



## WALLOWA WINTER WONDERLAND February 10–14, 2010

*Tucked into the northeast corner of Oregon lies a little slice of Switzerland. This region surrounding the Wallowa Mountains is one of the most remote and most spectacular in the state. Sharp, craggy peaks peer down on ancient glacial lakes, with endless rolling prairie to the north. In January, all this is covered with a soft blanket of white. Due to their geographical isolation from the rest of the state, the Wallowas harbor some of Oregon's most unique birds. While the region hosts a great diversity of breeding birds, the real spectacle comes in winter. Join us on this exciting weekend escape to sample Wallowa County's impressive collection of wintering avifauna.*

*Your host and lead guide,  
Stephen Shunk*

### TRIP SUMMARY

The forbidding arctic winter drives northern breeding species southward to spend the season in milder climes. Large concentrations of Snow Bunting, American Tree Sparrow, and Bohemian Waxwing make their way south until they reach suitable winter foraging grounds. Those that migrate west of the Rockies run into a formidable barrier in Northeast Oregon. Here they gather in large concentrations to overwinter in the shadow of the Wallowa Mountains.

Each winter, hundreds of Bohemian Waxwings gorge on mountain ash berries in the Wallowa Valley. Nearly every gully in the nearby prairie is filled with small flocks of American Tree Sparrows. In some years, Common Redpolls swarm the birch and alder trees by the dozens. A few species that breed in the Wallowas, such as Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, make their way down the north-facing slopes each winter. Huge flocks of rosy-finches may join dozens or even hundreds of Snow Buntings to forage on the rolling, snow-covered prairie below the mountains. Occasionally, Lapland Longspur joins large wintering flocks of Horned Larks, and Northern Shrike patrols the region for easy forage.

Searching for tree sparrows and redpolls along the prairie back-roads may also yield resident coveys of Gray Partridge, or a glimpse of Oregon's only wild population of Sharp-tailed Grouse. Pileated Woodpecker inhabits the forest that meets the grasslands from the north. Rough-legged Hawk and Bald Eagle exhibit a commanding presence throughout the region, highlighting dozens of wintering raptors. In some years, a Snowy Owl or Gyrfalcon spends the winter in Wallowa County. And all of this occurs surrounded by some of the most spectacular scenery in North America.

Our tour begins and ends in Portland, Oregon, the gateway to the Northwest. Soon after leaving the city, we will enter the infamous Columbia River Gorge, where we will visit spectacular Multnomah Falls. Here we might see American Dipper cavorting in the stream, Red Crossbill amongst the giant Douglas-firs, or Bald Eagle roosting along the Columbia itself. We will continue eastward along Oregon's northern border with a birding stop at the mouth of the Deschutes River, in search of Barrow's Goldeneye.

Winter always brings a chance for rare birds along the Columbia, such as Tufted Duck or Yellow-billed Loon, so we will leave our travel schedule flexible enough for a brief detour or two. After our first dinner in Pendleton, we will continue our journey to Enterprise. However, depending on the weather, we may choose to spend the first night in Enterprise or La Grande to avoid crossing the icy summits after dark.

Weather permitting, we will awake at our base in the town of Enterprise, and will spend the next three days exploring all the accessible habitats of the region on our quest for the region's specialty birds. Each day's itinerary will be driven by reported bird movements in the area, as well as our success at finding certain species.

Saturday night, we will enjoy dinner in La Grande before heading back to Pendleton for our final evening. Sunday will take us back along the mighty Columbia River, with additional chances for birding, possibly into Walla Walla County, Washington, or into the Hood River Valley, depending on the weather and local bird reports. We will return to the Portland airport by 4 p.m. Sunday.

### DAILY ACTIVITIES

Extensive birding experience is not required for this five-day weekend. In fact, the relatively low species count makes this an excellent trip for beginners. Birders with more advanced skills may be able to identify more of the anticipated species, while less experienced birders can be guaranteed excellent looks at potential life-birds. Birders of all skill levels will be awed by the endless scenic vistas. Your lead guide, Stephen Shunk, is a patient, experienced educator, and he will work diligently to help each participant learn bird identification, as well as general natural and cultural history of the region.

This tour is for moderately active people in good health. Each day may involve light walking, although the brisk weather may force us to do much of our birding from inside or just outside the vehicle. Individual walks will be short and at a "birdwatcher's pace," although we may be walking over packed ice and snow. We will start birding after sunrise each morning and will often bird until sunset, allowing plenty of time for a warm, relaxed dinner each evening and a review of our day. In general, the weather will dictate our daily schedule; snowy days may be broken up by a stop for coffee or hot chocolate, and a mild winter may allow us to head into the mountains in search of Pine Grosbeak.

The group will travel in a large passenger van or sport-utility-vehicle with easy viewing for all participants, and we will take a maximum of seven birders plus your guide. We will repeatedly enter and exit the vehicle from an entrance that is high off the ground, although running boards or step-stool will assist with this process. This is a non-smoking tour. We stay in non-smoking rooms and eat in non-smoking areas when available, but we are traveling in a rural area and cannot avoid exposure to cigarette smoke in all circumstances. Please be prepared for this possibility.

### CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

Very cold temperatures and low humidity predominate in winter in Northeast Oregon. The average January temperature in the region sits around 26 degrees F, with an average high of 35 deg. and a low of 17 deg. We could experience everything from bright sunshine with bitter cold to milder temperatures with heavy snow, all in one day. You should

be prepared to be outside for short periods in very cold weather. We will have plenty of room for multiple pieces of small luggage and larger soft luggage (such as duffle bags), but we request that you avoid large rigid suitcases. That said, please do not compromise your ability to be comfortable in a wide variety of field conditions. Prior to the tour, we recommend you check the latest weather forecast for Enterprise, Oregon.

We recommend that you bring your own binoculars and field guide. You also may bring a spotting scope, although we will have at least one spotting scope available for the group. We also carry an extensive birding library for reference and learning. We encourage you to take photos as souvenirs, but this is not a photography tour. If you wish to focus on photographic opportunities, we ask that you remain sensitive to the group's needs. Ensuring that everyone in the group gets their binoculars on a bird will take precedence over shooting photos, and it may not be practical to stop just for photos. You are welcome to bring along any camera you can tolerate carrying, and you may at least want to carry a small camera to capture some of the images of Wallowa County's spectacular scenery.

### LODGING, MEALS & REFRESHMENTS

We will spend three nights in Enterprise and our last night in Pendleton, each night in comfortable motels. The tour fees below include lodging at both single and double occupancy. If you are traveling with a birding partner and wish to share a room, we should be able to accommodate you in a double room. If we are unable to place you with a roommate for any reason, you will be responsible for the single tour rate.

Your tour fee also includes all meals, snacks and non-alcoholic beverages from dinner on Wednesday, February 10, through lunch on Sunday, February 14. We will eat most meals in restaurants with a wide variety of foods, and it may be difficult to accommodate the most restrictive diets. If you maintain such a diet, remember that appropriate foods may not be available locally, especially in this rural corner of Oregon. To prepare for these possibilities you may wish to bring some foods that will satisfy your needs.

We will eat breakfast out each morning, though coffee and tea will be available for early risers in the motels. Most breakfasts will be held around 7:30 a.m. We will eat lunches in local cafes, with dinners held after sunset at casual restaurants. In addition to restaurant meals, we will provide snacks and beverages in the field. One of our goals is to keep you pleasantly fueled and hydrated to help you get the most of your birding days. The survey included in your registration materials asks for your dietary restrictions and preferences. While we cannot honor every food and drink request, the more detailed your response, the better we can serve you.

### TRAVEL ITINERARY

Your trip fee includes round-trip transportation from Portland. We request that you arrive in Portland by 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10, to allow a little birding time en route to Enterprise. If you will originate near our home-base in Central Oregon or if you wish to meet us somewhere along our route, please let us know this well in advance. You are welcome to join us for the drive to Portland if this is convenient. We will return to the Portland by 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. You may wish to stay in one of the airport motels on Sunday night to meet your travel schedule.

If this schedule is difficult for you, let us know and we will do our best to help with your travel plans. If you need assistance with travel, we recommend D'TR Travel of Colorado: <http://www.dtrtravel.com/>.

Our daily birding will follow the basic itinerary below. Our specific destinations depend on a number of factors, including local bird reports, weather, and our success at finding certain species. If you have additional questions about the route or certain birding spots, please contact us at your convenience.

- Wednesday, February 10:* Portland to Enterprise  
Birding the Columbia Gorge; dinner in La Grande, night in Enterprise.
- Thursday, February 11:* Wallowa Valley  
Birding the valley; dinner and night in Enterprise.
- Friday, February 12:* Wallowa Valley  
Birding the valley; dinner and night in Enterprise.
- Saturday, February 13:* Wallowa Valley  
Birding the valley; dinner in La Grande, night in Pendelton.
- Sunday, February 14:* Columbia Gorge to Portland  
Birding the return route to Portland

#### TOUR FEE

Your tour fee includes all meals, snacks and beverages from Wednesday afternoon through Sunday afternoon; lodging at single or double occupancy; transportation from Portland; facility, permit, and license fees; service-related gratuities; and the instruction and leadership of your guide(s). The fee does not include guides' gratuities, which are never expected but always appreciated based on your satisfaction with our service.

TOUR FEE:	\$1,455 single/\$1,285 double
NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT:	\$95
BALANCE AFTER DEPOSIT:	\$1,360 single/\$1,190 double

*NOTE: Our tour fees are structured to allow the best possible client-to-guide ratio for an optimal birding experience, with a maximum of 7 participants on this tour.*

*REFUND POLICY: Your deposit is non-refundable. If you cancel your reservation more than 60 days prior to the tour, you will be refunded any payments above your deposit. If you cancel between 60 and 30 days prior to the tour, you will receive a 50% refund of fees paid over the deposit. If you cancel less than 30 days prior, you forfeit your entire tour fee, unless you can fill your space with another birder. If you cancel at any time, your deposit is transferrable to any Paradise Birding tour at any time in the future.*

To pre-register for the tour, please complete the registration forms printable from our web site at <http://www.paradisebirding.com/09regforms.pdf> and return them with your non-refundable \$95 deposit. *We look forward to seeing you in Oregon this winter!*

Stephen Shunk, Paradise Birding  
69320 Sisters View Drive  
Sisters, OR 97759

Phone: 541-408-1753  
Fax: 541-549-8937  
E-mail: [steve@paradisebirding.com](mailto:steve@paradisebirding.com)