

VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY: THE MAGIC OF FALL MIGRATION

SEPTEMBER 15-21, 2024

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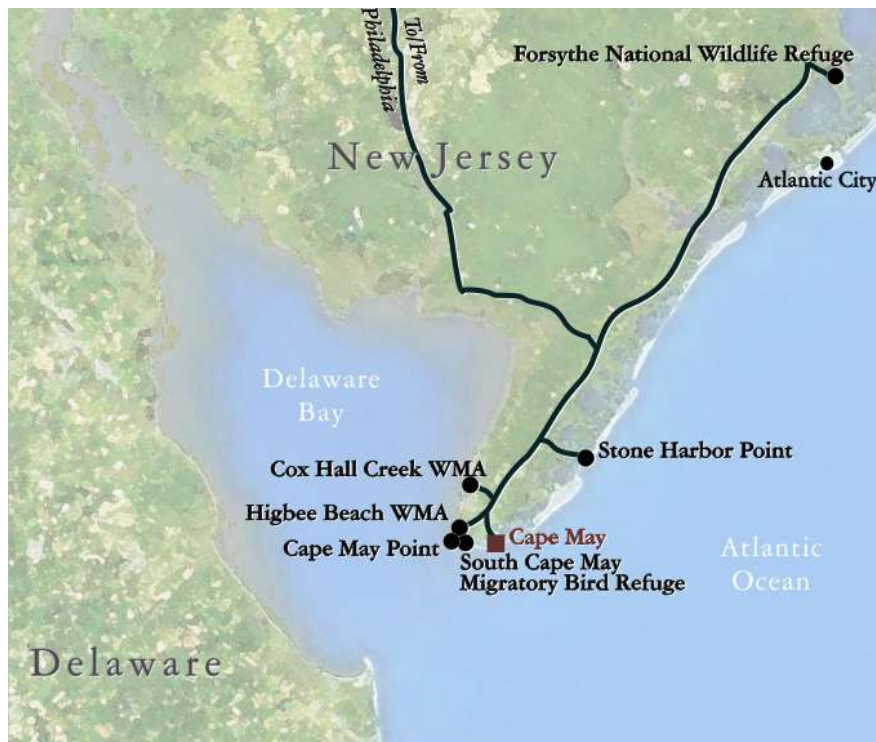
American Kestrel © Michael O'Brien

Along the Atlantic Coast, fall is perhaps the most enchanting of seasons. Summer has lifted, the harvest is in, and the air carries a promise of winter to come. But there is a last warm chance to savor the abundance of nature. Thousands of birds, their brief annual residence in the north completed, make their way down the eastern seaboard, pausing only to feed and rest. The feeling is very different from that of the spring migration, with its joyful song and sprightly breeding dress. However, this autumnal journey has a majesty and splendor that is truly unique.

At Cape May, southbound hawks find themselves in a quandary. They have been moving along the coastline, but here at land's end, they are surrounded by water on three sides. This causes an avian

traffic jam, and birders are its greatest beneficiaries. Songbirds, also heading south, are forced to stop in Cape May. The morning sky is often filled with warblers, vireos, flickers, buntings, and other species as they seek a place to rest and refuel after their nocturnal flight. As the day heats up, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Broad-winged hawks, along with Northern Harriers, Ospreys, American Kestrels, and Merlins are on the move. Even Peregrine Falcons may number in the dozens.

But there are more than just raptors in Cape May. In the "rips" off Cape May Point, feeding flocks of gulls and terns attract migrating Parasitic Jaegers, while the first southbound scoters, loons, and Northern Gannets pass by. Area marshes and ponds harbor an interesting seasonal mix of shorebirds and waterfowl, ripe with opportunity for study. A leisurely cruise through the back bays aboard a pontoon boat will be a particularly enjoyable way to explore these habitats. Fall is also the best time of year to witness insect migration in Cape May. The often spectacular movements of Monarchs are particularly well known, but movements of dragonflies can be equally impressive, and usually accompanied by small falcons that prey upon them.



Our tour is designed to experience the very best that this special season has to offer, and also explore the fascinating dynamics of migration. There is no better classroom in the United States to witness and learn about migration and migratory birds than Cape May.

September 15, Day 1: Arrival in Philadelphia. Participants may plan to arrive in Philadelphia at any time today. The *Home2 Suites, Philadelphia Airport South* offers complimentary shuttle service from Philadelphia International Airport (airport code PHL). Your tour leaders will meet the group at 6:30 p.m. in the lobby of our hotel prior to our get-acquainted dinner. Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, the VENT office will be happy to assist with reservations at our group hotel.

NIGHT: Home2 Suites, Philadelphia Airport

September 16-19, Days 2-5: Cape May and Environs. On our first morning we will depart Philadelphia for Cape May. We may stop to bird en route or, if conditions look good for a big flight in Cape May, we may head there directly. We will have four full days, plus part of another, to experience the Cape May area. Since bird migration is very weather-dependent, our daily activities will be planned to take best advantage of local conditions. If winds are from the northwest, we will likely begin by seeking migrant landbirds in the woods near Higbee's Beach. Late September is the season of peak migrant diversity and a good cold front should produce a long list of woodpeckers, swallows, warblers, and flycatchers. During our early morning birding we should also see our first hawks, mostly Sharp-shinned and Cooper's, as they prowl the brush for a morning meal.



Cape May Warbler © Michael O'Brien

As the sun gets higher, we will head to Cape May Point, the prime vantage point for observing the passage of southbound raptors. Here, land abruptly ends where the Atlantic Ocean meets Delaware Bay. Birds making their way south along the coast arrive at the Point and must decide whether or not to strike out over open water. A few, particularly Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier, and Bald Eagle, continue unhesitatingly, but many “stack up” over Cape May and size up the situation more carefully. As a result, one can often see hundreds, sometimes thousands, of hawks in a single day. Raptor diversity is also excellent in late September and, with luck, we could see the peak movement of Merlin and Peregrine.

There is no place in the United States which can best Cape May as an outdoor classroom for learning to identify raptors. One of the real pleasures of birding here is feeling one’s skill at separating various species of hawks on the wing increase by the hour. We will spend time discussing the different species and families of raptors and learning many useful identification techniques. In Cape May, one can easily see more hawks in a day than one might encounter elsewhere in a year!

The Cape May area is also good for other kinds of avian migrants, whether they be waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, terns, swallows, or warblers, for here the movement of birds is virtually constant. Other birding hotspots that we may visit include The Nature Conservancy’s South Cape Migratory Bird Refuge, Cox Hall Creek Wildlife Management Area, The Beanery, and Stone Harbor. A back-bay cruise aboard the “Osprey” will give us an intimate look at the vast South Jersey saltmarshes, and an up-close look at a variety of shorebirds, herons, and other marsh birds. We will also likely head up the coast to Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. Here, freshwater impoundments may harbor hundreds of shorebirds and waterfowl, and in the surrounding saltmarshes lurk secretive Clapper Rail, and Saltmarsh and Seaside sparrows.



Monarchs on Seaside Goldenrod © Michael O'Brien

Fall is also the best time of year to witness butterfly and dragonfly migration. The dunes can become a highway for passing Monarchs while Merlins and American Kestrels zip around Cape May Point chasing dragonflies. Louise has had over twenty-five years of experience working with the Cape May Monarch Monitoring Project. She will share her knowledge and perform a Monarch tagging demonstration in a local butterfly garden.

NIGHTS: La Mer Beachfront Inn, Cape May

September 20, Day 6: Cape May and Return to Philadelphia. After a final full day in the Cape May area, we will return to our original hotel near the Philadelphia International Airport.

NIGHT: Home2 Suites, Philadelphia Airport

September 21, Day 7: Departure for Home. Participants may arrange their departures for any time today.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 12 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Louise Zemaitis and Michael O'Brien



Louise Zemaitis is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey where she is a popular field trip leader teaching birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory. She also enjoys leading birding groups and lecturing at birding festivals and is known for her enthusiasm for all natural history subjects. Louise and her husband, Michael O'Brien, have been guiding young birders at birding events and conferences for many years. In addition to leading, Louise worked as field coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May and served as compiler of the Cape May Christmas Bird Count for many years. An honors graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art (owner of Swallowtail Studio) she enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published. Her proudest accomplishment has been the raising of her two sons, Bradley, a

conservation educator and artist, and Alec, a library scientist and musician.



Michael O'Brien is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has a passionate interest in bird vocalizations and field identification, and a serious addiction to migration and nocturnal birding. His travels have taken him throughout North and Central America and beyond. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*, and is primary author of *Larkwire*, an online and handheld application for learning bird sounds. His illustrations have been widely published in books and field guides, including the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the new Peterson field guides. Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies,

leads several "Birds & Butterflies" tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis, and is coordinator of the Cape May Butterfly Count.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$3,995** per person in double occupancy from Philadelphia. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 7, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Philadelphia and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$1,500**.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at www.ventbird.com) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days (April 18, 2024) prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Cancellation by Participant:

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants' protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

<u>If participant cancels:</u>	<u>Participant's refund will be:</u>
180 days or more before departure date	Participant's deposit minus \$250*
179 to 151 days before departure date	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded
150 days or less before departure date	No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

Cancellation by VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through

Redpoint, we recommend its **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: <https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip cost in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

In line with the decision made by the federal government (including the CDC), Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a **Coronavirus FAQ** page on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ** page at the following link: https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per-person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE: To prevent crowding in the vehicles, we ask participants to limit their luggage to one medium-sized bag per person, plus one carry-on bag. As a precaution, if you are flying to meet the tour and checking luggage, we urge you to pack a change of clothes, your binoculars, any medication, toiletries, and other essentials in your airline carry-on bag.

CLIMATE & CLOTHING: Fall on the East Coast tends to be the most pleasant weather of the year. Expect mild-to-warm afternoons, with chilly mornings and evenings. It is wisest to dress in layers, beginning the day with a light jacket or windbreaker over a sweatshirt or sweater, which in turn covers a long-sleeve shirt or T-shirt. Later, as the day gets warmer, one can adjust easily by removing layers. Jeans or similar durable, comfortable pants are most practical for this tour. Choice of footwear is largely a matter of personal preference. Sneakers or tennis shoes are generally quite suitable, though it might be a good idea to bring waterproof shoes as well, in case the going gets wet.

Though we will hope for blue skies and sun throughout, it is likely that we will have some rain. Be prepared with a raincoat or poncho. A warm jacket, a hat, and some light gloves will be useful if we get a good, strong cold front. Of course, a good, strong cold front is exactly what we want in order to have the best birding. Dress will be informal, though you may wish to bring something to change into for dinner; e.g., an oxford or similar shirt and slacks or a simple dress.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars in good condition, along with a day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, etc.). If you are trying to decide which pair of binoculars to use, you would probably do well to bring a versatile pair like 7 or 8 x 42. Migrating hawks often pass at moderate to great distance, but songbirds can be observed relatively close. Your leader will have a spotting scope; but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. You are welcome to bring a camera. There will be good opportunities to photograph scenery. Birds, as we all know, can be more or less cooperative depending on their whim.

OTHER ITEMS TO BRING:

- A water bottle which holds at least one pint.
- Mosquitoes can sometimes be annoying in the early morning. Repellent may be desirable.
- **Folding stool** – a recommended item for those who have trouble standing for more than 10 or 15 minutes at a time. The typical folding stool is small, lightweight and portable, consisting of three aluminum legs connected by a central bolt, with a sturdy but pliable material seat.
- There is an excellent bookstore at Cape May Bird Observatory, so a little spending money may come in handy.

CONDITIONS: For viewing songbird migrants, the best activity is typically during the first two hours of daylight, so most days will begin with breakfast around 6:30 am, followed immediately by our morning field time. Lunch will be either a picnic or at a restaurant, followed by more birding in early afternoon. We'll take a late afternoon break at the hotel before reconvening for our evening checklist session and dinner. Field time will involve little strenuous physical activity. We will likely take several walks of an hour or two in length, but at a leisurely "birding" pace. All walks will be on open ground, including on roadsides, trails, and beaches. Some wet grass is possible during early morning walks. We will also spend a good bit of time standing or sitting at various locations to watch migrants pass by. All travel will be in 15-passenger or 12-passenger vans. Most drives will be less than 30 minutes, aside from our roughly two-hour transfers between Philadelphia and Cape May.

Special Note: On some tours and in certain areas, the larger 15-passenger vans are not available. Every effort will be made to secure the larger vehicle for this tour. However, when smaller vans are reserved, participants may not always have a window seat and you will be asked to rotate daily.

INTERNET SERVICE: Wi-Fi is available at Home2 Suites Philadelphia Airport and La Mer Beachfront Inn.

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19> for our official statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of our tours. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

Insect Repellents – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

Field guides:

Any of the popular North American or Eastern North American guides will suffice, though the National Geographic and Sibley Eastern books are probably the most useful and certainly the most current:

National Geographic Society. *A Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. 7th ed. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2017.

Sibley, David A. *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*. 2nd ed. Chanticleer Press, 2016.

Reading and Reference:

Connor, Jack. *Season at the Point*. Chronicles a year's fall migration at Cape May and the birders who are drawn to it.

Dunne, Pete, David Sibley and Clay Sutton. *Hawks in Flight*. 2nd edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2012.

Written by three men who have birded Cape May extensively for years, this book describes in great detail the techniques used by hawk-watching devotees to separate this often confusing group. Unlike most bird guides, which emphasize colors and patterns of feathering, this book explains the use of less tangible marks like shape and flight pattern. It is heavily biased toward hawks of the eastern United States.

Liguori, Jerry. *Hawks From Every Angle*. Princeton University Press, 2005. One of the foremost experts on the field identification of hawks in North America, Jerry spent three years as Cape May's hawk counter.

O'Brien, Michael, Richard Crossley, and Kevin Karlson, *The Shorebird Guide*, Houghton Mifflin. Boston 2006. A photographic guide that presents a holistic approach to shorebird identification.

Sutton, Clay and Pat. *Birds and Birding at Cape May*. Stackpole Books, 2006. A complete guide to birding, bird finding, and the ornithological history of Cape May by local authors.

Weidensoul, Scott. *Living on the Wind*. North Point Press. NY, 1999. A must read for this trip, this book outlines many amazing examples of avian migration and explains how and why it happens.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, "**VENT**") act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed

necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on January 4, 2024, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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