

TOUR INFORMATION BULLETIN

Northern Arizona's Canyons and Condor I (Private Tampa Audubon) 2025

May 10, 2025 to May 16, 2025

This page was last reviewed or updated on Dec 20, 2024.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We will be staying at the Sonesta ES Suites in Flagstaff. It is an ideal place for the six-night stay and in a very good location with beautiful views of the Coconino National Forest. The rooms are very comfortable with full kitchens. Every room has a king bed and a single or queen sofa bed. Doubles have separate bedrooms, each with its own bath.

ACTIVITIES/PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

*We want to be sure you are on the right tour! **Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour.** If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.*

TRAILS & WALKING: Moderate amounts of walking (up to 1.5 miles per outing) with some of it on paved walkways at Grand Canyon, but mostly on dirt or gravel roads. We will also walk through a meadow at 8500 feet of elevation with a gradual uphill and no trails, where the ground is uneven and can be rocky and it is necessary to step over downed logs and fallen limbs. Lightweight hiking boots are recommended for most days.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES: We cover much ground on this tour and birding sites are spread out. To search for condors we will likely need to do a two-hour-plus drive one-way with a few stops along the way. The drive to Grand Canyon is about 90 minutes with a couple stops en route. Some days will feature shorter drives with a number of roadside birding stops with much getting in and out of vans.

PACE: The Flagstaff area is not on Daylight Saving Time, so it gets light early. Expect early mornings (usually 5:30 a.m. breakfasts), departing the hotel at 6:00-6:15 a.m., with one or two afternoon breaks during the tour. Most days will include a full day of birding with a picnic lunch in the field or a stop in a café. On some days, we will return in time for a shower before dinner, whereas others will find us taking advantage of early evening birding and going directly from birding to dinner.

WEATHER: Summer weather is pleasant in central and northern Arizona. Expect temperatures in the low 50s F in the morning, with days ranging from the low 70s to high 80s and possibly into the 90s at the lower elevations. Cool mornings warm quickly with the rising sun, and evenings cool quickly with the setting sun. Rain showers are unlikely but possible.

VEHICLE SEATING: So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.

BATHROOM BREAKS: Whenever possible, we use modern, indoor restrooms, but, on occasion, participants should be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.

OPTING OUT: Since we are in the same lodging for the entire tour, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they'll put you in touch with a guide.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS/ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE (if applicable)

This tour begins and ends in Flagstaff (Flagstaff Pulliam Airport, airport code FLG).

Flagstaff is served by American Airlines, with flights coming from Phoenix and Dallas in commuter jets. Please plan to arrive in Flagstaff on Day 1 on the 5:40 p.m. flight (or earlier). Due to the flight schedules, we will go straight to dinner from the airport. For anyone who arrives a day earlier, we will go birding on the afternoon of Day 1 on the way to the airport and then go to dinner. You will be met at the airport by your guide. Departures may be scheduled at anytime on Day 7.

Flagstaff is also served by Amtrak Rail and is on the Chicago to Los Angeles route. Additionally, there is a shuttle van service (Groome Transportation) that runs directly between Flagstaff and the Phoenix airport.

Please let the Field Guides office know if you will be arriving by train, shuttle, or driving to Flagstaff so that directions and meeting place can be passed on to you.

Field Guides is a full-service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed. **If we are not arranging your air travel, please check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to assure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary.** Once purchased most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change; Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees if you don't check with us prior to purchasing your airline tickets. Also, **it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary**—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.

ALTITUDE

Birding on this tour will be at moderately high to high mountain elevations (3500-9600 feet).

CANCELLATION POLICY

Refund of deposit and full payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable. Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no

matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

CLIMATE/CLOTHING

NOTE: Important items to bring are included in the SUGGESTED PACKING LIST in the last section of this document.

With the high elevation and low humidity we will experience a wide range of temperatures during the day. Early mornings are quite cool but the temperature rises quickly in the late morning and afternoon. Flagstaff could be in the upper 30s F overnight but warm to the high-70s in the afternoon. Sedona, at a lower elevation, could easily be 10-15 degrees warmer with afternoon temperatures in the mid-80s or 90s. The higher elevations of the mountains could see a high in the 60s. Evenings cool quickly as the sun sets. Peelable layers will be the norm, with a fleece jacket or sweater necessary in the mornings and probably in the evening. Long light- or medium-weight trousers, and long-sleeved shirts are recommended for most days and they also protect you from the intense high-elevation sun. Cold-blooded folks might find shorts comfortable on most days after the morning chill wears off.

You should have comfortable hiking footwear and a pair of lightweight shoes (like sneakers) to change into; running shoes with good arch support are adequate for the hiking we will do, but boots provide better ankle support. May and June are typically the driest months of the year in northern Arizona, but a light drizzle is not out of the question. We recommend having a rain jacket which could double as a windbreaker. Northern Arizona is usually quite sunny, so bring a hat with a brim and a good sunscreen.

Dress will be casual throughout the trip. We recommend peelable layers of clothing.

DOCUMENTS

A photo ID (e.g., driver's license or passport) is required of all persons boarding flights in the U.S.

DRINKS POLICY

As always, Field Guides will pay for one non-alcoholic drink with each meal. If you choose to have an alcoholic beverage—or a second (or more) non-alcoholic drink—you'll need to pay for those yourself. On the typical tour, you will have three options for paying for your extra drinks: 1) In many instances when we are eating at our lodging, you should be able to charge drinks to your room (provided you leave a credit card number with the desk when we check in) and settle up your bill before departing the lodging; 2) when charging to your room is not possible in some more remote lodgings, you may need to pay cash; or 3) if you would prefer not to have to pay as you go, your guide(s) will be happy to pay for your drinks during the course of the tour, provided that you keep track of your tally and bring an American dollar check (or cash) with which to reimburse your guide(s) at the tour's end.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

We will provide you with a list of hotels with addresses and phone numbers which you can give to your relatives and friends. In case of emergency or missed connections en route to the tour, contact the Field Guides office at 1-800-728-4953 or 1-512-263-7295 during business office hours, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time. **If you require immediate assistance after hours, you can reach the "on-call" tour manager at 1-512-431-9347.** This is a cell phone; if we are out of range, leave a message on our voice mail and we will return your call as soon as we are back in range. **Please note that this phone cannot receive text messages!**

HEALTH INFORMATION

You should consult your physician regarding health precautions and your individual health needs while on this tour.

Follow your usual travel health precautions for this tour.

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID-19 vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which includes a booster for those eligible to have one). Note too, that many travel destinations may still require proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may be a requirement for some travel destinations.

Our On-Tour Protocols are designed to minimize our exposure to COVID-19 as much as possible; please be sure to read them: <https://fieldguides.com/health-protocols/>. Contact the CDC (at 800-CDC-INFO or 800-232-4636; <https://www.cdc.gov/>) for further information about any potential health hazards in the areas you will be visiting.

Be sure to bring an adequate supply of your regular medications (in your carry-on!), as well as a personal supply of such basics as aspirin, cold medicine, Visine or other eyewash, lip balm, an anti-bacterial ointment, a general antibiotic recommended by your physician, and something for minor skin irritations. Sunscreen should be of a high sun protection factor (SPF) to protect your skin from the conditions we'll encounter on this tour (and remember, if your tour visits the tropics or high altitude, the intensity of the sun is greater there).

If you are taking any prescription drugs, please carry a photocopy of your prescription from the doctor with you.

INSECTS/OTHER PESTS

Northern Arizona is relatively insect-free throughout the year, but we could encounter a few mosquitoes if it has been unusually wet, so you may want a small container of repellent with you. Chiggers are no problem here. We do caution you against desert thorns in one or two places and venomous snakes which are present but rarely seen without effort.

INTERNET/TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Our hotel in Flagstaff has free wireless internet access.

LAUNDRY

Coin-op laundry facilities are available at our hotel in Flagstaff. Also, hand laundry dries very quickly in the warm, dry air of Arizona.

LUGGAGE

Our lodging has no porters to help with the luggage. We ask that you limit your baggage to one suitcase (or duffel) and a carry-on. In an effort to reduce the wear and tear on your guide's back we ask that you pack in such a way that no one bag is too heavy (this will help to ensure that your guide(s) are healthy and in the field rather than in bed with a strained back). Most participants find they have brought entirely too much, and traveling light will be more efficient and will endear you to the guides as well as to airport personnel.

We recommend that, if possible, you check your luggage from your point of origin to Flagstaff. Responsibility for tracking and retrieving lost luggage is with the carrier at its checked destination. Be sure to check the routing slip carefully against your itinerary to see that it lists the correct flights in the correct sequence.

We suggest you carry all essential medications and equipment, along with a change of field clothes and any personal items critical to your enjoyment of the first days' birding, in your carry-on luggage. Dress and/or pack in such a way that you could survive if your checked luggage did not catch up with you for several days.

Please be aware that due to rising fuel costs, many airlines are charging additional fees for checked bags. An airline's standard could easily change before your departure, so please be sure to contact your airline to verify their current policy.

Many airlines have instituted strict policies about the size of carry-on luggage. In some cities baggage sizer panels for measuring carry-on luggage are being installed on the X-ray machine conveyor belts at airport security checkpoints. Baggage will need to clear these sizer panels to travel as carry-on luggage. The panels are large enough to accommodate standard carry-on luggage and garment bags (up to 9 inches high and 15 inches wide for luggage and 24 inches wide and 5 inches high for folded garment bags). Most airlines allow a maximum of two carry-on pieces (for example, a roll-on and a laptop case or handbag) in the main cabin.

If you have binoculars, camera equipment, or any items that would be expensive to replace and that are not covered in your home owner's policy, you may wish to consider taking out personal property insurance. Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for the theft, loss, or damage of any of your personal equipment.

You will receive two luggage tags as a part of your pre-tour packet. Please use them, as they facilitate identifying, collecting, and distributing your luggage at airports and hotels.

PERSONAL ITEMS

NOTE: Important items to bring are included in the SUGGESTED PACKING LIST in the last section of this document.

We will have an ice chest with cold drinks, but you will need a canteen or water bottle in the vehicle with you daily to take on walks. You will also need an alarm clock and a small flashlight or headlamp (very useful since it frees up both of your hands). Other suggested items are sunglasses, lens tissue, some small packages of tissue paper and lip-balm. If you wear corrective lenses, you should consider bringing a spare pair. Your leader will have a telescope, but you may want to bring along your own, particularly if you customarily bird with your scope at home or if you plan to do any digiscoping. If you plan to do any digiscoping, you should bring your own scope for that purpose so as not to interfere with a guide's or the group's use of the guide scope(s). Please do not digiscope with the guide's telescope.

SMOKING

Most of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere. Smoking in vehicles is prohibited.

SUGGESTED FIELD GUIDES AND OTHER REFERENCES

Cornell Lab, Cornell University. MERLIN BIRD ID. This app, created by the Cornell Lab, is useful for more than just bird ID help. Depending on which free pack you choose to download within the app, each species has photos, an excellent range map, and various calls/song. App is free from the app store. Numerous packs are available, so be sure to select the appropriate pack for your tour. No internet connection is required because the data are stored on your phone/tablet (iOS or Android). Merlin allows you to ID birds through several pathways beyond viewing photos and text in the bird packs, including a photo-matching algorithm that's pretty darned accurate. Highly recommended!

Dunn, Jon L. & Jonathan Alderfer. 2017. FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society. ISBN: 9781426218354. This revised (seventh) edition is an excellent reference. Since many of the species covered here either migrate through or winter in Middle America and the Caribbean, it is also a valuable guide to take on holidays "south of the border".

Osborn, Sophie A. H. 2007. CONDORS IN CANYON COUNTRY. Grand Canyon Assn. ISBN: 0938216988. Subtitled "The Return of the California Condor to the Grand Canyon Region," this account, embellished with breathtaking photographs, combines in a compelling way Osborn's personal narrative with the history of this noble bird and its recovery from the brink of extinction.

Sibley, David Allen. 2016. THE SIBLEY FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF WESTERN NORTH AMERICA. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. ISBN: 9780307957924. The more compact and portable version of The Sibley Guide to Birds whose treatment is limited to western North America. This, the second edition, is a splendid guide; highly recommended.

TIME

This part of Arizona does not observe Daylight Saving Time but stays on Mountain Standard Time throughout the year. During the time of our tour, Arizona is three hours behind Eastern Daylight Time, two hours behind Central Daylight Time, and the same as Pacific Daylight Time.

TIPPING

Tips for drivers, baggage handling, meals, etc. are already covered by your tour fee. We will tip generously for the group as a whole. Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). The only service that we can't tip appropriately for as a group is maid service in rooms at our hotels, given that rooms are often scattered and involve various maids. Small tips would always be appreciated there. Otherwise, you should worry about tipping only for your extra beverages and, on occasion, if a local performs an appreciated service especially for you. However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips, as a reflection of your appreciation, are optional and not expected.

TRANSPORTATION

We will travel in a 15-passenger van.

TRIP CANCELLATION AND MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE

We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://>

fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/ and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii.

We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

CLOTHING & WEATHER GEAR:

- FIELD HAT WITH A BRIM
- LIGHTWEIGHT SHOES (sneakers/sandals)
- LONG-SLEEVED SHIRTS
- LIGHT or MEDIUM WEIGHT TROUSERS
- RAIN PANTS
- SHORTS
- SWEATER or FLEECE
- WALKING SHOES/BOOTS

IMPORTANT PERSONAL ITEMS:

- BINOCULARS
- ALARM CLOCK
- CHARGERS – for your cell phone, laptop, batteries, and other devices
- DAYPACK – suitable for carrying your water bottle, rain gear, etc., on the trail
- EXTRA BATTERIES – for cameras, alarm clocks, etc.
- FLASHLIGHT or HEADLAMP
- RAIN GEAR – a windproof/waterproof layer (it is often too windy for an umbrella to be useful)
- UMBRELLA – small fold-up type
- WATER BOTTLE – to bring daily in the field (very important, as we're often in the field – and away from water sources); to save luggage space, you could choose to purchase a 500-600ml soda en-route to the tour, and then reuse that bottle

OTHER ITEMS YOU MIGHT FIND USEFUL:

- CORRECTIVE LENSES – spare pair of glasses or contacts, if you wear them
- INSECT REPELLENT
- LENS CLEANER/CLOTH – for glasses and optics
- LIP BALM – one with a high SPF
- MEMORY CARDS – one or more extra ones for your camera, for example
- SUNSCREEN – high SPF, preferably broad spectrum (to cover both UVA and UVB rays)
- TISSUES – small package(s)
- TRAIL FOOD – a small supply of such things as granola bars, dried fruit, nuts, etc. to help tide you over between meals
- WATERLESS HAND CLEANSER – such as Purell