

## **Venture to Newfoundland**

Puffins, boreal birds and spectacular scenery

**September 4-14, 2024**

### Itinerary

#### **Day 1: Wed, Sept 4 – Arrival to St John’s**

Please plan to arrive in St John’s in the late afternoon where will transfer to our hotel near the airport. If you arrive early or have the time you may want to take a taxi into town, a charming and fascinating city set on a beautiful natural harbor. St. John's, one of North America's oldest cities, has much to offer for those wishing to explore: shopping on Water Street, touring churches, cathedrals, and museums, or enjoying the beauty of the botanical gardens. ***Night near St John’s Airport.***

#### **Day 2: Thu, Sept 5 - St John’s**

We start our day with a visit to Signal Hill, overlooking St. John’s; this was where the first trans-Atlantic wireless message was received by Marconi. Cape Spear is the most easterly point in North America, a lighthouse dating from 1839 and a spectacular view out over the ocean. Seabirds are everywhere especially on our boat ride to Gull Island, out from Witless Bay, where we’ll head to see the huge nesting colonies of seabirds. Hundreds of thousands of Atlantic Puffins, Common and Thick-billed Murres, Razorbills, and Black-legged Kittiwakes crowd the ledges to nest on the island, while Humpback Whales feed in the rich waters. ***Night near St John’s Airport.***

#### **Day 3: Fri, Sept 6 - Avalon Peninsula**

We leave St. John's early and travel along the scenic southern shore of Newfoundland, along the Avalon Peninsula. We’ll look for Common and Arctic Terns along the way, any early shorebirds, plus the resident herd of Caribou that frequents the area. A highlight will be the sound (and smell) of the colony of about 100,000 nesting Northern Gannets at Cape St. Mary's, along with Thick-billed and Common Murres. Other birds we should find in various habitats on the peninsula are Willow Ptarmigan, Short-eared Owl and American Pipit. ***Night in Placentia.***

#### **Day 4: Sat, Sept 7 - Cape Bonavista**

This morning we start our journey across central Newfoundland stopping to bird at several good spots along the way. Our destination this afternoon will be Cape Bonavista, where hopefully the weather conditions will allow us to have excellent views of Atlantic Puffins, as well as maybe have the chance for a passing iceberg! ***Night in Glovertown.***

#### **Day 5: Sun, Sept 8 - Terra Nova National Park**

Boreal forests, bogs, and fjords make up Terra Nova National Park, and we will spend the morning looking for landbirds, such as Spruce and Ruffed Grouse, and Short-eared Owls. Any recently burned over area could hold both Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers and White-winged Crossbill. This afternoon we will have a fairly long drive to Rocky Harbor, near Gros Morne National Park, stopping to bird as we go. ***Night in the Rocky Harbor area***

#### **Day 6: Mon, Sept 9 - Gros Morne National Park**

Gros Morne National Park is a wonderful area of landlocked fjords, ocean cliffs, sandy beaches, and serpentine barrens and we will spend the day exploring this beautiful park. As we hike on the trails, we

will look for both Willow and Rock Ptarmigans and Black-backed Woodpecker, and we may encounter Black Bear and Moose. ***Night in the Rocky Harbor area.***

**Day 7: Tue, Sept 10 - Gros Morne National Park**

We'll again bird around Gros Morne in the morning before driving north along the Viking Trail. We should find such boreal forest birds as Boreal Chickadee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Pine Grosbeak and nesting warblers such as Palm, Bay-breasted, and Blackpoll. We'll change the pace slightly this afternoon with a visit to the Viking site at Anse-aux-Meadows. Discoveries of iron objects have dated the first Norse settlements to around 1000AD. The settlement is situated in a very beautiful natural area, so those folks not wanting to explore the Viking site can head off birding on their own. ***Night in St Anthony.***

**Day 8: Wed, Sept 11 - St. Anthony**

There's another boat trip planned for this morning off Newfoundland's famous "whale and iceberg alley." This short tour will take us offshore where we should see an excellent selection of seabirds and maybe close-up encounters with Humpback Whales and Orcas. This afternoon we will start our journey back towards St John's with some birding stops along the way. ***Night in Rocky Harbor area.***

**Day 9: Thu, Sept 12 - Rocky Harbor to Bonavista**

We will wend our way south towards the Bonavista Peninsula, birding along the way. Migration will be in full swing at the moment and if the weather conditions are conducive we could get good numbers of warblers, thrushes and other passerines along the coastline. Shorebirds will also be moving through so we will check roadside pools and estuaries for Whimbrel, Semipalmated Plover and other species. ***Night near Bonavista.***

**Day 10: Fri, Sept 13 – St John's**

This morning we will spend some time in the Bonavista area, before heading back to St. John's for some final birding around the city. ***Night in St John's***

**Day 11: Sat, Sept 14 – Departure**

This morning we will leave St John's for our flights back home, or you may wish to stay on for a few more days to explore on your own.

***This Itinerary may change depending on weather, local conditions, or the whims of your leader!***