

Group Birding & Trip Etiquette
Things you will want to consider before and during your tour

- Keeping to the schedule is critical. Our expectation is that all will be on time for any planned departures or activities so as not to waste the time of the other participants.
- Seat rotation: The goal is to avoid anyone from getting “stuck” in the same seat every day. There is no perfect system but, with everyone’s willingness to do their best and be flexible, it is possible to work it out to everyone’s satisfaction. That said, we expect each participant to monitor their own seat rotation. Our standard procedure is that whatever seat you’re in, you have it for the entire day. The next day you switch vans, so as to be with the other leader, and you move back one row of seats from where you were the day before. If you were in the back, move to front. Each day one person may “ride shotgun” in the passenger seat (depending on number of leaders). This position has duties associated with it related to opening and closing the main doors.
- Please refrain from using cell phones during our time together and particularly in the vans. We understand that opportunities to make/receive a call may be limited during the trip due to cell coverage and there may be important issues going on with loved ones that you need to attend to. If this is the case and you need to make or receive a call during van time we ask that you keep your conversations as short as possible. Also, please share the provided lodging contact information with your family, so that they have alternative ways to contact you.
- During group meals enjoy one another’s company and refrain from using technological devices.
- Cameras – Photographs are good reminders of trips, but should not necessarily BE the trip. Please avoid taking unflattering or unwelcome pictures of others and be sensitive to how taking pictures can be disturbing to others, especially during meal time. Please refrain from using flash when photographing wildlife.
- Scope Etiquette- We usually provide and operate 2 spotting scopes. Since birds don't necessarily stay in one place for long it is important to get your view through the scope then move well off to one side for the next person to get a look. Look long enough to get a memorable view; there may be another opportunity if the bird is still around after everyone has seen it. If you have brought a scope, it is much appreciated if you invite people to view through it once you have gotten as much of a look as you wish.
- Please listen to the leader as they are describing the location and description of the bird. Please try to follow the leader’s instructions. If you still don't see the bird, please speak up. Our goal is to make sure that everyone gets a good view.
- Let the leader describe where to find the bird the first time. Afterwards, please don't hesitate to describe the location for someone next to you if they are still having difficulty.
- Please help your fellow tour participant. Though the leader is always responsible for the group, they do rely on the participants to assist each other while in the field, whether it is helping someone up or down a steep or slippery slope or getting someone on the bird.
- If you are tall, encourage shorter people to stand in front of you while trying to get a view of a bird. This is especially helpful in forested settings. Conversely, if you are of shorter stature, don't be shy (or think it rude) to stand in front of those who can easily see over you.



TOGETHER FOR NATURE

- Keep talking to a minimum and a low volume while birding. Loud talking scares away wildlife and is distracting to others. Staying focused on birding while birding greatly improves your chances for good viewing opportunities.
- We expect trip leaders and participants to model respect for all living things. Exemplary behavior includes keeping to the trail, minimizing our impact on wildlife and being ecologically mindful.
- Van security. The leaders will always make sure the vans are secure when you walk away from them. There is no need to ask if the van is going to be locked or if the leader has the key or not. If you are going inside for a meal and wish to leave your binoculars in the van then be responsible and put them out of sight – under a seat or garment or in a backpack. If you are at all concerned, simply bring them with you wherever you go. Never leave your ID, money, credit cards in the van when we will be out of sight for any length of time.
- Van access. Please make it a practice to take all your belongings out of the van at the end of each day. Clear any exceptions with your leaders. It is greatly appreciated when you take your garbage as well (coffee cups, wrappers). Should you need access to the van at anytime when locked, ask your leader for the key and promptly return it.
- Travel can be taxing, please pace yourself so that you stay healthy and energetic during the trip. Doing your best to maintain a flexible and positive attitude will go a long ways towards making your trip enjoyable.