

ITINERARY  
**NEBRASKA: CRANES WITH CORY**  
*February 28 – March 4, 2027*



*Sandhill Crane migration in Nebraska is one of the wildlife spectacles of North America. This tour is timed to provide an experience with cranes and many other migrants as they wing their way northward to breeding grounds.  
Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.*

*We include here information for those interested in the 2027 Field Guides Nebraska: Cranes with Cory tour:*

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- 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:*

- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for 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

As the Great Plains start to thaw, released from the clutches of their long winter, birdlife to the south starts to stir. Very early indeed are the migrant birds that begin their race northward toward their breeding grounds. As the snow and ice retreat, you can be assured that birds aren't far behind and, as the gate finally opens to the Central Flyway, one can witness stunning scenes of migration.

This short tour, one of our newest offerings, focuses primarily on enjoying one of the greatest bird spectacles in North America: the Sandhill Crane migration through Nebraska. The Platte River Valley is the temporary home for roughly a million Sandhill Cranes as they rest, stage, and prepare for the rest of their journey northward. The numbers can be staggering—roughly 80% of the world's Sandhill Cranes pass through between February and April! Of course, cranes aren't the only thing migrating up the Central Flyway at this time of year. We also hope to see an impressive variety of waterfowl, from an excellent assortment of geese such as Ross's, Snow, Greater White-fronted, Cackling, and Canada, to an eye-opening variety of ducks, including many dabblers and divers.

There are other specialties in Nebraska that we hope to find as well. Whether it's raptors like the regal Ferruginous Hawk or Prairie Falcon hunting overhead at prairie-dog town, to the resident Greater Prairie-Chickens dancing on their leks, or even wintering sparrows, including the sought-after and handsome Harris's Sparrow, there's always something interesting to try to find. Join Cory on this new and unique trip to witness this Central Flyway spectacle!



*We'll visit a Greater Prairie-Chicken lek to see these flamboyant birds in their mating displays.  
Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.*

*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.*

### **Physical requirements of this tour**

- **TRAILS:** We will not be taking any hikes longer than 1-2 miles, though some trails may be hilly, sandy, or muddy depending on recent rains.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** There will be a couple of drives lasting 2-3 hours. This tour has the potential for very cold weather (see below).
- **PACE:** We can expect mornings to start on the early side, usually about 6:30 AM. On one morning, we'll depart much earlier in order to visit the prairie-chicken lek. Dinners will typically be about 6:00 PM. On a couple of evenings, we'll offer an optional post-dinner outing to watch the cranes at sunset.
- **ELEVATION:** Between 1100 and 2200 feet.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures may range from lows in the 10s °F to highs in the 60s °F. As this is still considered late winter in the region, cold winds, rain and/or snow are 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:** Bathroom stops at indoor restrooms will be made regularly; comfort stops in nature are also possible, should the need arise.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations. It may be possible to opt out of various walks/hikes if needed, but keep in mind that the only alternative may be to stay with the vehicle instead.

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 the guide, or help you to find the tour that is right for you!



*Ross's Goose is another migratory species that stages along the Platte River. Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.*

## About the Birding Areas



**Omaha area** – While our adventure together begins and ends in Omaha, we'll actually do fairly little birding in and around this city, Nebraska's largest. Still, we'll plan to visit a few locations nearby, which may include Lake Manawa, sitting over the river in Iowa. This lake, a moderately-sized lake for the region, can be a stopover site for a wide array of waterbirds, grebes, loons, gulls, and more. From Trumpeter Swans and Snow Geese, to American White Pelicans, cormorants, and ducks, there is usually something interesting around. Additionally, the wooded areas around the lake at this time of year can host a number of wintering sparrows including the regional-specialty Harris's Sparrow.

**Kearney area** – This small city, which sits in the Platte River Valley, will be our homebase for a couple of nights. Kearney sits on the banks of the Platte River and right in the middle of the migration pathway of the massive crane

migration we hope to enjoy. Kearney has a rich history including playing an important role in the westward expansion of the United States. The Oregon Trail and Pony Express, for starters, came through here. Eventually these methods of transportation were replaced by trains. And after trains, roads and interstates. While the landscape is pretty flat by nature and dominated by corn and soybean fields, we'll be visiting a variety of habitats in and around Kearney. We'll check out a variety of lakes and gravel pits for waterfowl, woodlands and small forested areas for wintering sparrows, and of course the many agricultural fields that the cranes find so attractive. We'll also have the chance to visit an active Black-tailed Prairie-Dog town northeast of Kearney and observe a Greater Prairie-Chicken lek.



*The Platte River in central Nebraska is a perfect migratory stop-over for Sandhill Cranes.  
Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.*

## Itinerary for Nebraska: Cranes with Cory

**Day 1, Sun, 28 Feb. Arrival in Omaha.** Upon arrival, you may call the hotel to request a complimentary shuttle. We'll meet in the lobby at 6:00 PM Central Time to head to dinner together. Night in Omaha.

**Day 2, Mon, 1 Mar. Traveling west.** Today we'll start out by visiting local birding hotspots, including nearby Lake Manawa in Iowa. We'll be watching for a variety of ducks, geese, but also songbirds and sparrows. Later, we'll head west, toward Kearney, making one or two birding stops en route, depending on recent reports. By evening, we'll be in the perfect place to witness the crane migration in full swing. Night in Kearney.

**Day 3, Tue, 2 Mar. Kearney area.** We'll start very early this morning but for a worthwhile treat; we'll be visiting a lek where we'll witness the otherworldly displays of the Greater Prairie-Chicken! We'll have the rest of the day to explore the Kearney area, witness tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes, check various ponds and lakes, and look for songbirds in some wooded areas. That evening, we'll spend dusk watching the cranes come to roost. Night in Kearney.

**Day 4, Wed, 3 Mar. Kearney area.** This morning we'll try to clean up any various target birds while also enjoying the Sandhill Crane show once more. Later, we'll pack up and head back east, with one or two birding stops along the way. Night in Omaha.

**Day 5, Thu, 4 Mar. Depart.** You may schedule your flight home at any time today. Safe travels!

## About Your Guide

**Cory Gregory** started learning birds on flashcards at the age of three, but it wasn't until the ripe age of ten that things started to get more serious. Since then he has traveled to Central and South America, Australia, and all 50 states to try to get his fill of birding (and it hasn't worked yet!).

Cory earned a B.S. in zoology in Michigan, where he also worked for Whitefish Point Bird Observatory for several seasons. He then ventured to Iowa State University, where he earned a M.S. studying Long-billed Curlews in Nebraska. As an avid shorebird ecologist, he has handled more than 2000 shorebirds of more than 30 species.

After finishing school, Cory worked for several organizations as a shorebird ecologist and guided on St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs of Alaska for the 2014 and 2015 seasons. It was on St. Paul that his dream of stumbling on a first North American record was finally fulfilled. Cory is currently based out of Missouri where, when not on tour, he pursues his interest in birds, butterflies, and dragonflies with abandon.

Cory has co-led Field Guides groups to Arizona, Alaska, Oregon, Cape May, Texas, Peru, and Australia and has a busy and wide-ranging schedule coming up for 2020 --from the US and Canada, to Mexico, Costa Rica, and Australia.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for Cory's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

*"Cory is a wonderful guide. He is very skilled and knowledgeable, but manages to be calm and patient as he responds to all our questions and repetitions. The itinerary was carefully and thoughtfully planned, allowing us to experience so much of Oregon and its birds." D.M.; Oregon*

## Financial Information

**FEE: \$2,275 per person from Omaha, NE**

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$425**

**DEPOSIT: \$225 per person**

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE: September 1, 2026**

**LIMIT: 7**

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The manager for this tour is Maria. Maria 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:** This tour begins and ends in Omaha, Nebraska (Eppley Airfield, OMA).

**Arrival: Omaha (OMA) on February 28, by 4:00 PM.**

**Departure: Omaha (OMA) on March 4, at any time.**

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:** A valid photo ID (such as a [REAL ID](#)-compliant U.S. driver's license or passport) is required of all passengers boarding domestic flights within the U.S. Non-US citizens should consult the consulates of each destination for current entry requirements.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$2,275 for one person in double occupancy from Omaha.**

It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 4, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 5, all ground transportation, entrance fees, 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 the tour, airport taxes, any airline luggage fees, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

**The single supplement is \$425 for those requesting a single room.** 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 send your deposit of \$225 per person; see [fieldguides.com/payment-options/](https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/) for our Payment Options. Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or by September 1, 2026. 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

3/20/26 – cg; mz; 5/26peg