

BIRD TREKS

CHURCHILL & SOUTHERN MANITOBA

Northern Home of *WILLOW PTARMIGAN* & *HARRIS'S SPARROW*

Dates Saturday, 3 June through Tuesday, 13 June 2017: 11 days & 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.

Open prairies and lakes of southeastern Manitoba, with their summer wildflowers and displaying songbirds, shorebirds, and breeding 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 unique birdlife and more wildflowers, 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
Sabine'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

[Daily itinerary begins on page 2]

Trip lists from previous tours that include all **birds, mammals, orchids,** and other critters that we observed are available on our web site at:

<http://www.birdtreks.com/birdwatching-tours.php?region=Manitoba>

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

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=zDJlwFKF8JcU.kgtBbl_kz7U

Churchill & Southern Manitoba

3 - 13 June 2017

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. [Most participants prefer to fly to Winnipeg a day early, just in case there is a flight delay.]
- 2-4 Churchill has a **unique combination of habitats**. It is here that stunted boreal forest meets the Arctic tundra and the rocky 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 **Common Redpoll** 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 hopefully will 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. If time allows, 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, Mourning,** and **Chestnut-sided,** and hopefully **American Three-toed** and **Black-backed Woodpeckers**. On a recent tour we saw **21 Black Bears** in two mornings, plus **5 Moose!** One evening after dinner we will search for **Great Gray Owl** and **Short-eared Owl**. Both nights are near Riding Mountain.

[Day 8 - 11 are 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, Upland Sandpiper, 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, Sedge Wren,** and the highly elusive **Yellow Rail.** Our next three nights are 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 **Virginia Rail, Pileated Woodpecker, Orchard Oriole, Upland Sandpiper, Willet, Ferruginous Hawk, Marsh and Sedge Wrens,** and possibly even **Piping Plover.** Even **Baird's Sparrow** is possible. We'll return to Brandon for a nice dinner and our final night in Manitoba.
- 11 Today we are homeward bound. We'll depart **Brandon** for our drive to **Winnipeg** and our mid-day flights home, having logged away many fine memories of the beautiful province 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 our 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 tours to this region and looks forward to exploring its many unique habitats with you.

Price \$4075 based upon double occupancy. Single accommodations are available for an extra charge of \$595. Please register as early as possible. We will take a maximum of seven participants. On rare occasion we may extend the maximum to ten participants.

Includes Expert guide service, entrance fees, **ALL meals** upon your arrival in Churchill, 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.

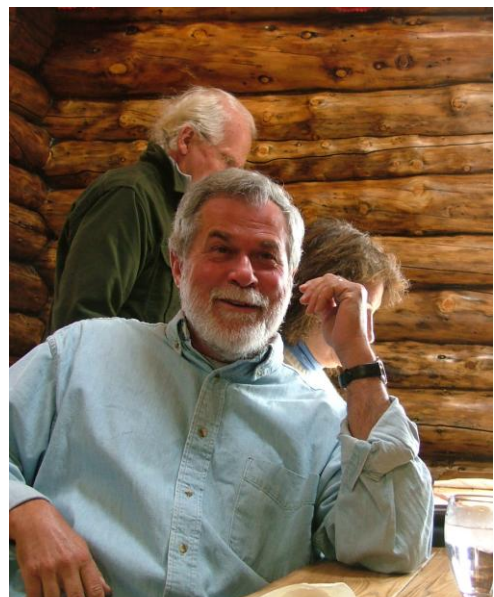
Extra Services We offer the services of our exclusive BIRD TREKS travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel. Lori has 32 years of experience in the travel industry and is a veteran birder. Contact her at Bailey Travel/Travel Time toll-free at **1-800-224-5399**, direct at **717-855-2128**, or e-mail her at **lori@trvlttime.com**. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free telephone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There will be a small fee for these services.

Deposit A \$900 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is due 3 April 2017. Please send your deposit **soon** so that we can help you to secure the least expensive airfare to Winnipeg. There is **LIMITED SPACE** on the flight from Winnipeg to Churchill.

Refund & 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** and mention **BIRD TREKS ACCAM # F021096**. You can apply via the Internet at **www.allianztravelinsurance.com**, or by phone at **1-866-884-3556**.

Bob Schutsky will be your tour leader.

- - photo by *Mary Brenner*,
tour participant



“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

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