpiper
46. Dunlin
47. Buff-breasted Sandpiper
48. Ruff
49. Long-billed Dowitcher
50. Wilson's Snipe
51. Red-necked Phalarope
52. Red Phalarope
53. Sabine's Gull
54. Herring Gull
55. Glaucous-winged Gull
56. Glaucous Gull
57. Arctic Tern
58. Pomarine Jaeger
59. Parasitic Jaeger
60. Long-tailed Jaeger
61. Thick-billed Murre
62. Black Guillemot
63. Snowy Owl
64. Short-eared Owl
65. Olive-sided Flycatcher
66. Common Raven
67. Horned Lark
68. Bank Swallow
69. Cliff Swallow
70. American Robin
71. Varied Thrush
72. Yellow-rumped Warbler
73. Wilson's Warbler
74. Savannah Sparrow
75. White-crowned Sparrow
76. Lapland Longspur
77. Snow Bunting
78. Rusty Blackbird
79. Common Redpoll
80. Hoary Redpoll

WILDERNESS BIRDING ADVENTURES

EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING LIST:

BARROW

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

HEAD:

- 1 ea Wool, pile or polarfleece hat - balaclavas or bomber hats are especially warm. A nylon outer shell is a bonus (such as the bomber hat has).

UPPER BODY: Barrow can be windy and cold, including snowy; therefore, some of the layers below should incorporate nylon wind protection, unless you opt to bring a separate wind shirt and wind pants. Also, because cotton will not keep you warm in damp, cool weather, it's important to have a layer of wool or synthetic long underwear that you can tolerate wearing next to your skin for both the upper and lower body.

- 1 ea Heavy winter coat or parka
- 1 ea Layer of wool or synthetic (e.g., Capilene, Thermax, etc.) long underwear.
- 1 ea Heavy wool sweater, synthetic fleece jacket.
- 1 ea Medium layer: light polarfleece or wool sweater, or down or synthetic vest.
- 1 ea Warm shirt.
- 1 ea A good rain jacket - make sure the seams are sealed. Ponchos are inadequate.
- 1 ea Pair of warm gloves. Windproof gloves are ideal.

LOWER BODY: The same comments at "Upper Body" apply here also.

- 1 pr Long underwear (wool or Capilene, etc.).
- 1 pr Heavy wool, synthetic (polarfleece, synchilla, etc.) or other warm pants.
- 1 pr Good rain pants, seam-sealed.

FEET:

- 2 pr Warm socks.
- 1 pr Insulated boots or NEOS to wear in combination with good walking shoes or hiking boots.

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

In addition to the above required items, the following items are recommended for your comfort.

HEAD:

- 1 ea Visor cap - baseball type, good for sun protection and aiding visibility when wearing a rain hood.

UPPER BODY:

- Cotton T-shirts
- 1 ea Wind shell. Your raingear can double for wind protection but I find a nylon shell to be more comfortable, lightweight, compact, and versatile in combination with other layers.
- 1 ea Additional wool or synthetic (e.g., Capilene etc.) layer for the top.

LOWER BODY:

- Changes of underwear.
- 1 pr Wind pants. Again, raingear may double for wind protection but light nylon is more comfortable.
- 1 ea Additional layer of synthetic (e.g., Capilene etc.) or wool bottoms, medium weight.
- 1 ea Comfortable walking pants.

FEET:

- 1 pr tennis or running shoes.
- 2 pr Removable insoles - the secret to warm feet if you are using rubberized boots.
- 3 pr chemical toe warmers

GENERAL:

- 2 ea bandanas
- Personal toiletries
- 1 ea Daypack for carrying gear while out birding during the day.
- 1 ea Water bottle &/or thermos
- 1 pr Sunglasses
- Spare glasses or contact lenses
- Personal medicine (WBA will supply a first aid kit which, by law, does not include prescription drugs)
- Camera and film/digital storage, plus spare batteries & charger
- Binoculars
- Spotting scope & tripod

WILDERNESS BIRDING ADVENTURES, LLC (“WBA”)

PARTICIPANT RELEASE OF LIABILITY, WAIVER OF CLAIMS, ASSUMPTION OF RISKS, AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

By signing this Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Assumption of Risks, and Indemnity Agreement, I acknowledge that I AM ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE for my own safety during my participation in any WBA activities, as well as for the safety of any minor children for which I am responsible.

Wilderness Birding Adventures, LLC, is an Alaska limited liability company, and reference to it in this document includes, among others, its agents, owners, and employees, as well as all other persons or entities acting in any capacity on its behalf.

RISKS BEING WAIVED: I (the term “I,” “me,” or “my” shall include myself, as well as any minor children for which I am responsible) acknowledge that there are significant risks in any activity associated with outdoor adventures, including but not limited to bicycling, camping, climbing/hiking/trekking, fishing, hunting, skiing, sledding, swimming, wilderness lodges, and the presence or use of animals, watercraft, transportation to/from/during trip, firearms, or other weapons and the use of any related equipment (referred to herein as “activity”). I specifically acknowledge that the inherent risks associated with these activities include, but are not limited to: 1) Slipping, falling, sprains, torn muscles and/or ligaments, fractured or broken bones, eye damage, cuts, wounds, scrapes, abrasions, contusions, dehydration, exhaustion, cramps, fatigue, chills and/or dizziness, oxygen shortage (anoxia), exposure and/or altitude sickness, head injuries, neck injuries, spinal injuries, shock, paralysis, drowning, and/or death; 2) Cold weather and heat related injuries and illnesses including frostnip, frostbite, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, hypothermia, and dehydration; 3) An “act of nature” which may include avalanche, flooding, rock fall, inclement weather, thunder, lightning, hail, severe and/or varied wind, temperature or weather conditions; 4) Risks associated with river crossings, fjordings, portaging, or travel including travel to or from the activity, such as exposure to cold or fast moving water; 5) Risks associated with crossing, climbing or down-climbing of rock, snow and/or ice, such as broken bones, sprained muscles; 6) Equipment failure and/or operator error; 7) Discharge of weapons; 8) Risks typically associated with watercraft including change in water flow or current; submerged, semi-submerged and overhanging objects; capsizing, swamping or sinking of watercraft and resultant injury, hypothermia, or drowning; 9) Negligence of other participants and my own negligence and inexperience; 10) Attack by or encounter with insects, reptiles, plants or wildlife and any resulting disease, condition or injury; 11) Accidents or illnesses occurring in remote places where there are no available medical facilities; and 12) Injuries or death from accidents or crashes on ATVs, small planes, vehicles or other modes of transportation. I understand the description of these risks is not complete and that unknown or unanticipated risks may result in damage to property, injury, illness or death. I acknowledge that WBA instructors, employees, guides, agents or others are not infallible, that they may be ignorant of my or another participant’s fitness or abilities, and that they may give inadequate warnings or instructions. I further acknowledge that I am releasing WBA of any liability for the negligence of myself, other participants, as well as from WBA’s negligence, including WBA instructors, employees, guides, agents.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: My participation in this activity is purely voluntary. No one is forcing me to participate and I elect to participate in spite of the risks. I am physically and mentally capable of participating in any WBA activity and/or safely using any associated equipment. I accept that wearing a USCG approved personal flotation device for waterborne activities is a basic safety precaution.

COVENANT OF GOOD FAITH: I recognize that WBA, as provider of goods and/or services, will operate under a covenant of good faith and fair dealing, but that WBA may find it necessary to terminate an activity or refuse or terminate the participation of any person for the safety of myself and/or other participants. I acknowledge that no guarantees have been made with respect to achieving objectives.

AUTHORIZATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT: I hereby authorize any medical treatment deemed necessary in the event of any injury while participating in any WBA activity. I either have appropriate insurance or, in its absence, agree to pay all costs of rescue and/or medical services as may be incurred on my behalf. Under separate cover, I have provided WBA with a list of known allergies to medications, plants or insects, and have notified WBA if I am under a doctor’s care or am using any prescription medications.

ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE: In consideration of the services of WBA, and all other persons or entities associated with WBA, I certify that I am fully capable of participating in this activity. Therefore, I assume and accept full responsibility for myself, including all minor children in my care, custody, and control, for bodily injury, death, loss of personal property, and expenses as a result of those inherent risks and dangers identified herein and those inherent risks and dangers not specifically identified, and as a result of my negligence in participating in this activity.

INDEMNIFICATION FOR ATTORNEY'S FEES AND COSTS: In the event any legal action is instituted against WBA and WBA is the prevailing party, WBA shall be entitled to its actual, reasonable costs and attorney's fees.

JURISDICTION FOR ANY CLAIMS ARISING FROM RELEASE: Any action arising from my participation in any WBA activity shall be instituted in the Third Judicial District, Homer Venue District, State of Alaska.

I hereby voluntarily release, forever discharge, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless WBA from any and all claims, demands, or causes of action, which are in any way connected with my participation in these activities, including any such claims which allege negligent acts or omissions of WBA.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that if anyone is hurt or killed or property is damaged during my participation in any WBA activities, I may be found by a court of law to have waived my right to maintain a lawsuit against WBA on the basis of any claim from which I have released it herein.

I HAVE HAD SUFFICIENT OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT. I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD IT, AND I AGREE TO BE BOUND BY ITS TERMS.

Participant's Name (printed) _____ Age _____

Signature _____

In an emergency, notify: (print) _____

Emergency contact phone: _____

If the Participant is under 18, the Parent or Legal Guardian must also sign:
