



BIRDING TOURS USA: ALASKA GENERAL INFORMATION



Red-necked Phalarope is always a favorite target on this tour.

PASSPORT AND VISA

For US citizens, no visas or passports are required. You will need to bring along a government issued ID as they are sometimes required for hotels.

Non-United States citizens will require a valid passport to enter the country, and some may require a tourist visa. Please consult with your local US Embassy for more details and information. You may need to show your ID/passport at various hotels and for the boat departures on this tour.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly encourage you to purchase trip cancellation or interruption insurance in case you have to cancel due to illness or for any other reason, as tour payments are non-refundable as per our terms and conditions. **We advise you to get a plan which covers all your medical care and evacuation back to your country of residence, repatriation, and trip cancellation due to illness just prior, or any other reason.**

HEALTH

Alaska does not pose any major health risk. Ample layers will help combat the unpredictable weather conditions and colder temperatures/wetter days. Water will be available throughout the tour and please feel free to bring your own reusable bottle to refill throughout the tour as the drinking water here is safe. There is always the potential for encounters with large mammals on this tour, however, they pose minimal risk if encounters with them are handled correctly. Your tour leader will give instructions and help with any questions to prepare for any potential encounter. Insects can be an annoyance and an issue in June, so we recommend bringing along repellent with higher levels of DEET and appropriate clothing.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please make sure that you are covered by medical insurance in case of an emergency while on this trip. Without insurance the cost of medical care can be extremely high. Please notify us at the time of registering for this tour of any medical conditions you think we should know about (including allergies, heart conditions, epilepsy, etc.). This will greatly help us to cater to your needs and update emergency services if required.

WEATHER/CLIMATE

The weather in Alaska in June can vary drastically from 70° F (21° C) down to the 20° F (-7° C). The coasts are generally cooler/cold ranging from 30-50° F (-1-10° C) and the interior is a bit warmer from 50-70° F (10-21° C). Temperatures can get into the freezing levels in Nome all the way through late June. Layers and warm clothing options are a must to help with the wide range of conditions. Waterproof and rain gear are essential to ensure comfort while on the tour as it can rain or snow at any time and staying warm and dry during your time in Alaska will help you enjoy the tour. Issues with climate generally stem from inadequate gear. Proper waterproof layers, hats,

gloves, and shoes/boots are highly recommended. Everyone is different with their tolerances to weather conditions so please bring along what you will need to help yourself stay comfortable.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We will be staying at comfortable hotels throughout the tour. Some may be slightly more basic than standard for mainland USA but still comfortable and providing everything needed.

COMMUNICATIONS

Our hotels should have decent access to Wi-Fi throughout the trip and phone service is typically fine near these areas and in the larger more populated cities. There are times throughout the trip where we will be out in the wilderness so do expect to lose coverage at some points. Nome is also a remote area so service and Wi-Fi can be questionable at times, depending on carriers.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS AND PACE OF TOUR

Most of the birding will be done along roadsides or paved trails with hiking/walking requirements considered easy aside from one or two specific hikes for target species including Bristle-thighed Curlew and Smith's Longspur. These hikes involve difficult and uneven terrain and potentially wet conditions and channels to cross.

There is also a lot of driving involved with this tour as we are covering a huge amount of ground (Alaska is massive), but of course there will be birding stops along the way. We will be stopping at restrooms whenever possible, however some drives and locations are fairly remote so a stop with nature may be needed at times.

Most mornings will begin around 6:30-7:00am with potential for a few earlier starts. We will continue birding for most of the day with some optional after-dinner birding at times. The days are very long at this time of year with sunset sometimes not occurring until midnight or later.

LUGGAGE

There should be enough space for each participant to bring one medium-sized suitcase as well as a personal bag to keep at their seat with them. Please do be mindful with large cameras or tripods if you choose to bring these along.

WHAT TO BRING

Please kindly read the general list of what to bring on a birding tour, [here](#).

Layers and waterproof gear are always a good idea when preparing for a wide variety of possible weather conditions, and we consider them essential on this tour. We also do recommend bringing Dramamine or other motion sickness medications if you need them as there are long drives in the vehicle and a scheduled boat trip out of Seward.

Do not forget – Binoculars, prescription drugs (also bring the generic names for these drugs), toiletries, prescription glasses (and a spare pair), sunglasses, camera, batteries (for electronic equipment and chargers for re-chargeable batteries if required), alarm clock, money pouch, field guide(s), and a daypack.

Key Documents and Cash – Passports, your travel or health insurance cards, photocopies of which can be carried by the tour leader in case of emergency, credit cards (see info above). US dollars for drinks, gifts, tips, items of a personal nature, etc., which are not included in the tour cost.