

Winter Birding in Northern Minnesota

February 5th-9th, 2020

Join us on a winter birding adventure with Skye Hass from Borealis Birding as we explore Northern Minnesota looking for northern owls, boreal species, and winter finches. Minnesota sits at the confluence of the boreal forest, the eastern deciduous forest, and prairie parkland, which makes it a magnet for a wide variety of birds. The winter months provide a great opportunity to find Great Gray Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl, and with a little luck even Boreal Owl. Winter finches are well represented here as we have chances to see Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, Red and White-Winged Crossbills, Pine Siskins, and Common Redpolls. We will search for Boreal Chickadee, Bohemian Waxwing, Black-backed Woodpecker, Northern Shrike, Rough-legged Hawk, Sharp-tailed, Spruce and Ruffed Grouse. Plus, you never know when a rare bird might show up like a Gyrfalcon, Varied Thrush, Townsend's Solitaire, or a rare duck or gull.

Wednesday, February 5th: We will depart from Sarett Nature Center by vans for the drive over to Duluth, Minnesota. We will leave the nature center at 7:00 am and make a stop along the way for lunch. Upon arriving in Duluth, we will check into our hotel and find a place for dinner. Night: Country Inn & Suites.

Thursday, February 6th: Today we will bird the world-famous Sax Zim Bog. It is an excellent location to look for Great Gray Owls; typically, there are several individuals that overwinter here. Most years a Northern Hawk Owl or three can be found in the bogland as well. But other fantastic birds can be found here, there is a feeding station in the bog that often hosts Boreal Chickadees and Gray Jays. Other feeders often have large flocks of winter finches like Evening and Pine Grosbeaks as well as Common and Hoary Redpolls. Some years, the cone crops are good and large numbers of Red and White-winged Crossbills can be present. The Sax Zim Bog has a decent population of Sharp-tailed Grouse, and while often requiring luck and timing, Black-billed Magpies can be found here. After a full day of birding, we will return to our hotel in Duluth. Dinner will be at one of the nearby restaurants. Night: Country Inn & Suites.



Friday, February 7th: We will get an early start to the day as we travel further north into the Superior National Forest. Spruce Grouse can be found in the early mornings along remote roads in these dense conifer forests and with a bit of luck we might turn up a Black-backed or Three-toed Woodpecker! On our return to Duluth, we'll work our way down the north shore of Lake Superior in search of Bohemian

Waxwings or (depending on ice cover), an interesting waterbird. On the years when a Boreal Owl irruption occurs, they tend to be found more often along the coast.

In the afternoon, we will spend some time birding in the “twin ports”, the waterfronts of Duluth (MN) and Superior (WI) can be good for white-winged gulls like Glaucous and Thayer’s Iceland Gulls, Snowy Owls and more winters than not, a Gyrfalcon is patrolling the area! After another full day of birding, we will head back to our hotel and then find a restaurant for dinner. Night: Country Inn & Suites.



Saturday, February 8th: We will head back to Sax Zim Bog today in search of any target birds that we didn’t find on the first day or to look at them a second time. We will also keep an eye on the rare bird alert in case a rarity shows up. After an enjoyable day of birding we will head back to our hotel, then find a place for dinner. Night: Country Inn & Suites.



Sunday, February 9th: Today, we will say goodbye to Duluth and head back to Sarett Nature Center. We will depart at 7:00 am after a quick breakfast at our hotel. We will make a stop for lunch en route back to Sarett.

Membership: A Sarett Nature Center membership is required to participate in our trips (\$50/family or \$40/individual).

Cost: \$950.00/person based on double occupancy. This includes:

- Round trip transportation in Sarett van’s to and from Duluth, MN and all transportation while in the Duluth Area.
- Four nights lodging at the Country Inn and Suites in Duluth, MN (218)-740-4500.
- Four hot continental breakfasts

- Services of Sarett Naturalist(s) and Guide from Borealis Birding.

Deposit: Each person must pay a \$100.00 non-refundable deposit to sign up for this trip. This trip is limited to 12 participants. Deposits must be made by January 11th, 2020.

Method of Payment: We prefer that you pay by check as this saves us money. However, we do accept Visa, Mastercard, and Discover credit cards.

Final Payment: You must have the final payment to Sarett by January 22, 2020.

Cancellation Policy: Every attempt will be made to refund any recoverable costs in the event that you must cancel.

Responsibility: Sarett Nature Center reserves the right, at their discretion, to make changes in the itinerary should that become necessary. Sarett is not responsible to any person for expenses, loss of time, money or happenings resulting from a change of tour scheduling. Sarett Nature Center reserves the right to accept, decline, or retain any person as a member of the tour, and is not responsible for any losses or damages of personal property, injuries, expenses, or damages incurred or claimed by any tour member.

What to Bring: Binoculars, spotting scope (if you have one), camera, warm clothing, good boots, a bird book, money for items of a personal nature, snacks, a sense of adventure, cheerful attitude, and a willingness to have some fun.

Photo Credits: Skye Haas of Borealis Birding