



Eastern Pennsylvania

Warbler Photography

Tour Leader: Brian Zwiebel
May 10-14, 2024

On this exciting tour you can plan to photograph up to twelve or more species of warblers in a short amount of time. Our tour location in eastern Pennsylvania provides access to a wide variety of warblers and other songbirds due to the diversity of habitats we will encounter in a relatively small area. We will photograph birds of older deciduous forest as well as in the brushy new growth that regenerates after a clear cut. Several different species will be encountered only in coniferous forests while stream bottoms and wet areas provide additional habitat types and thus greater species diversity. Your leader will know what species to expect in the different habitats before ever getting out of the vehicle. The wonderful sound of singing birds will confirm which birds are present.

General Overview

Join Brian in the beautiful Pocono Mountains region of eastern Pennsylvania! Spring will be unfolding all around us as the birds return to their breeding grounds. Brian is adept at finding the many avian gems that inhabit these forests. Birding a forested area is difficult at best if you have to rely on only your eyes. Brian is familiar with the bird songs and can recognize what species should be present based on the surrounding habitat alone. Once we have located our beautiful subject we will attempt to photograph them in the best settings using quality natural light, sometimes with fill flash when the ambient lighting needs a little help. You will learn what settings to use for fill flash (-3 is Brian's default) and when it is best to use less minus compensation. You will also learn why shutter priority mode is Brian's default camera mode and why it is absolutely best to use shutter priority when working with fill flash in high speed sync mode.

Possible species on the Eastern Pennsylvania warbler photo tour include more than 12 species of warblers and a variety of other songbirds found in the beautiful Pennsylvania State Forests. Likely warbler species include Golden-winged, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Canada, Nashville, Prairie, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Black-and-White, Chestnut-sided, Yellow-rumped, Yellow, and Hooded Warblers, plus American Redstart, Louisiana Waterthrush and Ovenbird. Eastern Towhee, Indigo Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, several vireo species, and Scarlet Tanagers are all possibilities on this tour.

Equipment

Bring your longest telephoto lens and matching teleconverters as well as a tripod for this tour. A flash kit including speed light, bracket, off-shoe cord, Better Beamer and external battery pack will help you get the most from this trip as we will be learning to use fill flash to enhance our images. Bring a macro lens (or extension tubes) for the flowers and a shorter lens will come in handy for documenting our trip.

Environment

While the calendar says May, participants will still want to plan for some chilly weather. Early mornings can be quite cool while afternoons can warm dramatically. A misty all day rain can be wonderful for photography but will quickly chill you to the bone without a waterproof outer layer (consider a rain cover for your lens as well). Light hiking boots will suffice for foot wear. This is tick and mosquito country. You may wish to wear long sleeves, gloves and a head net to protect exposed skin from biting mosquitoes. Deet is a well known mosquito repellent but the chemical contents can melt the plastic parts of your gear. Products with the active ingredient Picardin work just as well without destroying your expensive gear. We recommend tucking pant legs and shirt tails while treating clothing with permethrin as your best defense against ticks.

Physical Activity

Activity levels for this trip are not strenuous but some light off trail hiking for short distances can be expected. The majority of our photography will be done from along lightly traveled roads or adjacent pull offs and parking areas.

Daily Schedule

Each morning we will leave the hotel quite early and grab a quick bite of breakfast arriving at our photo locations at or near sunrise. This will allow us to take advantage of the birds' most active time of day and the best light. A leisurely lunch will provide a needed break to refuel and recharge. On full sun days lunch will be a little earlier while on overcast days we will extend our morning session longer. In the afternoons we will head back out to new locations and work on making more images. Dinner may not be until late but snacks and water in the vehicle will keep us going. Over dinner we will discuss the day's events and plan for the following morning. If the forecast is for heavy overcast or hard rain we may decide on a later start and have a more leisurely breakfast. In the event of an all day downpour we will discuss and demonstrate image editing or share a slide program.

Likely Species on this tour (species in BOLD are most frequently photographed on the trip):



American Redstart
Black-and-White Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler



Canada Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Golden-winged Warbler
Louisiana Waterthrush



Magnolia Warbler
Ovenbird



Prairie Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Eastern Towhee
Indigo Bunting
Blue-headed Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Scarlet Tanager

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from Scranton, Pennsylvania: \$2,999

Single Supplement: \$400

Minimum Participants: 3

Maximum Participants: 5

Price Includes:

Expert Guide

Ground Transportation in Pennsylvania

All Lodging

All Meals

Park Entrance Fees/Permits

Price Does Not Include:

Airfare to and from Scranton, Pennsylvania

Airport Taxes

Passport and Visa Fees (if applicable)

Alcoholic Beverages

Personal Items

Travel Insurance

Tips

Deposit:

A deposit of \$500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour February 10, 2024).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact us at info@sabrewingnaturetours.com, by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at sabrewingnaturetours.com.

Responsibility/Disclaimer Statement:

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