



TOUR INFORMATION FOR OREGON: Birds and Shakespeare

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!

You will then need to reclaim your checked-in luggage, go through security, then hand your luggage back to the airline staff who will be waiting nearby to give assistance. Once your luggage is back with the airline please proceed to the departure gate for your onward flight.

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

INTRODUCTORY MEETING: The tour officially begins at 16:00 on Day 1 with a transfer from the Rogue Valley International Airport; please plan to arrive at the airport no later than 15:30.

Note: The hotel in Ashland does not provide transportation to or from the airport; if you arrive later than 16.00, or a day early, you may need to provide your own transportation.

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There will be an introductory meeting at 17:30 on Day 1 of the tour, followed by dinner. This informal meeting gives the leader the opportunity to introduce everyone to each other and to let you know generally what to expect on the trip - pace of the tour, daily routine, etc. We strongly recommend you arrange your flights to arrive by the 16.00 pickup so you can be present at the meeting and group dinner.

CURRENCY: The currency of the United States of America is the dollar (USD). Dollars can be obtained from your local bank and from exchange facilities at the airport. As the tour price includes all travel, hotel and main meal costs, you only need bring enough dollars to cover gifts, snacks, or other purchases of a purely nature.

CLIMATE: It could be cool in the early mornings in the mountains and hot down in the valley: we may experience temperatures ranging from 40° to over 100°F, with averages ranging 55° to 85°F. Rain is unlikely at this time of year.

ALTITUDE: Some of our birding is at elevations of 6000 to 7500 feet and while we do not schedule anything even faintly strenuous at these elevations, anyone with a history of cardiovascular or respiratory problems should be aware of the altitudinal stress.

PACE OF THE TOUR AND DAILY ROUTINE: Most mornings will start around 06:00; a few may begin earlier. On three days we finish birding at our picnic lunch, returning to the hotel in time for the afternoon play. A short afternoon walk to the nearby park may be offered on one day, and optional owling will be offered on a couple nights after dinner. On our two days to the Klamath Basin and Crater Lake we have longer days in the field, returning to the hotel by about 16.00 with an hour or two off before dinner and a late evening play on the return day.

We will walk from the hotel to the theatre complex.

There are no particularly long or strenuous walks, the longest being no more than a mile. Most walking is done on roads and level trails, although there will be some over uneven ground and possibly in marshy/dewy grass. When looking for Great Gray Owl, we may have to walk through a forest up a slope with much fallen wood, requiring good balance and agility. One can opt to stay on the road near the van during this short walk if it is too difficult. Having sturdy footwear, waterproof if possible, is important, and a walking stick is recommended for anyone with balance problems or weak knees.

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.

It is recommended that you are up-to-date on routine vaccinations.

Oregon presents no real hazards to the visiting birdwatcher but certain factors must be considered.

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Insects: We will be in Oregon largely after the mosquito season. The leader will have enough repellent for all if it seems necessary.

Sun: High-altitude sun can be intense; a broad-brimmed hat, proper clothing and a strong sun block lotion are essential.

Miscellaneous: We actively look for reptiles, but the one species of poisonous snake in Oregon is very seldom seen this early in the year.

Finally, participants should bring an adequate supply of any personal medication as they may be difficult to obtain during 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 stay at a standard, comfortable motel while in Ashland; our cabins for the one night at Fort Klamath are nice and clean, but simpler, tending towards rustic.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry facilities are not available at our hotels.

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

FOOD: Food is North American standard but Ashland has some nice restaurants, and fresh fruit and produce are everywhere available. At Fort Klamath we will have a fresh grilled dinner prepared by your leader. There will be plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, mostly organic, at our picnic meals.

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.

DRINKS: Bottled water, a soft drink or a beer (or wine if appropriate) 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 rooms where we stay.

INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE ACCESS: Wireless internet will be available at both hotels.

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CLOTHING: Comfortable field clothes and shoes are essential. Having nicer clothes for the restaurants and plays is optional. The following items are basic:

Long-sleeved cotton or fast-drying microfibre shirts	T-shirts
Lightweight wool field socks	Lightweight gloves
Lightweight sweater / fleece	Sun hat
Long trousers, preferably light cotton quick-drying fabric	Shorts
Sturdy footwear (lightweight, waterproof hiking shoes)	Warm cap
Light tennis shoes (for easier walking and longer drives)	
Lightweight waterproof windbreaker	
Clothes for attending plays and dining out	

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: Please bring the following:

Notebook and pencil	Alarm clock
Small rucksack/Day pack	Sunglasses
Torch/Headlamp and spare batteries	Water bottle
Insect repellent	Small hand towel
Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)	Personal medication

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

LEADER'S EQUIPMENT: The leader will provide the following:

Telescope and tripod	Small first-aid kit
Reference books	Maps
Laser pointer	Playback equipment

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 but birds are difficult to photograph. Please bring all your film or memory cards with you as it may be difficult to find precisely what you need on short notice. 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. Camera equipment should be packed in moisture- and dust-proof bags, as a precaution. (This is especially important if you are taking the pelagic tour.)

There will be plenty of opportunities to take photos of birds, mammals and scenery and our 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.

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TRANSPORT: Depending on group size, we will be traveling by 15- (or 12-) passenger minibus. When using 15-passenger minibus, we take a maximum of seven passengers plus the leader. Some roads may be quite bumpy and/or winding; anyone susceptible to motion sickness should bring an appropriate remedy. We will rotate the seating each day.

SMOKING: Smoking is not allowed 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 if possible.

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, deck hands, and waiters/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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Field Guides:

Kaufman, Kenn. 2001. *Birds of North America*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston. Illustrated with digitally-enhanced photographs.

Dunn, Jon L. and Jonathan Alderfer. 2017. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. 7th Edition. National Geographic Society, Washington, DC. One of the top two field guides for North America, more portable than the full Sibley guide. **Recommended**.

National Geographic Society. 2008. *Field Guide to the Birds of Western North America*. National Geographic Society, Washington DC. Slightly outdated, but also a little smaller than the one for the entire continent.

Peterson, Roger Tory. 2010. *A Field Guide to Western Birds*. Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Sibley, David Allen. 2016. *Sibley Birds West: Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. A regional guide containing the same concise and accurate illustrations and information as in the more comprehensive guide though smaller and much easier to carry. **Highly recommended**. This is also available in as an app for smart phones or tablets.

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General References: The leader will have an extensive library of general natural history books including:

Brock, Jim P., and Kenn Kaufman. 2003. *Butterflies of North America*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Contreras, Alan. 1999. *A Pocket Guide to Oregon Birds, 2nd Edition*. Oregon Field Ornithologists, Eugene. A very useful booklet summarizing the status of each species occurring in the state.

Kays, Roland W. 2009. *Mammals of North America*, second edition. Princeton University Press.

St. John, Alan. 2002. *Reptiles of the Northwest*. Lone Pine Publishing, Boise.

FINAL INFORMATION: Final information with instructions for meeting the group, hotel addresses etc. and your air tickets will be sent to you about three weeks before the start of the tour. Other news will be communicated as necessary. If you have any questions, please contact us.