

# BIRD TREKS

## CHURCHILL & SOUTHERN MANITOBA

Arctic Home of the *ROSS'S GULL* & *BELUGA WHALES*

**Dates** Thursday, 7 June through Sunday, 17 June 2012: 11 days and 10 nights.

**We'll visit** Churchill near 60 degrees north latitude, where Canada's vast boreal forest slopes to the tundra and Hudson Bay, the largest bay in the world. Churchill is only accessible by air, boat, or train: no roads lead there! We'll travel by air.

Oak Hammock Marsh and the open prairies and lakes of southeastern Manitoba, with their summer wildflowers and displaying songbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl.

Riding Mountain National Park, extensive boreal habitat that contrasts greatly with the vast plains further south, both in vegetation and its birdlife. This is our best chance for Great Gray Owl, Connecticut Warbler, and Black Bear.

The open prairies of southwestern Manitoba with more wildflowers and unique birdlife, plus Douglas Marsh, home to Le Conte's and Nelson's Sparrows and the elusive Yellow Rail.

Some of our target species include . . .

Pacific Loon  
Red-throated Loon  
Western Grebe  
Red-necked Grebe  
American White Pelican  
American Bittern  
Greater Scaup  
Common Eider  
White-winged Scoter  
Surf Scoter  
Long-tailed Duck  
Marbled Godwit  
Hudsonian Godwit  
Red-necked Phalarope  
Stilt Sandpiper  
Parasitic Jaeger  
Franklin's Gull  
Little Gull  
Ross's Gull

Arctic Tern  
Black Tern  
Bald Eagle  
Swainson's Hawk  
Merlin  
Gray Partridge  
Spruce Grouse  
Willow Ptarmigan  
Short-eared Owl  
Great Gray Owl  
Black-backed Woodpecker  
Alder Flycatcher  
Western Kingbird  
Gray Jay  
Boreal Chickadee  
Swainson's Thrush  
Northern Shrike  
Bohemian Waxwing  
Connecticut Warbler



**Spruce Grouse** - - James C. Leupold

Le Conte's Sparrow  
Nelson's Sparrow  
Harris's Sparrow  
Clay-colored Sparrow  
Smith's Longspur  
Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Western Meadowlark  
Pine Siskin  
Hoary Redpoll  
Common Redpoll

Trip lists from previous tours that include all **birds** and **mammals** are available upon request.

To see a **map of the tour route** and places that we will visit, click on this link:

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&ll=53.696706,83.320312&spn=37.948828,114.257813&z=4&msid=117812928873209532533.00045ffc724f43ac97716>

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## Churchill & Southern Manitoba

7-17 June 2012

### DAY   AGENDA

- 1   We arrive at the Winnipeg, Manitoba Airport in the afternoon, then fly directly to **Churchill**. After a bit of local exploration, our **first few life birds**, and perhaps an **iceberg** or two, we'll settle into a nice lodge for four consecutive nights on the shores of Hudson Bay.
  
- 2-4   Churchill has a **unique combination of habitats**. It is here that stunted boreal forest meets the Arctic tundra and the shores of Hudson Bay. This gives us the chance to view many **shorebirds** in breeding plumage, some of them singing and displaying from the tops of spruce trees! We should also see **Willow Ptarmigan, Spruce Grouse, Parasitic Jaeger, American Bittern, Harris's Sparrow, and Smith's Longspur** on their breeding grounds. Along the Churchill River and Hudson Bay we'll witness the mass movement of high arctic species such as **Long-tailed Duck** and **Pacific and Red-throated Loons** in breeding plumage, as we search for specialties including **Little, Sabine's, and Ross's Gulls**. If the ice conditions are correct, we will take a floe ice boat ride where we are likely to see **Beluga Whales** and thousands of **waterfowl** and **seabirds**. As we explore the 100-mile road system surrounding Churchill, we may find **Caribou, Black-phase Red Fox, and Ermine**. One year we watched a **Red Fox** carry a **Hudsonian Godwit** to its den of five pups! In 2006 we found an immature **Little Blue Heron**, Churchill's second record. The **Arctic wildflower display** will be beautiful.
  
- 5   After one more morning of searching for Churchill specialties, we'll drive to the airport for our return flight to Winnipeg. We'll spend the remainder of the day at Oak Hammock Marsh, a great waterfowl refuge just a short drive north of Winnipeg. Interesting breeding birds found here on previous tours include many **Black Terns, Virginia Rail, Sedge Wren, Least Bittern, American White Pelican, Marbled Godwit, Short-eared Owl, and Yellow-headed Blackbird**. Our night is in Winnipeg.
  
- 6-7   We'll head west from Winnipeg toward Riding Mountain National Park. We'll have two full days to explore the boreal forests and lakes of this beautiful area. Birds that we are likely to find include **Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee**, many **warblers** including **Blackburnian** and **Mourning, Red and White-winged Crossbills**, and hopefully **American Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers**. On a recent tour we watched a female **Black Bear** with two cubs, all of them feeding on dandelion flowers along the edge of the road! One evening after an early dinner we will search for **Great Gray Owl** and **Short-eared Owl**. Both nights near Riding Mountain.

*[Day 8 begins on page 3]*

- 8-9 After breakfast we'll drive south toward Brandon. The vast Great Plains ecosystem will spread out before us in contrast to the boreal forest that we leave behind. Some of the area specialties that we'll seek include **Swainson's Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Sprague's Pipit, Vesper Sparrow, Chestnut-collared Longspur,** and a nice variety of **waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors.** We'll spend at least one evening at Douglas Marsh in search of **Le Conte's and Nelson's Sparrows** and the elusive **Yellow Rail.** Three nights in Brandon.
- 10 Our final full day will take us to the extreme southwestern corner of the province to Whitewater Lake and Turtle Mountain. Whitewater is an extensive, shallow saline lake fed by runoff from the mountain. This area will increase our chances of finding **Baird's Sparrow** and **Gray Partridge.** Other good birds that we may see include **Burrowing Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Orchard Oriole, Upland Sandpiper, Ferruginous Hawk, Marsh and Sedge Wrens,** and possibly even **Piping Plover.** We'll return to Brandon for a good dinner and our final night.
- 11 Today we are homeward bound. We'll depart **Brandon** for our drive to **Winnipeg** and your mid-day flights home, having gained many fine memories of Manitoba.

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We'll make every effort to find a **Great Gray Owl** at Riding Mountain.

- - *Randy Miller*

*"Thanks so much for a perfect vacation. My Manitoba birding experience far exceeded my expectations."*

Lou Anne Barriger, tour participant

*"Many thanks for a great tour. Everything was A #1 ! We especially liked the Lazy Bear Lodge in Churchill."*

Mary Ann & Pete Marchetti,  
tour participants

**[Final details are on page 4]**

**Leader** Bird Treks tour to **CHURCHILL and SOUTHERN MANITOBA** will be led by **Bob Schutsky**. Bob has led numerous previous tours to this region and looks forward to exploring its many unique habitats with you. There will be a second leader if there are more than seven participants.

**Price** \$3595 based upon double occupancy. Please register as early as possible. Single accommodations are available for an extra charge of \$535.

**Includes** Expert guide service, entrance fees, **ALL meals**, and lodging for 10 nights. **ALL tips** are included in the tour fee, except for anything that you may wish to give to your tour leader(s). Does not include the cost of airfare to Winnipeg and Churchill, alcoholic beverages, and items of a personal nature.

**Extra Services** We offer the services of our exclusive Bird Treks travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel. Lori has 26 years of experience in the travel industry. Contact her at **1-800-224-5399**, or you can e-mail [lori@baileytravel.com](mailto:lori@baileytravel.com). She will coordinate all of our flights to Churchill. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free telephone number in case of any travel emergency. There may be a fee for these services.

**Deposit** A \$900 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is due 7 April 2012. Please send your deposit **soon** so that we can help you to secure the least expensive airfare to Winnipeg and reserve the **LIMITED AIR SPACE** on the flight from Winnipeg to Churchill.

**Refund and Cancellation Policy** With written notice more than 60 days prior to the first day of the tour, 100% of your deposit will be refunded, minus a \$75 service fee. With 30-60 days notice, you will receive a 50% refund of the full cost of the tour. No refund can be made with less than 30 days notice. You will receive a full refund if you provide a replacement for your spot on the tour. No partial refund can be given once the tour begins. We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment. Contact **Allianz Global Assistance** (formerly Access America) and mention **BIRD TREKS ACCAM # F021096**. You can apply via the Internet at [www.allianztravelinsurance.com](http://www.allianztravelinsurance.com) or by phone at **1-800-284-8300**.

*"Once again we thoroughly enjoyed our tour.  
We'll always have fond memories of the days  
that started off well and got even better!"*

Pat & Sherron Lynch, Manitoba tour participants

The **Lazy Bear** Restaurant and Lodge is our comfy home in Churchill. **Bob Schutsky** will be your tour leader.

- - photo by *Mary Brenner*,  
tour participant

