

## ITINERARY

**ALASKA: The Great Land*****Tour I: May 29-June 11, 2027******Tour II: June 5-18, 2027***

*Kittlitz's Murrelet is a small seabird that nests on mountains in the coastal regions of Alaska. We should get good looks at them when we're in Kenai Fjords National Park, near Seward.  
Photograph by guide Micah Riegner.*

*We include here information for those interested in the 2027 Field Guides Alaska: The Great Land tour:*

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

*These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:*

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

**A**laska is an unfathomably vast mosaic of northern wilderness. One's first hint at the immensity of The Great Land may come from the airplane on the way there, as you pass over several mountain ranges, each one bleeding into the next: The Coast range, the St. Elias Mountains, the Kenai Mountains, and even the famous Alaska Range—on a clear day you can see Denali on most approaches. Finally, the plane circles and drops in for a landing at Anchorage in between the snow-capped peaks of the gorgeous Chugach Mountains and the expansive flats of Cook Inlet. Anchorage itself, a modern, thriving city, is insignificant by comparison, almost out of place in the tapestry of mountains, lakes, and forest that form the landscape all around. The sky in this far northern latitude seems indescribably wide and high, the air crisp and pure. The place is nothing short of spectacular!

After a short shuttle ride to our lakeside hotel, you might get the distinct urge start birding immediately, with Red-necked Grebes and Barrow's Goldeneyes dotting the water a stone's throw from the lobby, and those scaup you may see out there are probably a convenient mix of Lessers and Greater. Even with this excitement, you'll realize that this is not even scratching the surface of what's to come: You've made it to the beginning of one of the greatest of birding trips there is, in one of the wildest, most beautiful places on Earth.



*Bristle-thighed Curlew is a large shorebird that nests exclusively in Alaska. We'll hike out on the tundra near Nome to find this rare bird. Photograph by guide Alex Sundvall.*

Alaska represents North America's ultimate birding frontier. It is a prime place to go for a captivating mix of species such as King, Common, Spectacled, and Steller's eiders, Harlequin Duck, Gyrfalcon, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Aleutian Tern, Long-tailed, Parasitic, and Pomarine jaegers, Willow and Rock ptarmigan, Spruce Grouse, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Slaty-backed Gull, Bluethroat, Northern Wheatear, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Arctic Warbler, Snow Bunting, and many more. The bogs and tundra echo with the cries of displaying shorebirds including American and Pacific golden-plovers, Red and Red-necked phalaropes, Rock Sandpiper, Western, Semipalmated, Least, Baird's, and Pectoral Sandpipers, Whimbrel, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe and more.

Our grand tour will take us to many of Alaska's finest birding sites. We visit the Anchorage area, Seward (including Kenai Fjords National Park), Nome, and Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow). May-June is a great time to be in Alaska: birds are in their full breeding regalia and most of the biting insects are still underwater. The northern summer is a time of vibrant life, but there is an undertone of urgency, for the season's end is always in sight.

The icy waters and rocky intertidal zone of Kenai Fjords National Park provides a home for the likes of Black Oystercatcher, Kittlitz's, Marbled, and Ancient murrelets, Humpback Whales, and Sea Otters. Our boat trip here will get us up close and personal with one of the spectacular glaciers flowing off the Kenai Peninsula's Harding Icefield.

Our visit to Nome offers birders the chance to witness the merging of American and Eurasian avifaunas. We'll see Fox Sparrows breeding alongside Bluethroats while Eastern Yellow Wagtails perform their courtship flights above singing Yellow Warblers and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Meanwhile, diverse hordes of tundra breeding birds will be setting up shop for the breeding season across the Seward Peninsula.

Far to the north, in Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow), we'll seek some of the northernmost arctic breeders, including all four species of beautiful eiders (especially Spectacled and Steller's), Snowy Owl, Red Phalaropes, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Yellow-billed Loon—and there's even a chance to find a Polar Bear. The 24-hour daylight and stark northern landscape will provide a memorable backdrop for our wildlife observations.

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 this and be sure to fully explain 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.



*We'll have at least one strenuous hike to get to the area where Bristle-thighed Curlews can be seen.  
Photograph by participant Lyle Hamilton.*

### Physical Requirements of this tour:

- **TRAILS:** There is one long hike in Nome to search for Bristle-thighed Curlews. This hike lasts up to 3-4 hours; terrain is steep and uneven tundra, usually 2-3 miles round-trip. Other hikes are generally shorter, but terrain may be uneven, with obstacles such as fallen logs, grass hummocks and rocks. Some trails may be in wet areas where waterproof footwear is helpful/necessary.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** An all-day boat trip onto the Kenai Fjords may be rough and requires a good sense of balance. Medication is recommended if you suffer from motion sickness. You may need to climb stairs at some hotels. Travel will generally be in 15-passenger vans; you'll need to be able to climb in and out several or more times per day.
- **PACE:** Days will be long! Breakfast is typically between 6-7 a.m. and most evenings dinner will be around 7 p.m. We will have optional birding after dinner until perhaps 11 p.m. in Nome and Utqiagvik. Some days we will be out in the field all day, and we'll plan to eat a picnic lunch. We'll have some long travel days as well; flights to and from Nome and Utqiagvik (the exact start times will depend on our flight schedule).
- **ELEVATION:** This will not be an issue on this low elevation tour.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures range widely from lows in the 30s °F to highs in the 70s °F. It will be cold in Utqiagvik, potentially down to the 20s °F with a wind chill. We will be birding areas that may be wet; waterproof boots are needed. Quality rain gear (jacket and pants) is required to comfortably bird Alaska. Roads could be dusty, especially in Nome.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** 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 must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** You may opt out of the Bristle-thighed Curlew hike and stay at the van or back at the hotel. You may also opt-out of the Seward boat trip and stay back at the hotel for the day. It is also possible to take some time off when we are in Utqiagvik, and in Nome.

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 will put you in touch with one of the guides.

## About the Birding Areas



**Nome and the Seward Peninsula**— Accessed by daily jet service from Anchorage, this once-remote outpost in far western Alaska is now easy to reach and offers visitors unexpected comfort. Our lovely hotel looks out to Norton Sound and provides us with an excellent chance to seawatch right outside our doors. Situated on the south coast of the Seward Peninsula, the Nome area is characterized by a mix of moist tussock-heath tundra and drier, upland tundra crossed with shrub-lined creeks. A few good dirt roads give access to large lagoons and inland hills as well. We'll travel these roads in search of the many specialties of the area—and there are many specialties. Nome is the best place in North America to see several species that barely reach our shores from Asia. Among the many possibilities, some of the ones we'll seek include Arctic Loon (rare), Gyrfalcon, Rock Ptarmigan and Willow Ptarmigan, American and Pacific golden-plovers, Bar-tailed Godwit, Bristle-thighed Curlew (rare), Red-necked Stint (rare), Aleutian Tern, Slaty-backed Gull (rare), all three species of jaegers (Long-tailed, Parasitic, and Pomarine), Bluethroat, Northern Wheatear, White (rare) and Eastern Yellow wagtails, Northern Shrike, and Redpoll. Bristle-thighed Curlews are found on tundra in the central portion of the peninsula, and in order to see them, we will likely have to hike a

hill some two to three miles round trip over very challenging tundra. The remainder of our birding will be done primarily from the vehicles and along the roadsides. Birds aren't the only attraction here – there is also a great array of mammalian possibilities, from widespread animals like Muskox, Snowshoe Hare, Moose, and Red Fox, to less common Grizzly Bear, Alaska Hare, Caribou, and marine mammals offshore. The scenery in this part of Alaska is also rather grand, and past clients have been overwhelmed by the extraordinary vistas on the Kougakok and Teller roads.

**Seward and Kenai Fjords National Park**—One of the highlights of south-coastal Alaska is the rugged Kenai Fjords National Park on the southeast side of the Kenai Peninsula. The park and the adjacent Alaska Maritime NWR protect numerous seabird nesting cliffs and islands that host many thousands of alcids, cormorants, kittiwakes, and other seabirds. The combination of thousands of seabirds, numerous marine mammals, lofty snow-covered peaks, and stunning glaciers make this a spectacle not to be missed. Our all-day boat trip out of Seward and into the park should be one of the most memorable days of the trip. Some of the birds that we hope to see during our boat trip include Pelagic and Red-faced cormorants, Surf and White-winged scoters, Black Oystercatcher, Black-legged Kittiwake, both species of murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Rhinoceros (and maybe Parakeet) Auklet, Tufted and Horned puffins, Marbled Murrelet, Ancient Murrelet, and our primary avian goal: Kittlitz's Murrelet. Marine mammals seen on this route often include Humpback Whale, Dall's Porpoise, Killer Whale (or Orca), Steller's Sea Lion, and Harbor Seal.

The tall Sitka Spruce and Mountain (Western) Hemlock forests in the Seward area are typical of southeastern Alaska and are home to a number of birds that we are unlikely to encounter elsewhere, such as Rufous Hummingbird, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Steller's Jay, "Northwestern" American Crow, Red Crossbill, and Pine Grosbeak. The waters of Resurrection Bay at Seward support a healthy population of animated Sea Otters, which can easily be seen from shore near town and from our boat. And, if you're partial to great seafood, you won't be disappointed at dinnertime!

**Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow)**—The land near the far-northern town of Utqiagvik is a flat, watery expanse in the grip of permafrost, which can be 2000 feet deep! The landscape is fractured into a maze of giant, ice-wedge polygons, a pattern resulting from the continual freezing and thawing of the surface of the land. The *aufeis*, overhanging shelves of ice

formed by overflow waters of north-flowing rivers, look like rivers of ice from the air. And pingos, or “ice blisters,” frozen hills formed by ice forced to expand upward in drained depressions, contribute further to the unique and fascinating aspect of Alaska’s North Slope. Our flight takes us over the Brooks Range and leaves us on the coast of the Arctic Ocean at 71 degrees 20 minutes North latitude, more than 300 miles north of the Arctic Circle! Clearly, Point Barrow, the northernmost point in Alaska, is off the beaten track. This is not hard to understand, for Utqiagvik is a place of extremes, where the summer sun does not sink below the horizon for 67 days straight (and it is not dark for another 52 days!), the sun does not shine on the town for 67 days straight in the winter, the weather is calm only 1% of the year, and annual precipitation (rain and snow combined) is a meager 5 to 8 inches, the lowest in Alaska.

Although such a harsh place would surely seem unable to support many birds, the landscape here swarms with a variety of breeding shorebirds, waterfowl, and others. It is also home to two of the rarest birds of the Far North—the endangered Spectacled and Steller’s eiders. Populations of these gaudy ducks have declined in recent years, and each year we anxiously hold our collective breath until finding them here. If it’s a delayed spring and the tundra lakes remain frozen, these ducks can be challenging to find! During our search for the eiders, we will likely encounter a number of other species as well, including Red-throated, Pacific, and Yellow-billed loons, King Eider, Pectoral and Baird’s sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitcher, Red Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Sabine’s Gull, Black Guillemot, Snowy Owl, and Redpoll. Most of our birding here will be from our vehicles or along the roadsides. While here, we will scan the beaches and ice offshore for Polar Bear (very rare), too. Temperatures here are likely to be the coldest of the trip, ranging down to the teens or 20s with wind chill factored in (it’s often warmer just a few miles inland).



*On the tundra lakes near Utqiagvik, we'll look for Spectacled Eider. Western Alaska is an important breeding area for these beautiful ducks. Photograph by participant Melissa James.*

**Anchorage**, the largest city in Alaska, is our base between excursions to the more remote areas of the state. Situated between Cook Inlet and the rugged Chugach Mountains, Anchorage features several small parks and reserves in and near town that we will visit during our stay. Westchester Lagoon is the centerpiece of a lovely city park that offers a good introduction to the breeding waterbirds of the area and also visual access to the extensive mudflats of Cook Inlet which can host migrant and breeding shorebirds, gulls, and ducks. Potter Marsh, just south of town, is an extensive freshwater marsh that harbors a few species not frequently found in the middle of the city like Trumpeter Swan and Rusty Blackbird. The numerous parks in town and the boreal forest to the north are home to species typical of south-coastal Alaska including American Three-toed woodpeckers, Varied Thrush, Spruce Grouse, and in some springs, White-winged Crossbill.



*The Bluethroat is a primarily Eurasian bird that has gained a foothold in Alaska. We'll see these lovely songbirds near Nome.  
Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.*

## Itinerary for Alaska

**TOUR I, May 29-June 11, 2027**

**TOUR II, June 5-18, 2027**

**Day 1, Arrival in Anchorage.** If we are not ticketing your flight, please be sure to inform our office of your flight number and arrival time into Anchorage. Upon arrival at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, please take the hotel's on-demand courtesy van to the Coast Inn at Lake Hood; you'll need to call the hotel for the shuttle after you claim your luggage at baggage claim. **We plan to gather in the hotel lobby at 7:00 p.m. for dinner.** Night in Anchorage.

**Day 2, Flight to Nome.** After breakfast, we'll board our flight to Nome. Depending upon the time of our flight, we'll either provision for lunch at the airport or we'll eat lunch at a restaurant in Nome after we land. After checking into our hotel in Nome, we'll make our way along the Council Road which runs along the coast east of town. We will drive this road past the Nome River mouth and out to Cape Nome and the legendary Safety Sound, where we'll bird the tundra, lagoon, ocean, and riverine habitats for the remainder of the afternoon and evening.

This first afternoon around Nome could produce such quality birds as Bar-tailed Godwit, any of the three jaegers, Slaty-backed Gull, Aleutian Tern, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, and Redpoll. Safety Sound is an extremely bird-rich site and hosts impressive numbers of loons, waterfowl, cranes, shorebirds, gulls, and terns. Most birding will be along the roadside, but we may need to cross some wet tundra or marshy habitat to get a closer look at a suspicious-looking shorebird among the more common species, so rubber boots stored under your vehicle seat may come in handy today. Night in Nome

**Day 3, Kougarok Road, Nome.** After a picnic breakfast at our hotel in town, we plan to spend the entire day in the field today, journeying over seventy miles inland (if the road is open this year) on the Kougarok Road. Depending on conditions, a substantial amount of our day will be devoted to the search for the rare Bristle-thighed Curlew, which will entail hiking two to three miles over the challenging tundra. We'll take this hike at a reasonable pace, of course, and we'll hope to encounter the birds early on. In addition to our quest, we'll keep our eyes out for Golden Eagle, Gyrfalcon, Tundra Swan, Harlequin Duck, Willow and Rock ptarmigan, American and Pacific golden-plovers, Wandering Tattler, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Bluethroat, Northern Wheatear, and Arctic Warbler. This route is also excellent for scanning for the uncommon Grizzly Bear, and we'll want to keep our eyes out along the roadside for Snowshoe (common) and Alaska (rare) hares. We'll eat a picnic lunch in the field and will have dinner in town after our late afternoon return. Night in Nome.

**Days 4-5, Birding around Nome.** We'll have two more days to explore the vast tundra of Nome where we might track down Rock Ptarmigan, Northern Wheatear, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red Knot, Rough-legged Hawk, Short-eared Owl, American Dipper, and mammals such as Beaver, Grizzly Bear, and Muskox. Nights in Nome.

**Day 6, Birding Nome; flight to Anchorage.** We will take the morning flight back to Anchorage, arriving in time for lunch. After lunch we'll bird somewhere in the Anchorage area. Night in Anchorage..

**Day 7, Anchorage to Seward.** After a morning of birding around Anchorage, looking for Spruce Grouse, Three-toed Woodpeckers, we will make our way south to Seward along the Turnagain Arm of Cook Inlet and magnificent scenery en route. Several stops along the way may include Potter Marsh near Anchorage, areas along Turnagain arm, and some locations in the lush coastal forest of the Kenai Peninsula, as time and birding goals warrant.

We have the possibility to see a fine variety of nesting waterfowl, Dall Sheep, Mountain Goat, Red Crossbill, Rufous Hummingbird, American Dipper, and more. As we make our way towards Seward, the trees are taller and the habitats become wetter, reflecting the increase of precipitation in this region of Alaska. We'll eat dinner at a wonderful restaurant in Seward (if you love seafood, get ready!). Night in Seward.



*We'll watch for Tufted Puffin and other alcids on our boat trip in Kenai Fjords.  
Photograph by participant Cliff Drowley.*

**Day 8, Kenai Fjords National Park.** After breakfast, we'll board our private catamaran to visit Kenai Fjords National Park. The trip is planned to last at least nine hours if the weather is good. Most of the waters that we will be visiting are sheltered and quite calm, but there are a few rougher stretches of open water, especially as we round Cape Aialik. If you are prone to motion sickness, you should take the necessary precautions before we board the boat today. Lunch will be provided on board, and hot and cold drinks will be available in the galley. If you are a photographer, be sure to bring plenty of batteries and memory cards. The bird and marine life should be amazing, and the scenery truly breathtaking. Dinner will again be at a nice restaurant on dry land in Seward. Night in Seward.

**Day 9, Seward to Anchorage.** After breakfast, we will drive back north to Anchorage, birding along the way in search of forest and coastal species we may have missed up to this point. Night in Anchorage.

**Day 10, Flight to Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow).** Our flight crosses over the Brooks Range en route to the North Slope. Upon arrival at the far-northern outpost of Utqiagvik, we will transfer to our comfortable hotel to check into our rooms. This

afternoon, we will bird one of the short roads that lead out of town. The Chukchi and Beaufort seas will likely be icebound when we arrive, so be prepared for cold temperatures (20 to 45 °F without wind-chill) during our stay. All of the tundra here, teeming with displaying shorebirds, is quite wet so waterproof footwear (eg. rubber boots) is a necessity. Since the sun never sets during the summer months, we'll offer optional after-dinner outings for those interested. Night in Utqiagvik.

**Day 11, Birding the Utqiagvik area.** Depending on local road conditions, we plan to visit all of the accessible birding areas near Utqiagvik, returning to town for lunch and dinner. Most of our birding will be from the roadside, but we will likely take some short walks (where allowed) along the gravelly beach or in wet tundra to scan the margins of ponds for shorebirds and ducks, including the endangered Spectacled or Steller's eiders. We will also spend some time scanning the ice for seals and Polar Bear (rare). Night in Utqiagvik.

**Day 12, Birding Utqiagvik; flight to Anchorage.** After a final morning around the dynamic tundra of Utqiagvik, we'll fly back to Anchorage in the early afternoon, arriving in time for dinner. Night in Anchorage.

**Day 13, Birding around Anchorage** This will be our final day to "clean up" on any species we have yet to see in the Anchorage area. Night in Anchorage.

**Day 14, Departure for home.** You may schedule your departure for any time today.

## About Your Guides

### Tour I

**Chris Benesh** grew up studying natural history in California, where he was inspired by his father to take up birding as a teenager. After earning a degree in zoology from UC Santa Barbara in 1987, Chris moved to Austin to join the Field Guides staff. Since then, his life has undergone a wonderful transformation. The intervening years at Field Guides have taken him to many corners of the world and across both the Arctic and Antarctic circles!

Chris takes an interest in nearly anything that flies, and you might catch him sneaking a peek at a passing aircraft or stopping to examine a butterfly or odonate. You might also notice him getting especially excited at the sighting of a rare or wonderful mammal (heck, he can get excited about a squirrel). In recent years, scorpions have also caught his attention.

Chris's passion for education has led to his serving on the Arizona Bird Committee, leading the occasional workshop, presenting at birding conventions, and—we must add—thoroughly explaining in admirable detail the nuances of flycatchers to tour participants and colleagues alike. These days, most of his "down time" is spent at home in Tucson.

**Sam Wilson** grew up in New Jersey and had his spark moment as a young adult visiting Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. On his first visit he witnessed an epic migration of 10,000 Broad-winged Hawks as they took to the skies over the Appalachian ridges. He was hooked, and his fascination with bird migration has only grown.

Sam spent four years working in Cape May, New Jersey, for New Jersey Audubon developing bird migration programs for school groups and families and leading group trips for Cape May Bird Observatory and New Jersey Young Birders Club. He enjoyed a stint in the Hawaiian Islands doing breeding bird surveys in the remote Alakai Swamp for the Kauai Forest Birds Recovery project (though his gear didn't recover!).

Eventually, wanderlust led him to Alaska, where he led backcountry trips focused on birds and wildlife in Denali National Park, as well as guided trips for birding festivals along the Kenai Peninsula and Copper River. He has since led group trips as a naturalist-guide in most regions of the country with a special focus on National Parks and Wilderness areas. Sam is an eBird reviewer in Alaska and contributor to both *Cape May Magazine* and ABA's *Birding* magazine.

*"I just can't say enough good things about **Chris Benesh**. I've travelled with Chris before and he shows incredible patience and diligence. He goes to great lengths to plan the day and it shows with the birds seen. P.P., Slice of California*

*"**Sam** is an expert guide and one of the best spotters we've ever experienced. He was great to get us on hard-to-see birds. He worked well with all the participants and was knowledgeable about the birds and plants." A.D., Texas Coast Migration Spectacle*

When not experimenting with flight photography, investigating nocturnal migration, or researching biodiversity hot spots, Sam enjoys backpacking, growing super-hot peppers, discovering new music, and creating experimental dishes (usually Asian cuisine). Sam and his wife, Margeaux, have spent months traveling around the world seeking out rare birds and wildlife. They currently reside in Anchorage, Alaska.

## **Tour II**

**Micah Riegner** grew up exploring the Central Arizona Highlands and was fortunate to have parents who took him along on college field courses ranging from the coast of Mexico to the mountains of Costa Rica, where encounters with tinamous, barbets, and jacamars launched him into the birding world at a young age.

During his time at Prescott College, he made annual pilgrimages to Amazonia, where he worked as a guide and participated in expeditions, mostly in Brazil. For his master's he studied the foraging ecology of Amazonian woodcreepers. When he's not in the field, he tries to make time to paint birds and other creatures that spark his interest. Micah guided tours with Bret Whitney, John Coons, Dan Lane, and Tom Johnson before joining Field Guides full time in 2019. Micah is a generous guide with an easy laugh and is eager to share his love of birds and nature in the years to come. We know you will have a great time traveling with him, too!

*"Micah is a great addition to the FG team - he was kind, attentive, fun, shared lots of his deep knowledge about Amazonia, and is an exceptionally sharp birder that gets folks on the bird quickly. And I loved that he shared his artwork with us." M.C.; Succinct Suriname*

**Alex Sundvall** is a proud Minnesota native and has truly loved birds all his life. At the young age of five, he took a field trip with his kindergarten class to their local Nature Center and learned all about birds. At the end of the trip, the class got to watch staff release a Dark-eyed Junco they had been rehabilitating, and from that moment he was hooked! With the help of his very supportive and encouraging parents, he learned everything he could about birds and birding. Even as a child, whenever anyone asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up, he would always reply: "I'm going to be an ornithologist!" This love of birds and nature has followed him throughout his life.

He graduated from the University of Minnesota's College of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Sciences with a degree in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology with a double minor in Forest Ecosystem Management and Conservation; and Environmental Sciences, Policy, and Management. In 2016, Alex received the Young Birder Award from the Minnesota Ornithologists Union, and he has served as an alternate on his State's Bird Records Committee.

Growing up in Minnesota, Alex developed a passion for studying bird migration. In the past he has worked as both a Counter and Count Interpreter at Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in Duluth, MN. Even now, in his free time he'll often drive somewhere, post up for the day, and just count migrating birds as they pass by.

In recent years, Alex has led numerous tours across the US and beyond -- from the deserts and sky islands of the Southwest to the hallowed shores of Attu, Alaska, and everything in between. He loves teaching people about birds and showing them all that nature has to offer!

*"Alex was so delightful and kind. He was thoughtful and charming to everyone! He is smart AND accomplished; Field Guides is lucky to have him." J.M., Texas's Big Bend & Hill Country*

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for the complete tour schedules of all our Alaska guides.

## **Financial Information**

**FEE: \$9375 from Anchorage (Fee includes flights within Alaska.)**

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional\*):** \$2225 (If we have too many singles we may have to double in some places. It is the case, you will be refunded a portion of the single supplement).

**DEPOSIT:** \$950 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** Tour I, November 30, 2026; Tour II-December 7, 2026

**LIMIT:** 14

**Special Note about this itinerary:** We require everyone to take out travel insurance (trip interruption) for this tour. Alaska is prone to flight delays and or cancellations, usually due to weather.

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The manager for this tour is Karen Turner. Karen will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** The tour begins and ends in Anchorage (Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, ANC)

**Arrival:** Anchorage, **Day 1, in time to join the group for dinner at 7:00 p.m..**

**Departure:** Anchorage, any time on **Day 14.**

Please wait to purchase airline tickets until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate. At that time, we'll be glad to assist with your flight arrangements at no service fee.

**DOCUMENTS:** Be sure to verify the latest entry requirements for each country you will visit or transit.

US citizens will need a Real ID or passport for air travel.

**LUGGAGE:** Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility. **Note:** Alaska Airlines was charging \$40 per checked bag in 2026.

**SMOKING:** Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** **The tour fee is \$9375 for one person in double occupancy from Anchorage.**

It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 13, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through dinner on Day 13, *all flights within Alaska as outlined in this tour itinerary*, boat trips, all ground transportation, entrance fees, baggage handling, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). 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). 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 are optional and not expected.

**The above fee does not include** your airfare to and from Anchorage, airport taxes, any taxi hire to or from the airport, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

**The single supplement for the tour is \$2225 for those requesting a single room.** (If we have too many singles we may have to double in some places. If this is the case, you will be refunded a portion of the single supplement). If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please contact us at [fieldguides.com/contact-us/](https://fieldguides.com/contact-us/). Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

**Please submit your deposit of \$950 per person; see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options.** If you have previously paid a booking fee to reserve space on the tour, then the balance of your deposit minus the booking fee will be due. **Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or by November 30, 2026 (Tour I), or December 7, 2026 (Tour II).** We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

**TOUR LIMITS:** Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open. However, on occasion, we will send along a guide in training on a tour. In these cases, the guide in training will be taking a seat in the van or bus. Our guides will have a rotation system within the vehicle so that clients

share the inconvenience equally. We hope this minor inconvenience will be more than offset by the advantages of having another guide along.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and full payment, less \$500 booking 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.

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to protect your investment in case of injury or illness to you or an immediate family member before or during a trip. Because we must remit early and substantial deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer refunds for cancellations outside of our Cancellation Policy. If a participant is unable to join or continue a tour due to illness, all related expenses will be their responsibility, and no refunds can be issued for missed days. Please wait to purchase insurance until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate, as most policies are non-refundable.

For full details, visit our Trip Cancellation Insurance page at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/>.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides.

Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS.

EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

MR 6/23

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MR 24; 10/24 peg-updated

MR 7/25; 10/25peg

MR 6/26