Feb. 4-9, 2024

Great North, Great Grays, Great Experiences

Cost
$2600 for single room occupancy
$2200 for double room occupancy per person
Cost is for guiding fee, hotels, park/reserve entrance fee, rental car and packed lunches/breakfast.
Dinners will be self-pay.
Minimum number of participants 3, maximum number of participants 6

Event overview
February in Minnesota is absolutely bone chilling with the average high temperature being 25 degrees Fahrenheit but all the birds we have the chance to see are top notch and totally worth braving the elements to experience. From Owls to Grouse to winter Finches, the birds will make you forget all about the cold. We will enjoy snowy landscapes and an assortment of birds but you might be asking, “Why February? Why not July?” Well, our targets birds and considered boreal species or birds that are found in the northern tundra that aren’t this far south during the summer months, winter is the time to see them and Minnesota is one of the best places in the lower 48 to enjoy them as winter in Minnesota is the southern region of their ranges.

Day 1  Arrive in Duluth, MN
Participants arrive in Duluth MN and get settled in. The days are short this time of year with so we will have to see what the day brings between participants arriving and dinner plans.

Day 2 & 3
We will head to the Sax-zim Bog bright and early. The usual protocol is to drive around and search from the car, road birding is key since it is so cold. We will keep an eye out for owls like Great Gray, Northern Hawk and Snowy, but we can also run into a Barred owl and if luck is really with us, a Boreal Owl will be around. Sometimes these owls are “staked out” and we will know where to go for some of our targets. Northern shrikes and Black-billed Magpies are also fun birds that call this extreme climate home this time of year. We will hit all the feeders around which will secure us Common Redpolls, Pine Grosbeak, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Evening Grosbeaks. While sifting through the flock of redpolls we will try to pull out the frosty cousin, Hoary Redpoll. There are woodpeckers around with Hairy being fairly common, but we will be on the lookout for Black-backed as well and maybe make a special side trip for American Three-toed Woodpecker if any are being reported.

Day 4
We head in further North to Superior NF for Spruce Grouse and Boreal Chickadee. On the drive up it is good practice to scan the trees, on several occasions I have spotted Great Grays on this drive. Also looking on the roadsides for flocks of Crossbills feeding on grit. Once in the NF and with some luck we will get the Grouse and from there we will head to a spot I know that usually attracts decent size flocks of Bohemian Waxwings.

Day 5  Morning birding – Depart for airport
We will start the day off looking for Sharp-tailed Grouse back in the bog and after that we will try to clean up any birds we have missed thus far from our list. We will try to focus on more photography this day as well.

Day 6  Depart

Target species
Great Gray Owl  Ruffed Grouse  American Three-toed Woodpecker
Black-capped Chickadee  Snowy Owl  Spruce Grouse
Boreal Owl  Northern Goshawk  Bohemian Waxwing
Hairy Woodpecker  Sharp-tailed Grouse  Hoary Redpoll
Northern Shrike  Evening Grosbeak  Common Raven
Canada Jay  Common Redpoll  Pine Siskin
Red-breasted Nuthatch  Red Crossbill  Black-billed Magpie
Northern Hawk Owl  White-winged Crossbill
Black-backed Woodpecker  Boreal Chickadee

For additional questions, please contact your guide
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