



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Colorado

Prairie Chickens, Grouse & More

1st April to 11th April 2023 (11 days)



Sharp-tailed Grouse by Markus Lilje

Colorado is the best place in the country for finding all the species of Prairie Chicken and Grouse. Its varied topography, ranging from prairie grasslands through high plains to subalpine forests and alpine tundra, supports as many as 500 species of birds; its geographical location astride the Continental Divide provides a mix of eastern, western, northern and southwestern species not easily found together anywhere else.

Our trip will take us from the eastern prairies of Colorado into the high Rocky Mountains, covering about 2000 miles in search of our target species. In order to see many of these species at their leks at dawn, we'll need to be up and out very early. We expect to find Greater and Lesser Prairie Chickens; Sage, Gunnison, Sharp-tailed and Dusky Grouse and possibly White-tailed Ptarmigan. Other species of

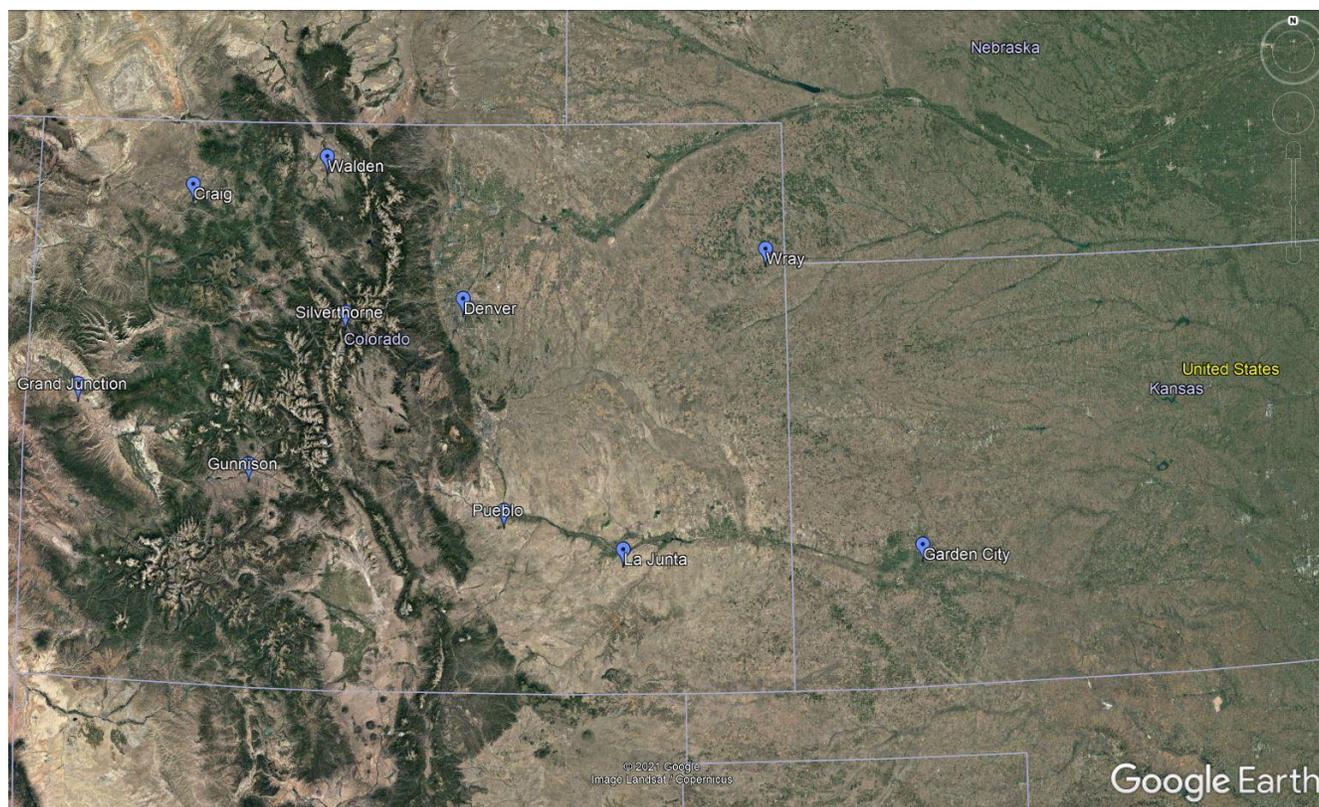
interest include Mountain Plover, Three-toed Woodpecker and Williamson's Sapsucker, Rough-legged Hawk, Black, Brown-capped and Grey-crowned Rosy Finches, Thick-billed and Chestnut-collared Longspurs amongst many others.

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

TEXAS ITINERARY

Day 1	Arrive in Denver, transfer to Pueblo
Day 2	Pueblo to Garden City, Kansas
Day 3	Lesser Prairie Chicken lek onwards to Wray
Day 4	Greater Prairie Chicken lek onwards to Silverthorne
Day 5	Loveland Pass to Gunnison
Day 6	Gunnison Grouse
Day 7	Gunnison to Grand Junction via Black Canyon National Park
Day 8	Grand Junction to Craig
Day 9	Craig to Walden
Day 10	Sage Grouse lek to Denver
Day 11	Final departures

TOUR MAP



THE TOUR IN DETAIL...



Mountain Plover by Stephan Lorenz

Day 1: Arrive in Denver, transfer to Pueblo. Today is set aside as an arrival day in Denver. After gathering, we will make a group transfer to Pueblo. Time permitting, we may stop for a quick birding session en route for our first chance of finding Horned, Western and Clark's Grebes. This evening we will enjoy a welcome dinner and discuss of our plans for the forthcoming days.

Day 2: Pueblo to Garden City, Kansas. Following breakfast, we'll start our journey to Garden City, Kansas. Today is mostly a travel day, but we shall make the occasional stop en route. At Cheraw Lake we'll scan for Snowy Plover and Baird's Sandpiper just arriving back from their spring migration, as well as American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt

and Wilson's Phalarope. There are often large flocks of Western Grebes at a few locations, and we'll check for Clark's Grebe amongst the flocks. A final stop at Blue Lake should turn up a fair few Mountain Plovers. We expect to arrive at our lodging late this afternoon.

Day 3: Lesser Prairie Chicken lek onwards to Wray. We depart very early this morning to arrive at the Lesser Prairie Chicken lek. We'll be viewing from the car so as not to disturb the mating ritual of one



White-tailed Ptarmigan by Stephan Lorenz



of the rarest birds in North America. Their ‘dancing’ and ‘booming’ is an unforgettable sight. After what promises to be an incredible morning, we return to our motel to have breakfast.

After breakfast, we’ll start making our way to Wray in north east Colorado. En route, we’ll make the occasional rest stop as well as keeping our eyes open for any interesting plains birds. We’ll arrive in Wray this afternoon, in time for an orientation on Greater Prairie Chicken with our rancher host. To avoid the disappointment of possible bad weather tomorrow morning, we will make a short visit to the lek this evening, where we should see some birds in the evening. We will then return to Wray for dinner.



Greater Prairie Chicken by Stephan Lorenz

Day 4: Greater Prairie Chicken lek onwards to Silverthorne. We depart very early again this morning to return to the Greater Prairie Chicken lek and enjoy one of the finest bird spectacles in North America as Greater Prairie Chickens boom, fight, chase and cackle for a few hours. We will return to the motel for breakfast, before continuing onwards to Silverthorne. We’ll stop at Pawnee Grasslands to search for Thick-billed and Chestnut-collared Longspurs as well as Mountain Plover.

Day 5: Loveland Pass to Gunnison. After breakfast we’ll head for Loveland Pass where we will search for White-tailed Ptarmigan. Often bitterly cold, any sighting of White-tailed Ptarmigan requires a certain amount of fortitude and an equal amount of luck. A brief stop at some feeders in Silverthorne often turn up Grey-crowned and Brown-capped Rosy Finches.



Dusky Grouse by Stephan Lorenz

Later in the morning, we shall stop at Buena Vista to look for Williamson’s Sapsucker and Pinyon Jay. Near Monarch Pass we will search for Clark’s Nutcrackers and American Three-toed Woodpecker before continuing onwards to Gunnison in the early evening.

Day 6: Gunnison Grouse. Another very early morning start is needed to reach the only available Gunnison Grouse lek. After another successful morning, we shall return to Gunnison for breakfast before heading to Crested Butte where we shall search for Black, Brown-capped and Grey-crowned Rosy Finches, Sage Thrasher and Evening



Grosbeak, before making a final stop at Almont for American Dipper.

Day 7: Gunnison to Grand Junction via Black Canyon National Park.

We depart early for Black Canyon National Park to search for Dusky Grouse, Golden Eagle, Spotted Towhee and Slate-colored Fox Sparrow. A short side trip to Blue Mesa may turn up Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes. We then continue onwards to Grand Junction with a final stop at Coal Creek Canyon where we may find Chukar Partridge.



Brown-capped Rosy Finch by Stephan Lorenz

Day 8: Grand Junction to Craig.

We depart Grand Junction and head to Colorado National Monument and explore the viewpoints of the dramatic sandstone cliffs, one of the most scenic stops along a route packed with dramatic vistas. Juniper Titmouse are likely to be calling in the background, with Bewick's and Canyon Wrens flirting along the gorge edges. With a little luck, we may find Rock Wren or locate Gambel's Quail which has been recorded calling from atop fence posts on previous tours!

Later in the day we will enjoy lunch at Rifle Falls where some relaxed birding in the oak woodlands should turn up Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, Band-tailed Pigeon and Spotted Towhee. At Coal Canyon we will search for Chukar Partridge if we still need to find this species before continuing onwards to Craig, possibly picking up Black-throated Sparrow, Golden Eagles and Sandhill Crane en route.

Day 9: Craig to Walden. We begin with another early start in search of Sharp-tailed and Dusky Grouse.



Clark's Nutcracker by Markus Lilje

We will most likely stop for lunch at Rabbit Ears Pass on the Continental Divide, which may also turn up Grey and Steller's Jays, Clark's Nutcracker, Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill, Cassin's Finch and Three toed Woodpecker if the snow is not too deep.

Time permitting, we will stop at the Walden Reservoir which should give us good views of Redhead, Canvasback, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck and Lesser Scaup. On the islands, California Gull and American White Pelicans will be busy setting up for the breeding season. Other species we may come across include American Avocets and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Day 10: Sage Grouse lek to Denver. We'll have another pre-dawn start to arrive at the Sage Grouse



lek on time. With luck, we may see up to 50 males booming, tail-spreading, and even fighting. After breakfast, we may make a stop at Mountain Park Colorado State Forest headquarters for rosy finches, Pine Grosbeak, Mountain Chickadee and Three-toed Woodpecker.

We'll make a final stop at Genesee Mountain Park en route back to Denver to say goodbye to some of the Rocky Mountains specialties we have become accustomed to over the last 10 days, searching for any species we may still require such as Pygmy Nuthatch.



Thick-billed Longspur by Markus Lilje

Day 11: Final departures. All good things must come to an end unfortunately. The tour will conclude after breakfast today.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

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

The tour price includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 11;
- All accommodations;
- Ground transportation;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- Tips for local guides and services; and
- All guiding services.

...and excludes:

- Any airfares, taxes and visa costs;
- Any beverages;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and 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 registration 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 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, porters and restaurants) 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 AND DEPARTURE DETAILS

This tour **does not** include ANY international airfares. The tour will commence with a transfer from Denver International Airport, Denver at midday (12:00) on day 1 to our lodgings. The tour will conclude after breakfast on day 11 with a transfer back to Denver International 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

Denver International Airport, Denver (IATA: DEN) is the main port of entry and exit for this tour. **Please DO NOT book your international flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

