



COLORADO GROUSE

APRIL 4–14, 2024

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Five species of lekking grouse inhabit the prairies and northern valleys of North America—the Greater and Gunnison sage-grouse, the Sharp-tailed Grouse, and the Greater and Lesser prairie-chickens. All are noted for their spectacular mating displays, and all can be exceedingly difficult to find away from their “leks” or display grounds. This tour will focus on observing these birds and their mating rituals. From the sandhills of western Kansas to the high sagebrush parklands of the mountains of Colorado, we’ll be spectators at some of the most fascinating displays in the bird world, such as the “booming” of the prairie-chickens, the wild dance of the Sharp-tails, and the strutting of the huge sage-grouse. We also seek out more secretive denizens of Colorado, the Dusky Grouse and White-tailed Ptarmigan, but these birds are always a challenge and have been missed.

There are more birds to see in Colorado at this season than grouse. Possibilities will include Golden Eagle; Ferruginous, Rough-legged and Swainson’s hawks; Prairie Falcon; Sandhill Crane; Mountain Plover; Lewis’s Woodpecker; Mountain Bluebird; Chestnut-collared and Thick-billed longspurs; as well as a host of waterfowl, shorebirds, and prairie and montane specialties. Mammal viewing should also be excellent, and the scenery will be breathtaking. Although the tour will require considerable daytime driving, we’ll make frequent stops.



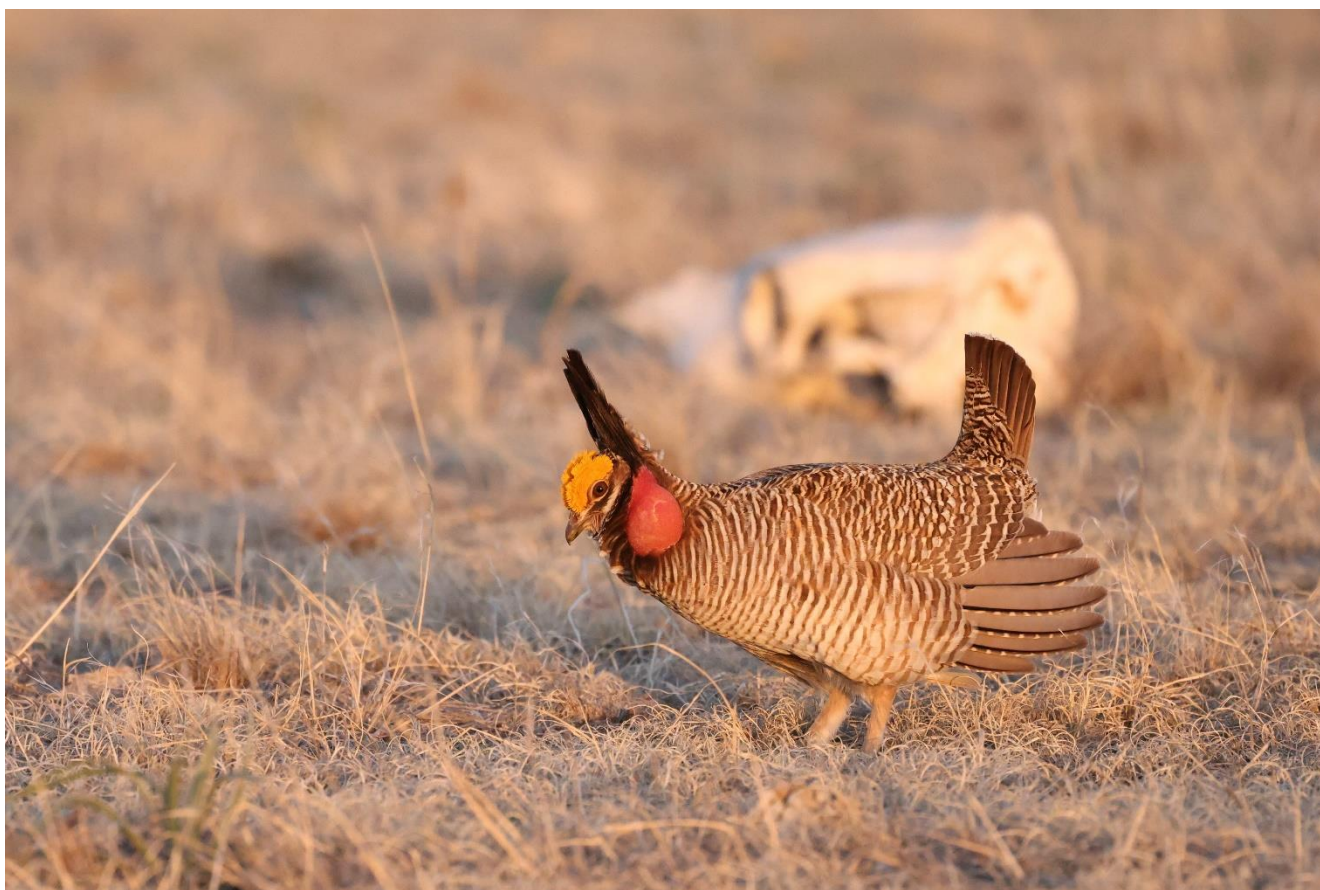
April 4, Day 1: Arrival in Denver. Participants should make arrangements to arrive today and take the complimentary shuttle to our hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. A get acquainted meeting and dinner will take place this evening.

NIGHT: Courtyard Denver Airport, Denver

April 5, Day 2: Depart Denver; Birding Eastern Prairies En Route to Scott City, Kansas. This morning we will bird our way to Scott City, Kansas, seeking prairie birds along the way. We hope to find migrant groups of longspurs, some waterfowl, raptors, and Mountain Plover. NOTE: we will lose one hour as we drive into Central Daylight Time.

NIGHT: Best Western El Quartejejo Inn and Suites, Scott City, Kansas

April 6, Day 3: Lesser Prairie-Chicken Lek and Drive to Wray, Colorado. Our first early morning will find us on a Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek. While they look similar when not displaying, the calls are different from Greater Prairie-Chickens with more gurgling pops, and the smaller, brick red air sacs and larger yellow combs distinguish the Lesser from the Greater. After this amazing show we will make our way to Wray, Colorado, searching along the way for any missing prairie birds like Mountain Plover, Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, and longspurs. NOTE: we will gain an hour back as we drive back into Mountain Daylight Time.



Lesser Prairie-Chicken displaying © Brian Gibbons

NIGHT: Cobblestone Inn and Suites, Wray

April 7, Day 4: Greater Prairie-Chicken Lek and Drive from Wray to Fort Collins. We will hear the Greater Prairie-Chickens before we can see them. On cue the males start cooing in unison; whoops, cackles, and foot stomping ensue. With the morning sun, the golden-orange air sacs of the males glow with a magenta rim. With pinnae erect, the males display for any females that may wander through the lek. After this spectacular morning



Greater Prairie-Chicken in display © Brian Gibbons

show we will head west through farmland to the Pawnee National Grassland to seek any missing prairie birds like Mountain Plover, Thick-billed and Chestnut-collared longspurs, and Ferruginous Hawk.

NIGHT: Hilton Garden Inn, Fort Collins

April 8, Day 5: Fort Collins to Walden. As we ascend Poudre Canyon into the mountains, we will encounter stunning scenery along the Poudre River, where American Dippers roam and Common Mergansers nest. Once we reach 8,000 feet, lodgepole pine and spruce dominate the montane landscape. Cameron Pass will afford our first chance for many exciting boreal forest birds. Pine Grosbeak, Cassin's Finch, Canada Jay, and American Three-toed Woodpeckers are all possibilities if we have good weather. As we descend into North Park, a huge expanse of rolling sage brush awaits, the realm of the Greater Sage-Grouse!

NOTE: Walden is at 8,000 feet elevation. One simple way to prevent altitude sickness is hydration; remember to drink water today.

NIGHT: North Park Inn and Suites, Walden

April 9, Day 6: Walden to Steamboat Springs. The spectacular Greater Sage-Grouse strutting display will be our first target of the day. We will also spend time searching through the piles of birds at Walden Reservoir where fifteen species of ducks are possible. The grebes, shorebirds and local Bald Eagles will keep us busy for a couple of hours. We will then make our way to Steamboat Springs through Rabbit Ears Pass, where we will bird for more boreal forest goodies. Red Crossbill, Mountain Chickadee, and American Three-toed Woodpecker are all possible.



Greater Sage-Grouse display © Brian Gibbons

Mammals in North Park and the Yampa River Valley are common, and we may see moose, elk, mule and white-tailed deer, pronghorn, and white-tailed jackrabbit.

NIGHT: Best Western Plus Deer Park Hotel Suites, Craig

April 10, Day 7: Steamboat Springs to Grand Junction. Another early morning will have us searching traditional leks for Sharp-tailed Grouse. Although smaller and less physically imposing, they have the most arresting dance. With tails held high, wings bowed out to the sides, and feet propelling them in circles, they resemble wind-up toys run amok. Imitated by the Plains Indians, this dance is an integral part of spring on the northern prairies. In the rolling grasslands nearby, Sandhill Cranes and Western Meadowlarks enliven the scene. We will also check the foothill areas nearby for our first encounter with Dusky Grouse.

NIGHT: Holiday Inn Express and Suites, Grand Junction

April 11, Day 8: Grand Junction to Montrose. In the morning we will explore the red rock canyonlands of Colorado National Monument searching for Pinyon Jays, Juniper Titmouse and Black-throated Sparrows among the junipers and pinyon pines of this beautiful, stark landscape. Even on freezing mornings we've seen White-throated swifts zipping along the canyon walls. After lunch we will make our way to Montrose and our first investigation of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. Sometimes Dusky Grouse stroll through the campgrounds and we hope to encounter this solitary grouse in the park.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn, Montrose

April 12, Day 9: Montrose to Gunnison. The spectacular Black Canyon of the Gunnison will be a wonderful backdrop as we survey this little-known national park for the hulking Dusky Grouse along the roads, in the campgrounds, and scenic overlooks. Spotted Towhees, Mountain Bluebirds and Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays all live in the scrubby oaks of the park and will entertain us while we seek the Dusky. We will then bird our way over to Gunnison for our final grouse lek of the tour.

NIGHT: Holiday Inn Express, Gunnison



Brown-capped Rosy-Finch © Brian Gibbons

April 13, Day 10: Gunnison to Denver International

Airport. A pre-dawn start will take us to the final grouse lek, this one for the recently described and declining Gunnison Sage-Grouse. With its strange filoplume crest, more prominently banded tail, smaller size than the Greater Sage-Grouse, and tiny range (basically restricted to southwestern Colorado), this newly recognized species has instantly become one of the most endangered birds of North America. Though this lek is distant, we should have scope views of the Gunnison Sage-Grouse in their outrageous display. After the morning display by the sage-grouse, we will bird into the mountains surrounding the Gunnison Valley. Some of our targets will be rosy-finches, grosbeaks, American Three-toed Woodpecker and Canada Jay. Note: Viewing the Gunnison Sage-Grouse will be from a blind and we will be inside from around 5:00 a.m. until the grouse depart the lek area. (Sometimes not until after 8:00 a.m.) This is regulated by

a local non-profit and we have no access to a bathroom from the blind until we are released by the Siskadee volunteer. We will break up the long drive to Denver with lunch and more birds. Loveland Pass at 12,000 feet hosts White-tailed Ptarmigan in the springtime; we hope to find one if the weather allows. We will then make our way to the Courtyard Marriott where we started this epic journey.



White-tailed Ptarmigan © Brian Gibbons

NIGHT: Courtyard Denver Airport, Denver

April 14, Day 11: Departure for Home. Participants may make arrangements to leave Denver anytime today.

TOUR LEADERS: Erik Bruhnke and Kevin Burke



Erik Bruhnke has loved birds since he was a child looking at chickadees. In 2008 he graduated from Northland College in Wisconsin with a Natural Resources degree. Erik taught field ornithology at Northland College for three semesters. Between 2009 and 2014, he spent his summers conducting field research focused on breeding bird transects in Upper Michigan, point counts for a breeding bird atlas in Minnesota and Wisconsin's Northwoods, vegetation and breeding bird surveys throughout wind farms in North Dakota's prairie potholes, and cavity-nesting surveys in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon. A devoted raptor nerd, he is drawn to hawkwatches. He worked as an interpreter for six seasons at Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in Duluth, Minnesota; counted migrating raptors at the Corpus Christi HawkWatch in Texas in 2015; and was the 2016, 2017, and 2018 hawk counter at the Cape May Hawkwatch in New Jersey. Erik's wildlife photography has won national awards, and he's written for the American Birding

Association's *Birder's Guide*, *BirdWatching* magazine, and *Bird Watcher's Digest*. When not leading birding tours, Erik often leads field trips and speaks at birding festivals. He also enjoys hiking, kayaking, cross-country skiing, and just being out in the snow. In his free time he loves to cook and bake.



Kevin Burke is originally from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. He grew up running around in the woods and trails of Shenandoah National Park. His family spent many summers camping and hiking in the park. One of Kevin's favorite activities was jumping in the river and turning over every rock to see what was underneath. This eventually earned him the nickname "Hellgrammite Kid." This early exposure to the natural world has vaulted into a lifelong obsession with the outdoors. Kevin was introduced to birding while spending summers in Rhode Island at his grandmother's house. She would point out all the feeder birds and help him identify them. These early encounters helped foster a love for birds. An early Ornithology class at Hocking College in Ohio rekindled his

love for birds. He has been birding every day since. He went on to get a Bachelor of Science in Ecotourism and Conservation Ecology from the University of Idaho. Kevin has been involved with leading bird trips in some capacity for almost 20 years. He has led birding trips all throughout the United States, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic. His birding journeys have also taken him to some spectacular locations such as Portugal, Colombia, The Bahamas, and Canada. This is truly a lifelong obsession. He currently resides with his family in Hendersonville, North Carolina. Kevin's wife and two kids also enjoy birding. They have fun kayaking, hiking, and camping in the mountains that surround their home. One of their favorite activities is jumping on the paddle board and kayaks and leisurely floating the French Broad River near their house.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 14 participants.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$4,995** per person in double occupancy from Denver. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to dinner on Day 10, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare between your home and Denver, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$700**.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you would like 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 <https://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 prior to the tour departure date (November 6, 2023).

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, 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, 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.

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 their **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 and rescue services** from your point of injury or illness to your **hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for **trip cancellation/interruption**, primary medical expense coverage, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, **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: 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 14 days of making your tour deposit. The CFAR benefit Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual 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 14 days in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. The primary medical expense benefit is available to U.S. residents only. For this reason, non-U.S. residents will pay an adjusted premium when purchasing a comprehensive policy, which includes all of the other benefits available to U.S. residents. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

Concerns about COVID-19 may present uncertainty for those holding travel insurance policies or who are considering future travel and purchasing such insurance. Redpoint features a **Coronavirus FAQ page** on its website that addresses questions and concerns regarding its travel insurance and the impact of COVID-19. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of topics such as policy coverage and limitations, policy modifications, cancellation, refunds, and more.

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

Additionally, some countries maintain COVID-19 entry requirements, including mandates to purchase travel insurance covering medical expenses due to COVID-19 illness and in case of quarantine. Ripcord’s comprehensive travel insurance plans are designed to satisfy the various country-specific travel insurance entry requirements. Those who purchase a Ripcord policy will receive a “letter of confirmation” that affirms that the policy satisfies such requirements.

NOTE: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is an equal opportunity service provider and authorized permittee of the Pawnee National Grassland, Colorado National Monument and Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park.

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.

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.

TRANSPORTATION: Comfort and safety for the miles driven in modern high-top extended passenger vans with AWD. Large windows provide great scenery-viewing and birding from the vehicle.

INTERNET AVAILABILITY: Wi-Fi is offered at all hotels on this tour.

BAGGAGE: As space in the vehicles is limited, please restrict your luggage to one medium-sized bag and one carry-on bag.

CLIMATE: Temperatures will range from very warm in the lowland prairies to very cold in the mountains. Daytime highs in the plains could reach the mid-80s, while nighttime lows in the mountains may dip below 20°F. Temperatures ranging from the low 30s to mid-60s would be closer to the norm. Spring snow storms are not uncommon in Colorado in April, so be prepared. Note that several nights are spent in towns near 7,000 feet and above (Gunnison 7,700 feet, Walden 8,100 feet and Steamboat Springs 6,800 feet). We will drive over mountain passes exceeding 10,000 feet on three days and some birding at these elevations will take place. Loveland Pass for White-tailed Ptarmigan is at 12,000 feet.

CLOTHING: We suggest lightweight field clothing, a warm jacket (possibly down), thermal underwear, hat, and gloves. You should bring a comfortable pair of walking shoes or hiking boots and a second pair of light shoes. Dress will be casual throughout. Sitting in vans on the leks in pre-dawn darkness can at times be chilly, so be prepared with layers of warm clothing. Small disposable chemical hand warmer packs have been widely employed on the frigid mornings.

EQUIPMENT: Pack a pair of binoculars in good condition, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, camera, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leaders will have a spotting scope; but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. Other items should include an alarm clock, as well as a good flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries.

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>.

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.

Andrews, Robert, and Robert Righter. *Colorado Birds*. Denver: Denver Museum of Natural History, 1992. An excellent up-to-date reference on bird distribution and habitats within the state.

Bailey, Alfred M., and Robert J. Niedrach. *Birds of Colorado*. Denver: Denver Museum of Natural History, 1965. Large and very expensive but may be available through your local library.

Bailey, Alfred M. and Robert J. Niedrach. *Pictorial Checklist of Colorado Birds*. Denver: Denver Museum, 1967. Available through Audubon House, Buteo Books and other dealers.

Bowers, Nora, Rick Bowers and Kenn Kaufman. *Mammals of North America*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

Connelly, J.W., M.W. Gratson, and K.P. Reese. Sharp-Tailed Grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 354. (A. Poole and F. Gill Eds.) Philadelphia, PA: The Birds of North America, Inc., 1998. [Excellent life history account.]

Craighead, Craighead, and Davis. *A Field Guide to Rocky Mountain Wildflowers From Northern Arizona and New Mexico to British Columbia*. Peterson Field Guide Series. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.

Giesen, K.M. Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 364. (A Poole and F. Gill Eds.) Philadelphia, PA: The Birds of North America, Inc., 1998. [Excellent life history account.]

Holt, Harold. *A Birder's Guide to Colorado*. American Birding Association, 1997.

Johnsgard, Paul. *The Grouse of the World*. University of Nebraska Press, 1984. [See especially pages 109-127 (Sage Grouse); pp. 316-341 (Pinnated Grouse); and pp. 342-360 (Sharp-Tailed Grouse). Excellent discussions of displays and their interpretation.]

Michener, James. *Centennial*. New York: Random House, 1974.

National Geographic. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. (Seventh Edition.) Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2017.

Schroeder, M.A., and L.A. Robb. Greater Prairie Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 36. (A Poole and F. Gill Eds.) Philadelphia, PA: The Birds of North America, Inc., 1993. [Excellent life history account.]

Schroeder, M.A., J.R. Young, and C.E. Braun. 9. Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 425. (A Poole and F. Gill Eds.) Philadelphia, PA: The Birds of North America, Inc., 1999. [Excellent life history account.]

Sibley, David. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Chanticleer Press, 2000.

Zimmer, Kevin J. *Birding in the American West*. Cornell: University Press, 2000.

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 July 6, 2023, 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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