



# BIRDING MAN

## A D V E N T U R E S

### GROUSE ADVENTURE

**Western Colorado**

April 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> 2025

7 days, 6 nights

**Prairie Extension**

April 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> 2025



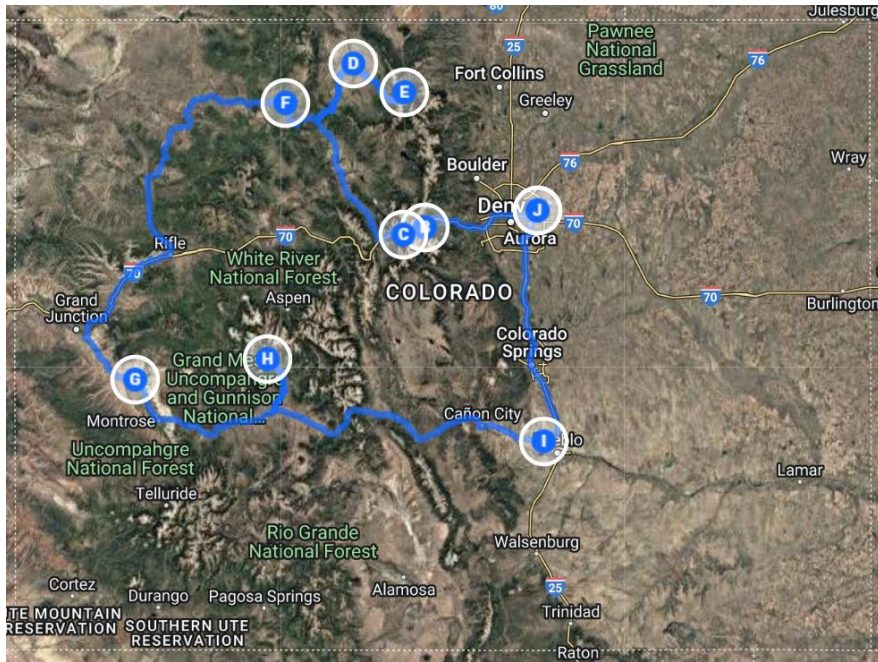
*Set out to find all 7 species of Grouse found in Colorado on this adventure-packed trip of a lifetime!*



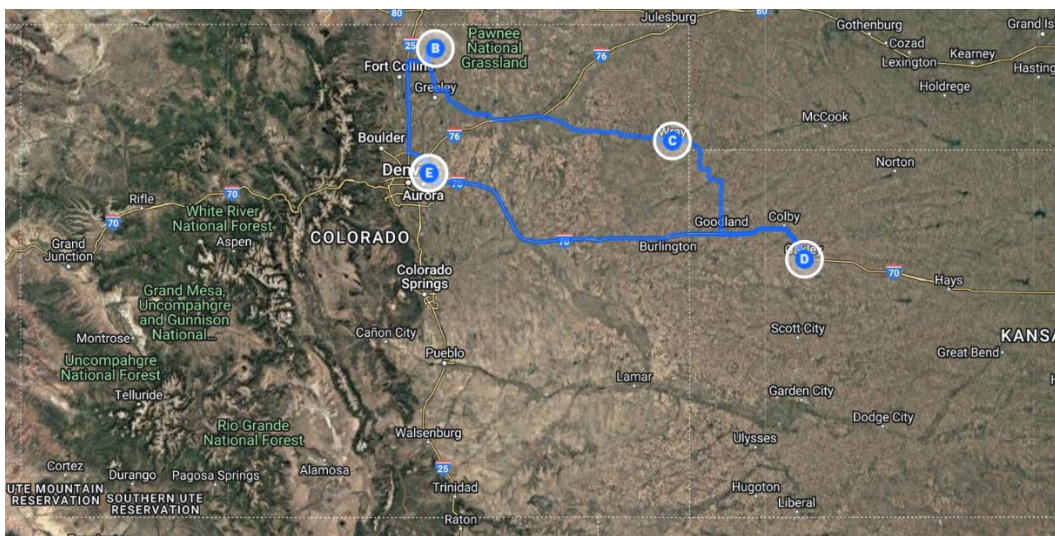
## Itinerary in Brief

Bold font indicates mornings we will rise before dawn to observe birds on mating leks

Day	Activities	Food	Lodging
1	Arrival in Denver, CO Transfer to Georgetown, CO	D	Georgetown, CO
2	Loveland Pass for White-tailed Ptarmigan Feeders in Silverthorne Walden Reservoir Optional Owling on Cameron Pass	BLD	Walden, CO
3	<b>Greater Sage-Grouse Lek</b> Birding on Rabbit Ear's Pass Transfer to Steamboat Springs	BLD	Steamboat Springs, CO
4	<b>Sharp-tailed Grouse Lek</b> Transfer to Coal Canyon Palisades Colorado National Monument Transfer to Delta, CO	BLD	Delta, CO
5	Black Canyon of the Gunnison N.P. for Dusky Grouse Crested Butte, CO Return to Gunnison	BLD	Gunnison, CO
6	<b>Gunnison Sage Grouse Lek</b> Transfer to either Buena Vista or Pueblo West, depending on what still needs to be seen Return to Denver	BLD	Denver, CO
7	Breakfast at hotel Transfer to airport/departure Pawnee National Grasslands Meet with Bob Bledsoe, owner of Bledsoe Cattle Company	BLD	Wray, CO
8	<b>Greater Prairie Chicken Lek</b> Prairie birding Transfer to Oakley, KS	BLD	Oakley KS, CO
9	<b>Lesser Prairie Chicken Lek</b> Prairie birding Transfer to Denver, CO	B	Denver, CO
10	Breakfast at hotel Transfer to airport/departure		



*Mountain Itinerary*



*Plains extension itinerary*



*Your guide, Ryan Dibala, will greet you at the airport in Denver, Colorado*

## Itinerary

### **Day 1: Home | Denver, CO | Georgetown, CO**

- Arrival at Denver International Airport
- Transfer to Georgetown, CO (1 hour, 7 minutes; 68.1 miles)
- Welcome dinner and trip orientation

Lodging: [Georgetown Mountain Inn](#)

Meals included: Dinner



*The main street of Georgetown looks like it could be from straight out of a western movie*

**Day 2: Georgetown, CO | Silverthorne, CO | Walden, CO**

- 7 am breakfast at hotel
- Loveland Pass to search for **White-tailed Ptarmigan** (21 minutes; 16.3 miles)
- Transfer to Silverthorne (26 minutes; 18.3 miles)

Target Species

- **Brown-capped Rosy-Finch**
- **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**
- **Black Rosy-Finch**
- **Pine Grosbeak**
- **Evening Grosbeak**
- **Clark's Nutcracker**
- **Canada Jay**
- **Barrow's Goldeneye**



*White-tailed Ptarmigan in its winter plumage at Loveland Pass*

- Lunch in Silverthorne
- Transfer to Walden (1 hour, 44 minutes; 98.4 miles)
- Walden Reservoir and Arapahoe National Wildlife Refuge

Target Species

- American White Pelican
- California Gull
- Yellow-headed Blackbird
- Brewer's Blackbird
- Cinnamon Teal
- Mountain Bluebird
- Sandhill Crane
- Rough-legged Hawk
- Golden Eagle
- Prairie Falcon

- Dinner at River Run Restaurant
- Optional night trip to Cameron Pass for **Boreal Owl** (1 hour, 20-minute round trip plus 1 – 2 hours of owling)

Lodging: [Antlers Inn](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



*The Arapahoe National Wildlife Refuge protects over 24,000 acres in the middle of North Park*

**Day 3: Walden, CO | Steamboat Springs, CO**

- 5 am wake up: **Greater Sage-Grouse** Lek (25 minutes; 17.6 miles)
- Box-lunch breakfast
- Rabbit Ear's Pass (26 minutes; 23.8 miles)

Target Species

- **Cassin's Finch**
- **Pine Siskin**
- **Pine Grosbeak**
- **Red Crossbill**
- **American Three-toed Woodpecker**
- **Steller's Jay**
- **Clark's Nutcracker**



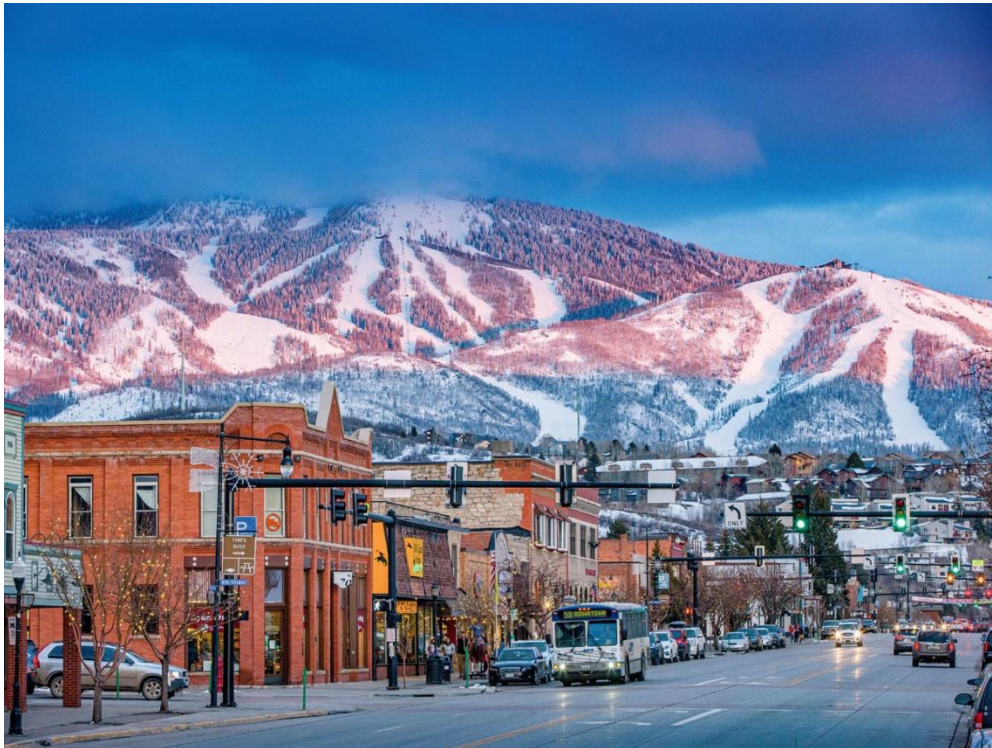
*The American Three-toed Woodpecker can be found foraging in stands of beetle-infested trees near Rabbit's Ears Pass*



- Transfer to Steamboat Springs (28 minutes; 22 miles)
- Free time in Steamboat Springs
  - Individual Lunch
  - Optional activities
    - Shopping
    - Hot Springs - Old Town Hot Springs (no reservations required) or Strawberry Park Hot Springs (reservations and public transportation required)
    - Grab a hot drink at the Steamboat Ski Lodge while watching skiers and snowboarders come down the slopes
- Group Dinner

Lodging: [The Nordic Lodge of Steamboat](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



*Enjoy an optional free afternoon in Steamboat Springs where you can go shopping, soak in a hot spring, or have a hot drink while watching skiers and snowboarders cruise down the slopes*

**Day 4: Steamboat Springs, CO | Palisade, CO | Delta, CO**

- 5 am start: **Sharp-tailed Grouse** lek (31 minutes; 15.2 miles)
- Box breakfast
- Search for **Dusky Grouse**
- Transfer to Coal Canyon (3 hours, 21 minutes; 180 miles)
  - **Chukar**
- Lunch in Palisade, CO (14 minutes; 6.7 miles)



*Sharp-tailed Grouse near Steamboat Springs*



*Colorado National Monument offers sweeping views of red rocks and canyon country*

- Transfer to Colorado National Monument (50 minutes; 36.4 miles)

Target Species

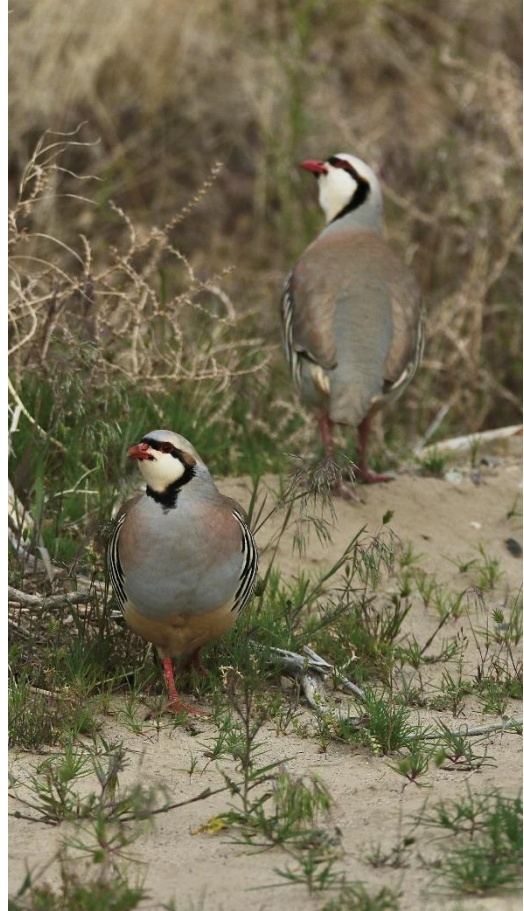
- Gambel's Quail
  - Sagebrush Sparrow
  - Black-throated Sparrow
  - Gray Vireo
  - Gray Flycatcher
  - Black-throated Gray Warbler
  - Canyon Wren
  - White-throated Swift
- Transfer to Delta, CO (1 hour, 9 minutes; 57.5 miles)
  - Group Dinner

Lodging: [Quality Inn Delta Gateway to Rocky Mountains](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



*It is not uncommon to find coveys of Gambel's Quail along the roads near Colorado National Monument*



*Chukars at Coal Canyon*

**Day 5: Delta, CO | Crested Butte, CO | Gunnison, CO**

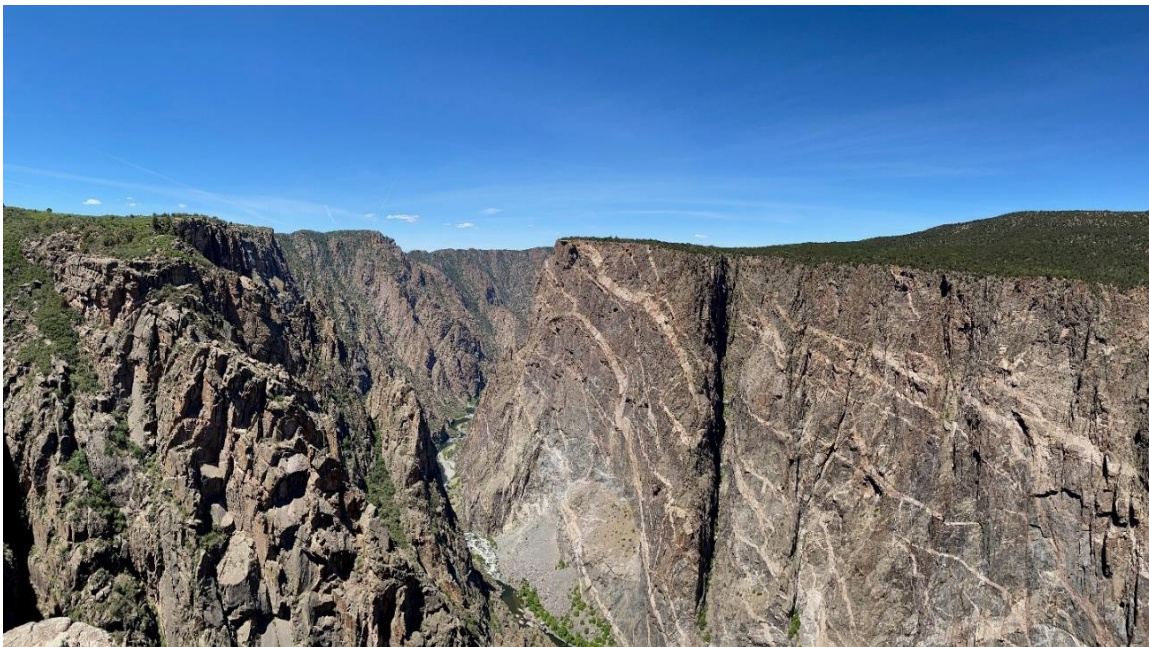
- 6:30 am breakfast at hotel
- Transfer to Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (44 minutes; 35.6 miles)

Target Species

- Dusky Grouse
- Canyon Wren
- Red-naped Sapsucker
- Fox "slate-colored" Sparrow



*Dusky Grouse can sometimes be found displaying in open areas at Black Canyon*



*Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and its steep canyon walls are home to Canyon Wrens and White-throated Swifts while the surrounding pinyon pine – oak woodlands support healthy populations of Dusky Grouse*

- Transfer to Crested Butte (2 hours; 90.2 miles)
- Lunch in Crested Butte
- Birding around Crested Butte

Target Species

- **Brown-capped Rosy-Finch**
  - **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**
  - **Black Rosy-Finch**
  - **American Three-toed Woodpecker**
  - **American Dipper**
- Transfer to Gunnison, CO
  - Group Dinner

Lodging: [The Inn at Tomichi Village](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



*The American Dipper can be found along streams in the mountains near Crested Butte*



*Enjoy one night at the Inn at Tomichi Village near Gunnison, Colorado*



Photo: Matt Bergland

*Crested Butte is my favorite mountain town in Colorado. We will bird for high elevation species here and take some time to enjoy the town*

**Day 6: Gunnison, CO | Buena Vista, CO or Pueblo, CO | Denver, CO**

- 5:00 am start: **Gunnison Sage-Grouse lek** (17 minutes; 17.1 miles)
- Box breakfast
- Depending on what species we still need, transfer to either:
  - Buena Vista (1 hour, 12 minutes; 64.8 miles)

Target Species

- **Lewis's Woodpecker**
- **Pinyon Jay**
- **White-tailed Ptarmigan**

- Pueblo West (2 hours, 44 minutes; 134 miles)

Target Species

- **Greater Roadrunner**
- **Canyon Towhee**
- **Curve-billed Thrasher**
- **Scaled Quail**



*Scaled Quail are a fairly common site in the neighborhood of Pueblo West*



Photo: National Audubon Society

*The **Gunnison Sage-Grouse** is an endangered species that was first discovered in 2006. Observation of GUSG leks are strictly controlled by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. We have obtained permits to join a privately guided tour with a State Wildlife Biologist*

- Lunch in Buena Vista or Pueblo
- Transfer to Denver, CO (2 hours, 9 minutes; 123 miles)
- Final dinner

Lodging: [La Quinta Inn and Suites by Wyndham Denver International Airport](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Day 7: Denver, CO | Home

- Breakfast at hotel
- Transfer to airport
- Departure
- Plains extension arrivals



## Plains Extension

### Day 7: Denver, CO | Pawnee National Grasslands, CO | Wray, CO

- Breakfast at hotel
- Airport dropoff/pickup
- Transfer to Pawnee National Grasslands (1 hour, 33 minutes; 99.2 miles)

#### Target Species

- **Thick-billed Longspur**
  - **Chestnut-collared Longspur**
  - **Mountain Plover**
  - **Brewer's Sparrow**
  - **Lark Bunting**
  - **Burrowing Owl**
  - **Loggerhead Shrike**
- Lunch
  - Transfer to Wray, CO (2 hours, 58 minutes; 174 miles)
  - Meet Bob Bledsoe, owner of Bledsoe Cattle Company
  - Group Dinner

Lodging: [Doc's Bed and Breakfast](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



*The Chestnut-collared Longspur is an iconic species of mixed-grass prairie and is one of the fastest declining birds in North America. We will look for them, along with Thick-billed Longspur, at strategic stops across the prairie*

Birding Man Adventures | [www.gobirdingman.com](http://www.gobirdingman.com) | +1 860-455-3224 | [ryan@gobirdingman.com](mailto:ryan@gobirdingman.com)



*Trip leader Ryan Dibala and wife Angie meeting with ranch owner Bob Bledsoe in Wray, CO*



*Photographing Greater Prairie Chickens (left). A male Greater Prairie Chicken raises his philoplumes in preparation for a dispute with a nearby male (right). Indigenous Plains tribes like the Shoshone and Pawnee were said to have modeled their dances after the mating display of the Prairie Chickens*

**Day 8: Wray, CO | Oakley, KS**

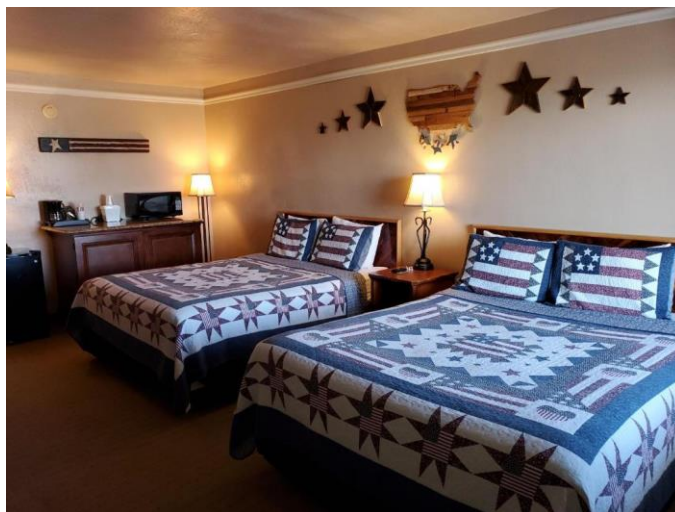
- 5 am wake up: **Greater Prairie Chicken** lek (20 minutes; 12 miles)
- Return to Doc's for breakfast
- Birding the eastern prairies

Target Species

- **Bobwhite Quail**
  - **Greater White-fronted Goose**
  - **Cackling Goose**
  - **Wood Duck**
  - **Chihuahuan Raven**
- Lunch
  - Transfer to Oakley Kansas (2 hours, 9 minutes; 136 miles)
  - Dinner

Lodging: [Kansas Country Inn](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



*Enjoy a stay and a homemade breakfast at the hospitable Kansas Country Inn in Oakley, Kansas*



*Lesser Prairie Chickens are listed as “Threatened” in Colorado and the viewing of leks is now prohibited in the state. Therefore, we will travel to Oakley, Kansas, where populations – although still designated as threatened - are more stable and controlled lek viewing is still permitted*

#### Day 9: Oakley, KS | Denver, CO

- 5 am wake up: **Lesser Prairie Chicken** lek (20 minutes; 12 miles)
- Return to Kansas Country Inn for breakfast
- Birding the eastern prairies (1 hour, 30 minutes; 123 miles)

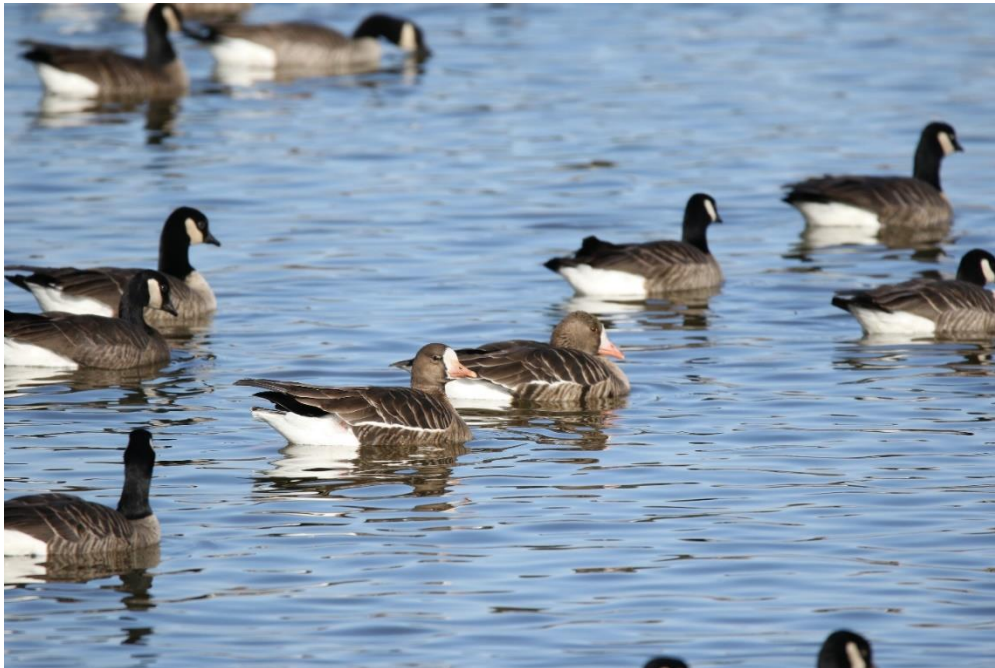
##### Target Species

- **Bobwhite Quail**
- **Great-tailed Grackle**
- **Yellow-headed Blackbird**
- **Lark Bunting**
- **Chihuahuan Raven**

- Lunch
- Transfer to Denver, CO with birding stops along the way (2 hours, 9 minutes; 136 miles)
- Final Dinner

Lodging: [La Quinta Inn and Suites by Wyndham Denver International Airport](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



*Greater White-fronted Geese mixed with a flock of Cackling Geese*

#### Day 10: Denver, CO | Home

- Breakfast at hotel
- Transfer to airport
- Departure

Lodging: None

Meals included: Breakfast



*Birding Man Adventures guide Ryan Dibala with a group of guests near the Continental Divide*



### Western Colorado

Price per person: **\$2,000**

Single supplement: \$400

### Prairie Extension

Price per person: **\$1,200**

Single supplement: \$200

#### Includes:

- ✓ Driver and guide throughout the tour
- ✓ Ground transportation
- ✓ All hotels
- ✓ Meals listed on itinerary (note that 1 lunch in Steamboat Springs will be independent)
- ✓ All fees and permits
- ✓ Water and snacks throughout the trip
- ✓ General Liability insurance and auto insurance
- ✓ 24-hour assistance in case of emergency

#### Does not include:

- × Flight
- × Medical insurance
- × Travel insurance
- × Evacuation costs
- × Alcoholic beverages
- × Personal expenses
- × Activities and food not included on the itinerary
- × Optional tips
- × Laundry and other items of personal nature

*Please note that this itinerary cannot be 100% guaranteed, as it is only a rough guide and can be changed due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.*



## What You Need to Know

### **Tour Pace:**

This tour is designed for intermediate birders and photographers. We consider the difficulty level to be moderate, with most of the birding being close to roadsides and trails with slight uphill and downhill. Expect early morning starts and long drives, but we will make sure the trip is broken up with plenty of out-of-vehicle time. Rest and relaxation time will be built in throughout the tour, including free time in Steamboat Springs and Crested Butte.

### **Transportation:**

You will be traveling in a 12- or 14- passenger van with windows. The maximum group size will be 8 people, including the guide. There will be sufficient room for personal baggage.

### **Lodging:**

You will be staying at a combination of 2- and 3-star hotels and lodges throughout the tour. Each accommodation has been diligently vetted for quality and assurance. Please see websites at hyperlinks above.

### **Altitude:**

Denver is located at 5,280 ft above sea level. Highest elevations will be reached at Loveland Pass (11,991 ft above sea level) on Day 2. Please consult with your doctor if you have medical conditions that may be exacerbated at high elevations. You may experience some minor irritations such as a slight headache and mild dizziness, but symptoms should disappear as we descend to lower elevations. You may consider taking Diamox (Acetazolamide) and/or Acetaminophen before traveling to higher elevations, but please consult your doctor. Eat a lighter meal before heading to a higher altitude, stay well-hydrated, and try to avoid caffeine and alcohol.

### **Laundry:**

Laundry services are available at all hotels on this trip, however, please note that laundry fees are not included in the tour pricing.





### Travel Insurance:

We do not provide travel (or medical) insurance. We strongly advise that you purchase a travel insurance package. Please read our **cancellation policy** below and on our [Terms and Conditions Page](#).

## READY TO BOOK THIS TOUR?

### Registration and Payment Information:

Registration and all payments, including initial deposit, should be made through our trip portal on [We Travel](#). We do accept credit cards for an additional 2.9% fee, but you may also pay by bank transfer or check. We request a \$1,000 initial deposit upon registration. **Full payment is due 90 days prior to tour departure.**

CANCELLATIONS: If we cancel a tour due to low attendance, severe weather, COVID-19, or other unforeseen event, participants may either move their payments to another trip of their choice or receive a full refund. If you cancel your spot on a tour more than 90 days from departure, you will be eligible for a full refund. If cancelled within 90 days of departure, no refund will be given UNLESS we are able to fill your spot(s) with another participant(s). In that situation, \$250 will be withheld for administrative purposes, but the remainder of your payment will be refunded. We highly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or a family member prior to or during a trip.