



**BIRDING TOUR MINNESOTA:
GENERAL INFORMATION**



PREPARING FOR MINNESOTA IN WINTER

A Great Grey Owl descends silently upon an open field to catch a vole hidden in the deep snow. Flocks of colorful winter finches noisily visit a feeder, rivaling even the tanagers of the tropics in color. Grouse strut along an open field with their amazing snowshoe-like feet, perfectly adapted in both form and color to the depths of winter. These are the images that come to mind when one thinks of a birding trip to Minnesota in winter.

Although visiting this frigid state in winter may seem like madness to the uninitiated, the birds that occur in northeastern Minnesota are among some of the most special and charismatic in the world, such as Northern Hawk-Owl, Great Grey Owl, and Snowy Owl. Sitting on the southern edge of the vast boreal forest biome, northeastern Minnesota is the southern limit of distribution for many other boreal forest species that do not regularly occur further south, such as Boreal Chickadee and Grey Jay. However, one must keep in mind that a trip list to this state in January will only include about 40 or so hardy species, with few individuals overall. It will definitely be a case of quality over quantity.

Another factor to consider is the weather. Average high temperatures in Duluth in January range between 15 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit (-9 to -6 degrees Celsius), but it can potentially never go above 0 degrees Fahrenheit (-17 degrees Celsius) on some days. Although it will be very cold by most standards, most of our birding will be done along roadsides, either near or within the warmth of our vehicle. There may be a few very short walks of a couple of hundred meters/yards or less. Notwithstanding these details, please dress in multiple warm layers!