



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Canada

Alberta: Cold Lake – Warbler Wonderland

4th June to 11th June 2022 (8 days)



Cape May Warbler by Lev Frid

Tucked away in northeast Alberta is a hidden gem known as Cold Lake. Here, the woods host 23 breeding warbler species, including such stunners as Connecticut, Blackburnian, Cape May, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted and Canada. No "luck of the draw" birding here - almost all of these species are breeding residents that can be found every single day. Sharing the woodlands and marshes with the warblers are such mouth-watering northern specialties as Yellow Rail, Nelson's and LeConte's Sparrows, Spruce Grouse, Boreal Chickadee, and Canada Jay. Here is your chance to observe the breeding behaviours of your favourite migrant species - watch Bonaparte's Gulls nesting in trees and hear Common Loons give their haunting calls.

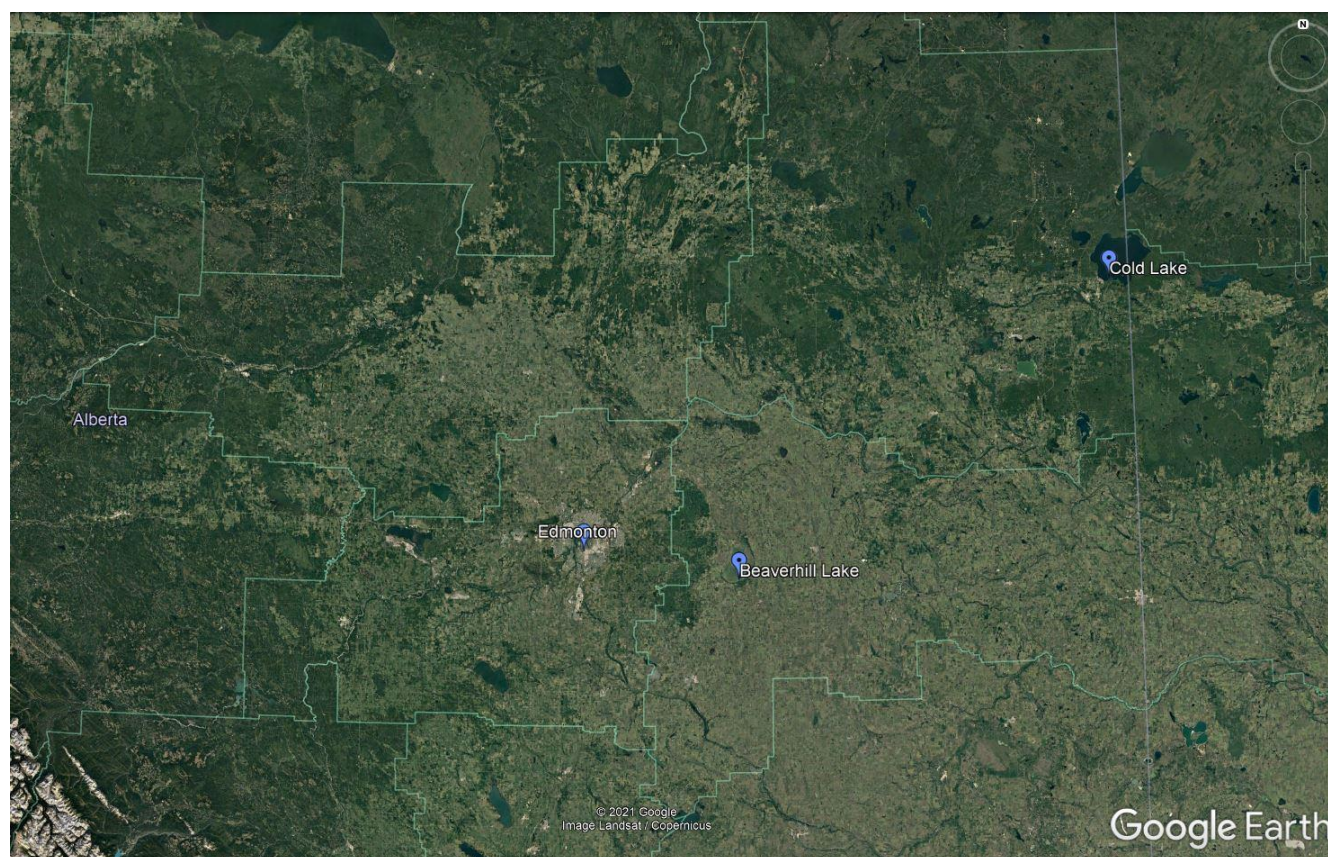
Add to this a fantastic colonial waterbird scene, featuring California and Franklin's Gulls, American White Pelicans, and a huge colony of Western Grebes - as well as the chance to view shorebirds such as Stilt Sandpiper and Sanderling - even Piping Plover - in their breeding finery, AND a high probability of scarce migrants such as Pacific Loon or Sabine's Gull, and you've got an unforgettable birding adventure in the heart of the boreal forest, outside of the usual "birding season" in the south. The secret won't be kept for long!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	Arrival in Edmonton
Day 2	Edmonton to Cold Lake via Beaverhill Lake
Days 3 to 6	Cold Lake and environs
Day 7	Cold Lake to Edmonton
Day 8	Final departure

TOUR ROUTE MAP...



THE TOUR IN DETAIL...



Mourning Warbler by Lev Frid

Day 1 - Arrival in Edmonton. After arriving in Edmonton, we will meet up this evening for a welcome dinner and talk over our plans for the forthcoming tour of this hidden birding gem.

Day 2 - Edmonton to Cold Lake via Beaverhill Lake. We will begin our drive to Cold Lake by first visiting Beaverhill Lake, one of Alberta's premier birding locations. The prairie-like grassland areas around Beaverhill Lake give us an opportunity to encounter prairie specialists at the north end of their range, which we won't have the opportunity to see at Cold Lake. Our main quarry will be the much-sought after Baird's Sparrow and Sprague's Pipit – both relatively easy to hear, but tougher to see! We will make it our goal to obtain views of these two elusive species, with a supporting cast of Black Tern, Mountain Bluebird, Bobolink, Marbled Godwit, Wilson's Phalarope, Swainson's and (rarely) Ferruginous Hawks as well as hundreds of waterfowl including Canvasback, Redhead, Ruddy Duck, Green-winged and Blue-winged

Teals as well as Eared and Horned Grebes in their breeding finery.

Once we arrive at Cold Lake, we will make ourselves comfortable and get ready to spend a few days in the surrounding area. We will work from one base and visit several sites nearby to search for our targets.

Days 3 to 6 – Cold Lake and environs. We don't have far to go to visit several productive birding areas around Cold Lake. Over 200 bird species have been recorded in this boreal mecca and we will make a concentrated effort to find as many as we can. The principal attraction are the wood-warblers; we have excellent chances in seeing over 20 species over the course of our time here. Amongst these are skulkers like Connecticut, Mourning and Canada, which are much easier to see here than on migration, often giving frame-filling views in the open. Chestnut-sided, Cape May, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Blackpoll and others fill the cool morning air with their songs.

Besides the warblers, a variety of vireos, thrushes and others add their songs to the chorus. Anywhere in the Cold Lake area can be good for any number of species, and there are several places to check. Boreal specialties such as Spruce Grouse, Boreal Chickadee, Canada Jay, and Black-backed and American Three-toed Woodpecker are all on our target list as well. In the afternoon, when songbird



LeConte's Sparrow by Lev Frid





Piping Plover by Lev Frid

activity is lower, we will search for a myriad shorebirds and waterbirds that use Cold Lake as a migratory stopover. These may include Stilt and White-rumped Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitcher, American Avocet, Hudsonian Godwit and others. Piping Plover breeds nearby and we should get great views of this imperiled shorebird. Colonial waterbirds are abundant around Cold Lake and we should see impressive numbers of Franklin's Gull, American White Pelican and Western Grebe.

In the evening we will cruise some roads and visit wetlands in search of crepuscular birds such as Yellow Rail (can be common!), Sora, American Bittern, Nelson's and LeConte's Sparrows, and at dusk for owls



Magnolia Warbler by Lev Frid

such as Short-eared, Barred, Northern Saw-whet and, if we are very lucky, Great Grey, Boreal and Northern Hawk Owls. In some years it is possible to see several of these species while in others they are absent.

Day 7 - Cold Lake to Edmonton. This will be our last morning at Cold Lake, where we will seek out any species we may have missed or would like to get better views of. On our way to Edmonton we may stop at some pothole wetlands to view waterfowl and migrant shorebirds, or use the opportunity to try again for Sprague's Pipit and Baird's Sparrow.

Day 8 - Final departure. The tour will end after breakfast this morning.



FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under **IMPORTANT NOTES** below.

This includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 8;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Extra activities mentioned in the itinerary;
- Reserve entrance fees; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services.)

The tour fee does not include:

- Visa fees;
- **ANY** flights (see above);
- Any additional beverages;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

a) **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.**

b) **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient participants, a small party supplement will have to be charged.**

c) **Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**

d) **Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

Tiping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If, therefore, you feel that he/they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:

This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The tour will depart from Edmonton International Airport (IATA: YEG). As Day 1 has been set aside as an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time. The tour



will conclude at Edmonton International Airport (IATA: YEG) on day 8 after breakfast. Our hotel has regular shuttles to and from the airport.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:

Edmonton International Airport (IATA: YEG) is the main port of entry for this tour. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

