ALASKA: VAST BEAUTY – NOME, SEWARD, DENALI

14–26 JUNE 2027
14–26 JUNE 2028
12–24 JUNE 2029



*We will visit a large colony of **Horned Puffins** while in Seward.*

Overview

Alaska birding tours offer one of the world's most amazing combinations of stellar birds, jaw-dropping mammals, and breathtaking scenery, which will leave any nature enthusiast ecstatic! The variety of habitats offer a constant scenic backdrop as we travel through the arctic tundra, along numerous pristine lakes and rivers, past an assortment of distant (and some near) glaciers, and of course through sections of the mighty boreal forest. A stunning mountain view is never too far away, with the mightiest coming from Denali itself, North America's highest peak. Do not forget the incredible experience of near 24-hour days with the sun almost never truly setting. The list of large-mammal possibilities is an impressive one, ranging from the tundra of Denali National Park to the waters of Resurrection Bay with **Grizzly Bear**, **Moose**, **Orca** (Killer Whale), **Humpback Whale**, **Sea Otter**, **Reindeer** (Caribou), and **Thinhorn Sheep** (Dall's Sheep) and many more.

Then of course there is the wide array of fantastic birds that use these bountiful summer arctic habitats for their nesting and breeding season. Birds include **Bald Eagle**, **Horned** and **Tufted Puffins**, **Ancient** and **Kittlitz's Murrelets**, **Long-tailed** and **Harlequin Ducks**, **Aleutian Tern**, all four amazing **Eider** species (**Steller's**, **Spectacled**, **King**, and **Common**), all three **Jaeger** species (**Parasitic**, **Long-tailed**, and **Pomarine**), **Bristle-thighed Curlew**, **Emperor Goose**, and many others which can be found on or above the waters and bays, not to mention true stunners like **Snowy Owl**, **Arctic Warbler**, **Gyrfalcon**, **Bluethroat**, **American Dipper**, and **Willow** and **Rock Ptarmigans** in the tundra and alpine areas. There are indeed very few places that could challenge the scenery, birds, and other wildlife found in the majesty of Alaska.



*The striking **Willow Ptarmigan** is one of the top targets on this trip.*

This trip can be combined with our extension tour **Utqiagvik (Barrow): Top of the World**, which immediately follows this one.

Detailed Itinerary (13 days/12 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Anchorage

You arrive at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport by 6 p.m., where you will use the shuttle to the hotel. There will be introductions and an orientation about our upcoming trip during our first dinner together.

Overnight: Anchorage

Days 2–4. Birding the wonders of Nome

Using the hotel shuttle we will arrive at the Anchorage airport and catch our flight to the amazing birding destination that is Nome. Some of the best birding in all of Alaska can be found here during the tail end of migration, with breeding birds setting up territories and the potential of a stray species still high. Species such as **Black-throated Loon**, **Bristle-thighed Curlew**, **Aleutian Tern**, **Parasitic** and **Long-tailed Jaegers**, **Bluethroat**, and **Red Phalarope** are a few of the top targets for our time here. There are three main roads that extend from the central town, and we will spend each of our days exploring these 60-plus-mile (97-plus-kilometer) roads that stretch through the beautiful arctic tundra. The evenings will be spent around the town with time for some birding. There is so much birding potential here in Nome with additional species like **Alder Flycatcher**, **Eastern Yellow Wagtail**, **Pacific Golden Plover**, **Common Eider**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, and **Northern Wheatear**, plus a shot at **Muskox**. During our three-plus days in Nome we will be able to fully explore everything that this amazing location has to offer.

Overnight: Nome



*The dainty **Long-tailed Jaeger**.*

Day 5. Back to Anchorage

We'll spend the morning birding around Nome for the final time, targeting any potential species we might be missing. From there we will take an afternoon flight back to Anchorage and pick up our rental vehicle, when we will likely see a few species near the airport and in town like **Black-billed Magpie** and **Northern Raven**. The remainder of the evening will be spent on dinner and getting comfortable in the hotel for a good night's rest and recovery after a great time in Nome.

Overnight: Anchorage

Day 6. Kenai Peninsula

Today we will be traveling a few hours south to Seward with plenty of birding stops planned along the way. First is a morning of birding around the Anchorage area at Westchester Lagoon. A few pairs of **Red-necked Grebes** nest on this good-sized lake, with the possibility of other waterfowl and shorebird species like **Hudsonian Godwit**, **Northern Shoveler**, and **Greater Scaup**. Next we will head to another local park for a relaxing stroll that should produce **Boreal Chickadee**, **Two-barred** (White-winged) **Crossbill**, **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, and many others. From here we will continue working south toward Seward with a brief stop in the small town of Whittier. In order to access the town we must drive through America's longest tunnel, just over 2.5 miles (4 kilometers) long, where we will be treated to views of Prince William Sound. We will scan the waters for species like **Pigeon Guillemot**, **Glaucous-winged Gull**, **Harlequin Duck**, and **Harbor Seal**, while enjoying **American** (Northwestern) **Crows** scattered around town. We'll then make the rest of the drive to Seward, where we will eat dinner and settle into the hotel for the evening.

Overnight: Seward

Day 7. Seward Pelagic trip and Resurrection Bay

Today is very exciting as we spend most of it on the waters of Resurrection Bay, looking for loads of amazing seabirds and the potential for incredible marine mammals as well. The scenery of the bay is simply stunning, with large rock outcroppings scattered throughout and various glaciers in the surrounding mountains. We will visit colonies of both **Tufted** and **Horned Puffins** as well as **Thick-billed** and **Common Murres**. In addition, **Red-faced Cormorant** and a few other alcids are likely, like **Ancient Murrelet**, **Marbled Murrelet**, and even the rare **Kittlitz's Murrelet** spends time in these waters during the summer. Thousands of **Black-legged Kittiwakes** enjoy the bay and are always a treat to see in their various plumage states. The chance at amazing marine mammals keeps the excitement alive, with **Steller Sea Lion** and **Sea Otter** as likely species with the chance at **Dall's Porpoise**, **Humpback Whale**, and even the incredible **Orca** (Killer Whale)! After our time on the boat we will check out a few areas nearby before having dinner in town and settling in for the evening. This is also a good time to catch up on rest if needed or do a bit of laundry.

Overnight: Seward



*Sea birds, like **Red-faced Cormorant**, can be seen in Resurrection Bay.*

Day 8. From Seward back to Anchorage

We start the day birding around the town of Seward, exploring the airport mudflats for species like **Mew Gull**, **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, and other shorebirds. We'll also check out the areas surrounding Lowell Point, which hold a small population of **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** as well as other species like **Varied Thrush**, **Pacific Wren**, and **Steller's Jay**. There is also the chance for a **Sea Otter** being close to shore or some auk species hanging close to nearby rocks. On our way back to Anchorage we'll make several stops along the famous Potter Marsh Bird Sanctuary as we scan for nesting **Arctic Terns**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Wilson's Snipe**, and others plus some amazing scenic views. We will have dinner in Anchorage before making our way to Wasilla for the night to help give us a head start for the next day.

Overnight: Wasilla

Day 9. Hatcher Pass to Healy

Today we'll make the long, but scenic, drive toward Denali via Hatcher Pass. We'll pass through a variety of habitats and elevations on this drive through the south-east Talkeetna Mountains. Fast-flowing streams along the roadside are common, with nesting **American Dippers** taking residence. Eventually we will reach some large open areas of tundra, where we will stop along the road when we spot something like perhaps a flock of **Grey-crowned Rosy Finches** or a **Willow Ptarmigan** strutting along.

Once we are back on the main road we will stop again briefly at Byer's Lake in Denali State Park for a brief hike, hoping for the likes of **Northern Goshawk** to bust through the forest and for a

scan of the lake, where **Trumpeter Swan** and **Common Loon** should be nesting. Finally we'll arrive in the small town of Healy for dinner and check into the hotel for the evening.

Overnight: Healy



This tour will feature some stunning Alaskan scenery.

Day 10. Denali National Park

On one of the most exciting days of the trip today we will travel into the pristine Denali National Park. There is only a single, 90-plus-mile (150-plus-kilometer) road into and out of the park, and standard vehicles are not allowed past mile number 15. We will instead take one of the park's tour buses, with our final destination of the day being at mile 66. Denali is best-known for its large-mammal sightings, spectacular tundra views, and of course Mount Denali (formerly Mt. McKinley) itself. The odds are good of seeing incredible wildlife like **Grizzly Bear**, **Moose**, **Reindeer** (Caribou), and **Thinhorn Sheep** (Dall's Sheep) with the off chance at a rare mammal sighting as well. Views of Denali can be hit-or-miss, since it is so tall (20,000-plus feet/7000-plus-meters) that it regularly creates its own weather conditions, often obstructing views with clouds and only occasionally peeking out. Then of course there are chances for some great birds like **Golden Eagle** and **Gyrfalcon** soaring in the thermals or a **Willow Ptarmigan** hopping through the scrub. Overall this national park is certainly a memorable one. After our bus returns, we will explore the nature center a bit and then head for dinner.

Overnight: Healy

Day 11. Birding the Denali Highway

We'll spend the day cruising along the 135 miles/216 kilometers of scenic alpine tundra on the Denali Highway. This mostly dirt road offers some amazing opportunities to experience some of Alaska's nesting species in a peaceful solitude. We will make stops in a variety of habitat zones. **Trumpeter Swan**, **Tundra Swan**, and **Harlequin Duck** are found on the multitude of lakes and ponds along with various nesting shorebirds such as **American Golden Plover**, **Hudsonian Whimbrel**, and **Wandering Tattler**. We will become weary of **Long-tailed-Jaeger** nests while we search carefully for nesting **Smith's Longspur**. Throughout the drive we should see and hear recently arrived **Arctic Warblers** as well as the chance for a ptarmigan or grouse crossing, with numerous species possible. Eventually we will arrive in the Paxson area for the evening and dinner.

Overnight: Paxson

Day 12. Back to Anchorage

We will return to Anchorage today via the Richardson and Glenn Highways. Today we will target and focus on any tundra/alpine species we may have missed on previous days. The drive takes us through some beautiful sections of the boreal forest, giving us a chance for a **Northern Hawk-Owl** perched up high or a **Spruce Grouse** on the edge of the road. There are a few campgrounds to wander through that host all the typical boreal species, like **Boreal Chickadee**, **American Three-toed Woodpecker**, **Canada Jay**, and **Pine Grosbeak**. We will finally make it back to Anchorage for our final dinner of what was surely an amazing trip.

Overnight: Anchorage



*The cute **Canada Jay** is one of our many boreal targets.*

Day 13. Tour concludes, extension begins

The main Alaska tour concludes this morning with transport to the Anchorage airport. Some of the participants may fly back home, while others may board the flight to Utqiagvik for the tour extension.

Overnight: Not included

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides, and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Tour Details

Duration:	13 days
Group Size:	5–8
Dates:	14–26 June 2027 14–26 June 2028 12–24 June 2029
Start:	Anchorage
End:	Anchorage
Prices:	US$ 9,157 per person sharing, assuming 5–8 participants (2027) US$ 9,690 per person sharing, assuming 5–8 participants (2028) US$ 9,990 per person sharing, assuming 5–8 participants (2029)
Single supplements:	US$ 2,247 (2027) US$ 2,370 (2028) US$ 2,490 (2029)

Price includes:

Meals
Accommodation
Transport
Guiding fees
Flights Anchorage – Nome – Anchorage

Price excludes:

Flights to and from Anchorage
Personal insurance
Alcoholic beverages
Laundry service
Personal expenses such as gifts
Gratuities (please see our tipping guidelines blog)