



Oregon's Diverse Landscapes

August 16 – 25, 2019

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The state of Oregon features a dramatic contrast of landscapes and ecosystems within its boundaries. This new Audubon Naturalist Society Nature Travel program is designed to explore several of these different ecosystems. We have planned a trip with a broad natural history focus and a relaxed pace. We'll see a good variety of birds and other wildlife, and we'll also learn about habitats, plants, geology and more, but don't expect dawn-to-dusk field days with a goal of building the longest list of sightings. Join us if you love nature and appreciate a relaxed pace, with time to reflect on the experiences.

The following day-to-day itinerary represents an outline of our plans. Details may be changed at the leaders' discretion for any reason that they deem to be in the best interest of the group.

Friday, August 16: Our trip begins with the arrival of flights into Portland. We will gather for introductions and a short orientation to the trip in the late afternoon or early evening. Overnight near the Portland Airport.

Saturday, August 17: We spend the morning traveling through the scenic Columbia River Gorge, traveling along the Historic Columbia River Highway. A stop at Crown Point provides a great overlook of the Columbia River and the dramatic gorge that it cuts through the Cascade Mountains. We'll see exhibit at the Vista House and perhaps get our first look at some common birds of the northwest, such as Bewick's Wren or Violet-green Swallow. We'll walk the short trail to Multnomah Falls, which drops more than 600 feet off the wall of the gorge. We might even find an American Dipper in the stream below the falls. In the afternoon we'll drive along the eastern foot of the Cascades, along the transition between the forested mountains and the high desert habitat to the east. We finish up at the town of Bend, our home for the next three nights.

Sunday, August 18: We plan to explore various spots along the Cascade Lakes Scenic Byway. We'll drive through luxuriant conifer forests up to the crest of the Cascades, where we will find subalpine meadows, marsh-edged lakes, and views of

several high volcanic peaks. We may see late season wildflowers and we will learn to identify some of the more common trees. We're sure to find a good variety of birds – we'll be watching for resident birds such as Steller's Jay, Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Tanager, and many more. There is high woodpecker diversity in this region, and we will hope to find several species. Southbound migration will be underway, so we could find some surprises. Overnight in Bend.

Monday, August 19: We begin our day with a visit to the High Desert Museum, an excellent educational facility with indoor and outdoor displays, providing a great overview of the natural history of the sage-dominated desert habitat that stretches east for hundred of miles from Bend. There are some captive animal displays here, but there's also a lot of natural habitat where wildlife can often be seen. We are keeping afternoon plans flexible; if it's not too hot, we will visit other sites in the high desert habitat, seeing desert plants and looking for birds, lizards, and other wildlife. If the forecast is for a hot day, however, we'll head up in elevation again. There will be time to explore the town of Bend, with pleasant shops, restaurants, and breweries, or to simply relax at our riverside lodge. Overnight in Bend.

Tuesday, August 20: Back west into the Cascade Mountains this morning, with one or two more stops to look for mountain wildlife, before we descend into the Willamette Valley, a fertile landscape of farms, towns, and a few vibrant wildlife refuges. We plan to visit one or more of these wetland refuges, where we might find a good variety of migrating shorebirds, grebes, and waterfowl. If the day is sunny we might find good numbers of butterflies. We then continue heading west, crossing over the coast range and finishing our day near the Pacific Ocean at Newport. We'll spend four nights here at the Whaler, where every room has a small private balcony with ocean views. Overnight at Newport.

Wednesday, August 21: We have three full days to explore the scenic Oregon coast. The sequence of visits may change from what we list here, depending on weather conditions and other factors. One day will be dedicated to explorations close to Newport. On this day we'll visit tidal flats to search for migrant shorebirds and walk along the coast, where we might see Brown Pelicans and Sooty Shearwaters offshore. We'll embark on a short whale-watching boat tour, hoping for good views of some of the gray whales that spend the summer in nearshore waters here. Seals, sea lions, and water birds might also be seen on this trip. One day while at Newport we will visit the outstanding Oregon Coast Aquarium for a close-up look at marine life and excellent displays about the ocean ecosystems. Overnight at Newport.

Thursday, August 22: Our plan for one day is to head north along the Oregon Coast, at least as far as Lincoln City. We begin with a visit to Yaquina head, not far from Newport, where a scenic lighthouse overlooks the ocean at an area where a variety of alcids, cormorants, and shorebirds gather, and where whales can often be seen from land. We also plan to visit the Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge, which features salt marsh, mudflats, and upland field and forest habitats. We'll be sure to

build in time for relaxed strolls along the beach at Newport, right across the street from our motel. Overnight at Newport.

Friday, August 23: On another day we travel south along the coast from Newport, at least to Cape Perpetua and perhaps to the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. In addition to diverse coastal environments, we can also head inland a short distance to visit impressive coastal forest habitats dominated by Sitka spruce and western hemlock trees, with devil's club and salal among the understory plants. Here we can watch for songbirds, woodpeckers, and the impressively large banana slug, which slithers along the floor of this forest ecosystem. Overnight at Newport.

Saturday, August 24: We'll spend much of the day driving north along the coast, making short stops to continue our study of coastal wildlife. We'll visit the Three Capes Scenic Route – Cape Lookout, Cape Kiwanda, and Cape Meares, seeing both beach and coastal old growth forest habitat. We'll stop at the town of Cannon Beach for lunch and check to see if any of the nesting Tufted Puffins are still around Haystack Rock this late in the summer. We'll enjoy the dramatic coastal scenery of Ecola State Park. Around mid-afternoon we head inland, ending our day back in Portland. Overnight at Portland.

Sunday, August 25: Our trip concludes this morning.