



TOUR INFORMATION FOR NEW JERSEY (Cape May)

These notes are designed to help you prepare for your tour. Please read carefully.

ENTERING THE UNITED STATES: United Kingdom citizens need to have a passport that has a minimum validity of 6 months remaining after the tour has finished. This is an immigration requirement for many countries, including the USA. All nationalities require a machine-readable passport if travelling to the USA under the visa waiver programme (see below).

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has made changes to the immigration requirements. Travellers seeking to travel under the Visa Waiver Program must pre-apply for authorisation using the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (**ESTA**). **ESTA** must be completed online via their website.

Having an **ESTA** is a mandatory requirement and applications should be made online at least 72 hours before departure via their website <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> as although the majority of responses are immediate, it can take 72 hours for approval in some cases. There is a small fee to pay as a processing charge followed by a small fee when authorisation has been granted.

For further information, or if you don't have access to the internet, please contact the Embassy of the United States in London on 020 3608 6998. Citizens of other countries should contact their nearest US Embassy for entry requirements.

Once you've applied for your ESTA please remember to print it out and take a copy of that document onto the aircraft with you.

All visitors to the USA's first port-of-entry have their index fingerprints taken by an electronic scanner at Passport Control. You will also have your photograph taken at the same time. Although the process itself only takes a few minutes the queue can be quite long if several flights arrive at the same time!

It is always a good idea to take a photocopy of your passport and air ticket with you when travelling abroad. They can prove invaluable in helping you get replacements if your originals are lost or stolen. Obviously you should keep the photocopies in a separate bag to the originals.

INTRODUCTORY MEETING: The trip begins with dinner at 18:00. We'll meet in the lobby of our hotel, located near Philadelphia airport. Our first meal together is a chance for the leader to introduce everyone and to let you know what to expect on the trip - pace of the tour, daily routine, the next day's schedule, etc. We strongly recommend that you arrange your flights so that you can be present.

PACE OF TOUR AND DAILY ROUTINE: Given the nature and timing of passerine migration, we'll be up early most mornings and in the field not long after dawn; on some mornings, though, it will be possible to sit out our earliest birding and meet up with the group later. We'll be birding much of the time on foot, walking at a slow birder's pace on wide, well-maintained, level paths and roads; our most strenuous walking will be on the beaches, where we will make every effort to stay on the wet (and thus firm) sand below the high tide line. If it has rained recently, some trails may be muddy. At Brigantine, we'll split our time between birding from the vehicle and walking short distances on the dike road. The Cape May – Lewes ferry is a large, stable car ferry, with comfortable inside seating and safe viewing from the outdoor deck.

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Most afternoons will leave us a break before dinner to shower or put our feet up.

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CLIMATE: The weather is typically cool (40s-50s F) in the mornings and warm (70s-80s) in the afternoons. Rain and wind are possible at any time; our schedule has sufficient flexibility that we can avoid birding open areas if the weather is unfriendly.

HEALTH: **It is essential that you contact your own doctor to obtain the latest information on the regions you are visiting.** Please contact your doctor well in advance of your tour's departure as some medication must be initiated weeks before the period of possible exposure.

Birding in New Jersey poses no major health hazards however it is recommended that you are up-to-date on routine vaccinations.

Miscellaneous: At this time of year, biting insects are generally scarce, though mosquitoes may be a nuisance at some locations. Deer ticks carrying Lyme disease, and other potentially serious illnesses are present in the area; avoid them by staying on paths, wearing rubber boots, tucking your trousers into your socks, and using chemical repellent.

We recommend insect repellents with a high concentration of DEET. Care must be taken, however, to avoid getting the DEET repellent on optical equipment, as DEET dissolves rubber and plastic and can damage coated lenses. Camping supply stores and outfitters carry some reasonably effective alternatives that contain natural products like permethrin and aren't corrosive.

The best prevention against ticks and mosquitoes is to treat your clothing with Permethrin one to a few days before you leave home. This non-staining, odourless chemical is non-toxic to humans and protective on clothing through several launderings. Most economical is a 10% concentrate which you dilute and then treat clothing by soaking it in a large bag and then hang out to dry; be sure to look into this option well in advance of the tour.

For further information on health advice refer to the Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad website www.masta-travel-health.com

ACCOMMODATION: We will be staying in standard, comfortable motels, the first night is near the Philadelphia airport, the other within a few minutes' drive of all of Cape May's best birding sites.

LAUNDRY: Laundry facilities are not conveniently available during this tour.

ELECTRICITY: 110/120V AC 60Hz. The plugs are 2-flat pins. An international travel plug is useful and can be bought in most airport departure lounges. You may find the following website useful: <http://www.power-plugs-sockets.com>.

FOOD: Food is North American standard with some excellent seafood options.

Sunbird tours are all-inclusive and no refunds can be issued for any tour meals participants choose to miss. While we will try to do all we can to accommodate the requirements of all participants, please note that we cannot guarantee all causes of food allergies can be avoided at every destination. Many restaurants offer set menus and are unable to accommodate all special requests within a group. Thus, participants with significant food allergies or special dietary needs should bring appropriate foods with them for those times when their needs can, regrettably, not be accommodated. Our tours are carefully scheduled to ensure the best possible birding experience and although the leaders will do all they can to make sure the group eats at a reasonable time, sometimes early or late lunches and/or evening meals cannot be avoided. Any participants who need to eat at specific times may need to take supplemental food with them.

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DRINKS: Bottled water or soft drinks are provided at meals, as is coffee or tea. In addition we keep a supply of bottled water on the tour vehicles. Bottled or filtered water may also be provided in some of the rooms where we stay.

INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE ACCESS: Our hotels have reasonably good Wi-Fi connections. Mobile phone access is very good near our lodging locations but can be intermittent when in the field.

Mobile phones can be useful while on tour but keep in mind that many countries operate on a different cellular technology. Your phone may be incompatible with the local system, so please check with your local carrier. Fortunately, with the advent of smartphones, it is easy to download applications such as Skype or Google Voice, which can make calling home free or very inexpensive. Another option is to replace the data ("SIM") card in your phone in-country. The SIM cards, including data can be very cheap. If you wish to use this option you will need to check that your smart phone has a SIM card slot.

FIELD CLOTHING: The following items are basic:

Moderate-weight sweatshirt or sweater	Jacket or fleece
Walking shoes or boots	Lightweight rain clothes
Light-weight or cotton trousers	Long-sleeved shirts
Sun hat	Light-weight gloves
Head net in case the mosquitoes are troublesome	

FOOTWEAR: Comfortable walking shoes will be adequate in most situations. Rubber boots ("Wellies") may be useful should we encounter wet grass; they can also help in avoiding ticks.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Notebook and pencil	Alarm clock
Torch with spare batteries	Water bottle
Sunscreen	Sunglasses
Rucksack/Day pack	Insect repellent
Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)	BPA-free water bottle
Tick remover	

Optional: Telescope & tripod (recommended if you have them), camera, film or memory cards, spare binoculars and spare spectacles (in case of loss or damage), field guide.

Note: The most effective insect repellents are those containing at least 35% of the active ingredient diethyltoluamide (DEET). The higher the percentage, the greater the effectiveness. However, care must be taken to avoid getting the repellent on to optical equipment as it dissolves rubber and plastic and can damage coated lenses. A reasonably effective alternative, which isn't corrosive, is Mosi-guard, produced by MASTA, and we recommend this. It is available in most high street chemist (including those at the airport). Camping supply stores sell a product containing permethrin 0.5%, which must be applied directly to clothing in advance of wearing and allowed to dry. This non-staining, odourless chemical is non-toxic to humans and protective on clothing through several launderings. Please make sure you never to spray insect repellent inside the vehicle or when you are standing close to other participants – it may drift on to their optical equipment.

LEADER'S EQUIPMENT:

Ice chest	Field library and maps
Telescope	Basic first aid kit

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LUGGAGE: Our Final Information document, which will be sent to you approximately three weeks before departure, will give details about baggage weight and size restrictions imposed by the airline used for this tour.

If possible, please bring your luggage in soft-sided bags or cases (rather than large hard 'Samsonite'-type suitcases) as these pack more easily into our vehicles during the tour. Please note that on many tours there are no porters to carry your luggage so please ensure that **no bag is so heavy that you are unable to lift and carry it yourself**. As a general rule, in addition to using your luggage labels, it is a good idea to fix identification to the *inside* of each piece of luggage.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Scenery and memory shots will be plentiful and simple to obtain. Although there will be occasions when bird photography is possible, a birdwatching tour is not normally the best means of pursuing this aim. Bring all your film or memory cards with you as it may be difficult to find precisely what you need during the tour. Camera equipment should be packed in moisture- and dust-proof bags, as a precaution. "Digiscoping" is perfectly compatible with the tour, though it is recommended you bring your own telescope as the leader's telescope is not available for this activity.

There will be plenty of opportunities to take photos of birds, mammals and scenery and the leaders will do all they can to accommodate anyone wishing to take photographs. However if you are a serious photographer please bear in mind that this is first and foremost a birdwatching tour. Please do not allow your photographic desires to conflict with other participants' birdwatching activities.

TRANSPORT: We will be traveling by 15- (or 12-) minibus, depending on the group size. When using 15-passenger minibus, we take a maximum of seven passengers plus the leader. Participants should be able to ride in any seat in tour vehicles and are expected to change seats with others daily.

SMOKING: We request that you do not smoke in the vehicles or when the group is gathered for meals, checklists, etc. If you are sharing a room with a non-smoker, please do not smoke in the room. If you smoke in the field, we ask that you do so well away and downwind from the group.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Travel insurance is essential and we insist that you take out suitable cover as soon as your tour is booked. If you are bringing expensive optical equipment or other valuable items, please make sure they are also adequately insured on your home contents policy, as most travel insurance policies do not cover very expensive individual items. You may wish to consult your insurance broker regarding coverage. Please also ensure that your policy covers you in the event of a medical emergency, cancellation of a trip or severe delays. Medical costs abroad can often be extremely expensive. Please note that Sunbird is not liable for any medical or repatriation costs resulting from injury or illness during a tour or for covering any costs resulting from a flight delay such as extra hotel accommodation.

If you wish, insurance can be arranged by Helen Fisher, Bullerwell Independent Insurance Brokers, 13 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3JY. Tel: 01234-866964. Please contact Helen for a quote and she will send the schedule directly to you.

TIPPING: All tour-based tips are included in the tour price. These include tips to local guides, drivers, hotel porters, and waiters and waitresses when we have group meals together in restaurants. You only need to pay tips for personal services such as room service or drinks from the bar.

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Sibley, D.A. 2014. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, Second edition. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. **Highly recommended.**

----- 2003. *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. Perfectly usable in New Jersey, but these smaller, regional volumes sacrifice the ingenious layout of the larger book in favour of portability.

Crossley, R., O'Brien, M., and K. Karlson. 2006 *The Shorebird Guide*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Dunn, J., and K. Garrett. 1997. *A Field Guide to the Warblers of North America*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Evans, W., and M. O'Brien. 2002. *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds: Eastern North American Landbirds*. Old Bird, Inc., Ithaca, New York. **Recommended for those interested in advanced voice identification.**

Glassberg, J. 1999. *Butterflies Through Binoculars: The East*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Stone, W. [2000]. *Bird Studies at Old Cape May*. Stackpole reprint. Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

Sutton, C., Dunne, P., and David Sibley. 2013. *Hawks in Flight: The Flight Identification of North American Migrant Raptors*. Second edition. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Sutton, C., and P. Sutton. 2006. *Birds and Birding at Cape May*. Stackpole, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

OBTAINING BOOKS: Most of the field guides and the major ornithological references in print are available by mail order from booksellers specialising in natural history titles.

Natural History Book Service Ltd
Tel: 01803 865913
www.nhbs.co.uk

Subbuteo Books
Tel: 0870 010 9700
www.wildlifebooks.com

WildSounds
Tel: 01263 741100
www.wildsounds.co.uk

MAPS: Maps of the region may be available from:

The Map Shop
Tel: 01684 593146
www.themapshop.co.uk

Stanfords
Tel: 020 7836 1321
www.stanfords.co.uk

FINAL INFORMATION: A Final Information sheet with instructions for meeting the group, hotel addresses, etc. and your flight tickets will be sent to you about three weeks before departure. If you have any questions about the tour please contact us.