

## **Acadia Birds by Land and Sea**

**2020 Tours: I. June 12-16, II. June 19-23, III. Aug. 21-25**

These experiences are designed to explore the habitats of the Downeast Acadia Region, focusing on terrestrial birding hotspots and near-shore waters of the Gulf of Maine. In partnership with the Maine Birding Trail, we will observe and learn about birds and regional ecology at a comfortable pace while contributing to Schoodic Institute's ongoing scientific studies of birds. Experience the thrill of discovery while being immersed in Acadia National Park's outstanding beauty and landscape.

### **For more information, contact:**

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### **Day 1 (Arrival and Check-in, 3-4 pm)**

The experience begins at 4 pm at Schoodic Institute's Rockefeller Hall on the Institute campus in Acadia National Park for lodging check-in and a group orientation. We'll then take a leisurely ride around the quiet side of Acadia's Schoodic Peninsula before dinner at 6 pm. Following dinner, we will have an evening presentation or short stroll to Schoodic Point to get acquainted with the ecology of the region.

### **Days 2, 3, and 4**

These first few days usually begin with an optional bird walk before breakfast on the Schoodic Institute campus. Weather and tides will help to shape each day's customized plan. Breakfast is served in our dining hall from 7-8 am. However, some days will start earlier in which case we'll have a prepared field breakfast to tote along. We will go afield each day, complete with a scrumptious bagged lunch, to a fruitful variety of birding locations and outstanding sites throughout the region. Our "home range" extends from the eastern blueberry barrens of Columbia Falls to Seal Cove on the western side of Acadia National Park. We'll travel in a 15-passenger van. We'll return to our lodging at the Institute by late afternoon each day (between 5-6 pm) to enjoy a little relaxation time and a favorite beverage before dinner. Dinner is always served from 6-7 pm, where we'll be seated as a group. After dinner we'll review the day's bird checklist, discuss our use of eBird to document birds, and glean information from the latest conservation and research efforts of Schoodic Institute and the National Park Service.

June tours will prioritize a boat trip to Petit Manan Island to see Atlantic Puffin and other nesting birds of this active seabird colony such as Razorbill, Black Guillemot, Common Eider, Arctic and Common Tern. Our route will include ledges where Harbor and Gray seals can be seen, as well as opportunities to view of an active Bald Eagle nest, and a colony or two of nesting Double-crested cormorants.

On the mainland, in June, we'll look for Spruce Grouse, a variety of forest-dwelling warblers, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Nelson's Sparrow, Palm Warbler and other songbirds by visiting various area hotspots.

A June trip to this region also warrants a day trip to an impressive expanse of nearby blueberry barrens to look for specialty birds such as Upland Sandpiper, Vesper and Savannah sparrows, nesting Northern Harriers and American Kestrel.

During the August tour, our sea-going priority shifts to PELAGIC birds and WHALES. In fact, we could call this tour "Feathers and Flukes" as we take a boat trip out to different areas of the Gulf of Maine in search of shearwaters, jaegers, fulmars, and phalaropes and several species of whales! From land, in August, we'll concentrate on songbird and shorebird migration hotspots.

## **Day 5**

The last morning of birding together, after breakfast, there will be an easy stroll along Schoodic Institute's Sundew or Alder Trail or a quick van ride to nearby Frazer Point. We'll review what we've learned before saying our goodbyes and then all depart at 10 am.

Lodging is in Cape Cod style duplex cabins or you can upgrade (<https://schoodicinstitute.org/visit/lodging/>)

Transportation from Bangor Airport or Bar Harbor Airport is available upon request. Please coordinate travel plans with tour officials to allow for ground transportation to and from Schoodic Institute in Winter Harbor.

**Descriptions of Mount Desert Island Hotspots** (an assortment of which will be on the itinerary):

**Clark Point Road** 1.0 mile of easy walking

Clark Point Road is a little gem. The walking is easy and there are a variety of habitats ranging from open field, to hardwood forest, mixed growth, and conifers. The road creates edge habitat that offers great views of Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Black-and-white, Yellow, and Northern Parula Warblers alongside Common Yellowthroat and American Redstart, and we often hear the drumming of Ruffed Grouse. Pileated, Hairy, and Downy woodpeckers all grace the woods. Successional alder thickets yield Alder Flycatchers and the open fields along the road offer Bluebirds, and Song Sparrows. We will walk through private property with Red-eyed Vireos, Blue-headed Vireos, Purple Finches, Hermit Thrushes, Brown Creepers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, White-throated Sparrows, and Winter Wrens to access a secluded beach on the shore of Goose Cove where we may see Black Guillemots, Common Eiders, Double Crested Cormorants, Scoters, Osprey, and potentially the daily visit of the Bald Eagle.

**Otter Cliffs** 2 miles of moderate, hilly terrain with some rocks/roots.

This unique peninsula acts as a migrant trap for birds traveling from Neotropical regions. Mourning, Blackburnian, Cape May, Black-throated Green, Yellow-rumped, and Northern Parula Warblers, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy and Downy Woodpecker, Blue-headed Vireo, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Purple Finch, and Pine Siskin are all found here. Otter Point, located 12 miles out to sea from the mainland, offers diverse coastal and deepwater habitats which attracts a variety of seabirds including Common Eider, Black Guillemot, Laughing Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Red-necked and Horned Grebe, Double-crested and Great Cormorant, Northern Gannet, Red-breasted Merganser, and all three Scoter. A special treat is the chance to view nesting Black Guillemot on the high vertical cliffs.

**Peregrine Falcon Viewing** Precipice Trailhead Parking Lot

Easy opportunity to view nesting Peregrine Falcons. Your guide will have a spotting scope. Acadia National Park was among the first to reintroduce Peregrines at this very site. Nearly thirty years of annual nesting has successfully produced fledgling falcons!

**Pretty Marsh/Long Pond Fire Road** 2-3 miles of easy to moderate terrain, with 100 ft elevation change, and some rocky paths.

Surrounded by a maturing red spruce forest with views of Hardwood and Bartlett Islands, Pretty Marsh is an Acadia gem where land meets sea. Blackburnian Warblers, Northern Parula, White-winged Crossbill, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-headed Vireo, and Hermit Thrush make this seaside forest their home. Bald Eagle, Osprey, Common Loon, Red-breasted Merganser, and occasionally, non-breeding Long-tailed Ducks and White-winged Scoters as well as Harbor Seals are seen in the saltwater

of Blue Hill Bay. Though called Pretty Marsh, the picnic area where we walk is not a marsh.

**Seal Cove - Cape Road** 2.5 miles of easy walking.

This walk begins along the ocean's edge where we have opportunities to encounter lingering sea ducks, plus eagles, loons and kingfishers. We will also monitor mixed habitat on the inland side as we walk along the shore. A little farther up Cape Road we turn inland and encounter shrubby habitat where we can hope to find warblers, flycatchers, sparrows, thrushes and others. One of the best parts of this walk is not only the abundance of species, but the ease of viewing many birds that stay low and close. The road is not heavily traveled, so we can expect to exercise our auditory acuity and help each other to re-learn our favorite bird songs.

**Sieur de Monts Spring** 1.75 miles, flat, easy walk.

The "spring" situated here was used to prevent perishable food from spoiling by ancestors of the Wabanaki people. The on-site Abbe Museum celebrates Native American culture and history in Maine while the extensive grounds provide excellent birding opportunities. The two primary trails, Jesup Path and Hemlock Road, are configured into a figure eight, double loop which affords the option for a shorter walk for those so inclined. The diversity of the trail system presents a wonderful mix of forested wetland, upland marsh, mixed growth and conifer forests hosting a wide variety of bird species. The Jesup trail begins as a boardwalk offering a quiet, almost ethereal experience through a forested wetland with a lush carpet of moss and fern. Red-eyed Vireo, Eastern Wood Pewee, Great-crested Flycatcher, and migrating warblers are found foraging here. Blackpoll, Magnolia, and Nashville Warblers appear along with the regulars often enough, to keep sharp eyes on the lookout. Juvenile begging has revealed active woodpecker nests along the boardwalk. Hairy, Downy and Pileated Woodpecker are regulars, with Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Yellow-shafted Flicker making frequent appearances.

**Valley Cove and Flying Mountain** 1.5 miles of easy to difficult, hilly terrain, 150 ft elevation climb.

Experience one of MDI's diverse emerging old growth forests for Neotropical migrants. Tall red spruce, white pines and cedar are breeding habitat for Blackburnian and Magnolia Warblers, Northern Parula, Blue-headed Vireo, Winter Wren, Swainson's Thrush, Pileated and Hairy Woodpeckers, and Pine Siskin. During irruption years, White-winged Crossbills can frequent the area! The trail takes you to Valley Cove where you can gaze at the cliffs of St. Sauveur Mountain and search for Peregrine Falcon nesting on the cliffs. From the cove, there is an option to take a more strenuous hike over Flying Mountain and enjoy fabulous views of Somes Sound and beyond.

**Wendell Gilley Museum** Southwest Harbor

The Wendell Gilley Museum is a community center that celebrates the life and work of Wendell Gilley, a pioneer in the field of decorative bird carving. It teaches the art of bird carving and presents art exhibitions and educational programs with a special focus on people, nature and art. The Museum endeavors to inspire appreciation of the visual arts, engagement in artistic creativity, and respect and care for the natural world. Exploring the

natural world through art and action is fun at the Gilley Museum. Stop in, there is always so much to see and do. Open Tuesday-Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm.

**Wonderland** 2 miles, easy walk

The Wonderland Trail is located on Seawall Road between Ship Harbor and Seawall Campground, offering a similar variety of habits and birdlife as the Seawall Road Hotspots Trip. The trail traverses through a forest of red and white spruce, emerging onto a lovely short loop trail by the ocean's edge. The forest is a migrant trap in the spring, and is home to Spruce Grouse, Hermit Thrush, Pileated Woodpecker, and a variety of warblers. Observe Common Eiders, Black Guillemots, scoters, Common Loons, possible shorebirds, and Bald Eagles along the shore.