Alaska! What an adventure! We were thrilled to be able to run the Nome photo tour this year. Due to Covid restrictions, we thought we would have to skip another year visiting one of our favorite spots. As luck would have it, Nome lifted many of their restrictions a few months prior and before we knew it, the trip was on!

Our group of 6 arrived to find beautiful golden light on our first night and immediately took advantage. We all enjoyed a group of Musk Ox a stone’s throw from our lodging. Long-tailed Jaegers seemed to be everywhere, and we captured some great images right off the bat. We found a number of other songbirds, Whimbrel, and even a Willow Ptarmigan on our first night around town. Our first full day found the group following the coast road along the Bering Sea, to Safety Sound and beyond where we spent some time photographing Arctic and Aleutian Terns. Long-tailed Ducks were in good numbers and we found ourselves surrounded by calling Lapland Longspurs while Semipalmated Sandpipers executed their amazing, hover display overhead.

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The next several days were spent photographing a nice diversity of species while exploring the three major roads leading from Nome. We tracked down species like American Golden Plover, Baird’s Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, Willow and Rock Ptarmigan. Red-necked Grebes and Red-throated Loons provided close shooting opportunities. An unexpected round of snow showers gave the group great songbird shots in the falling snow including Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Wilson’s Warbler.
Later in the week we had fun with close Sabine’s Gulls, Red-necked and Red Phalarope, Western Sandpiper, and Parasitic Jaegers. Breeding plumage Surfbird and Wandering Tattler occasionally got too close to photograph. At Nome you never really know just what you might find. On a day with particularly foul weather, we had hundreds of jaegers lined up on the tundra. They had apparently been driven to shore by the inclement weather. It was incredible to see so many in one place! We also found a number of rarer species like Parakeet Auklet, Eurasian Wigeon, Yellow-billed Loon, a Gyrfalcon nest with chicks and an Emperor Goose.
On our last full day, we spent time traveling the Kougarok Rd photographing specialties like Arctic Warbler and Bluethroat. Eventually we made the difficult but legendary hike up Curlew Hill where three Bristle-thighed Curlews obliged for some photo opps. We had a beautiful afternoon and the birds and scenery were top notch. It was a great way to end a very productive trip with old friends and new. We are already looking forward to next year’s Alaskan adventures!
Join us in Barrow for the opportunity to photograph birds in one of the best spots Alaska has to offer!

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