



BIRDING MAN

A D V E N T U R E S

MOUNTAIN CHICKEN CHASE

Colorado

April 19th – 24th, 2024

6 days, 5 nights

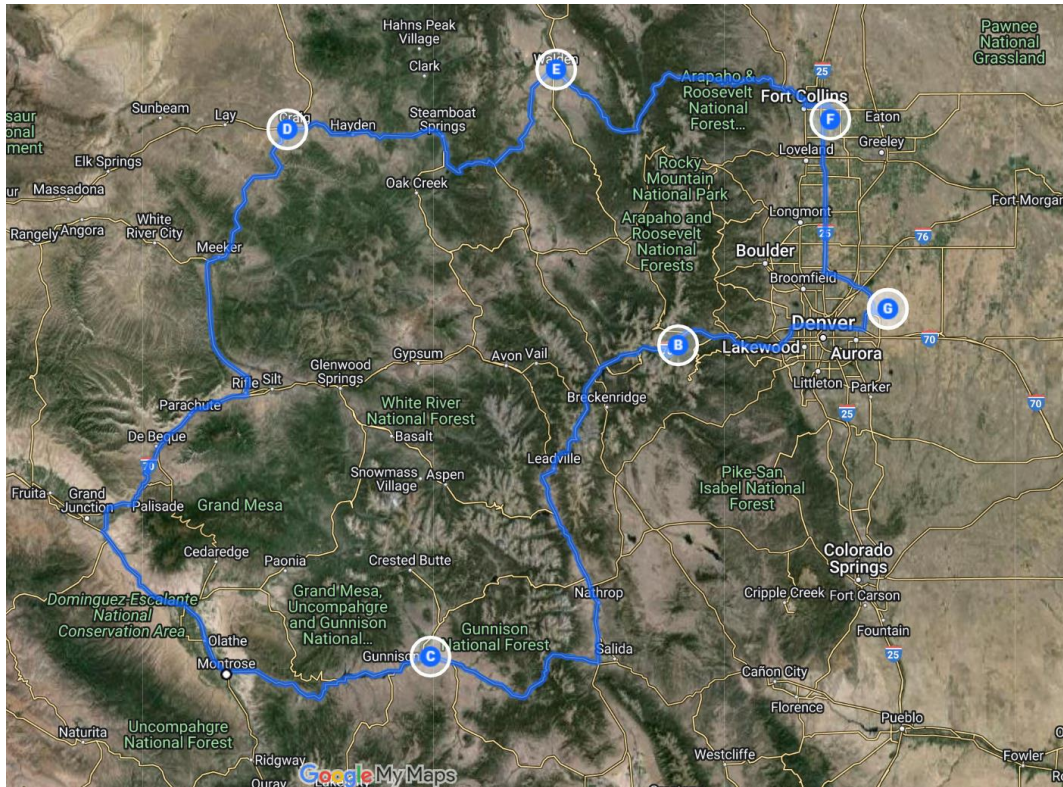


Set out to find all 5 species of mountain grouse found in Colorado on this adventure-packed trip!

Itinerary in Brief

Bold font indicates mornings we will rise before dawn to observe birds on mating leks

Day	Activities	Food	Lodging
1	Arrival to Denver, Colorado Transfer to Georgetown	D	Georgetown
2	Loveland Pass for White-tailed Ptarmigan Feeders at Silverthorne Lunch in Leadville Birding in Buena Vista Transfer to Gunnison	BLD	Gunnison, CO
3	Gunnison Sage Grouse Lek Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park Coal Canyon Transfer to Craig	BLD	Craig, CO
4	Sharp-tailed Grouse Lek Steamboat Springs feeders Free time in Steamboat Springs Transfer to Walden	BLD	Walden, CO
5	Greater Sage Grouse Lek State Forest State Park Poudre River Canyon Fossil Creek Reservoir Transfer to Denver	BLD	Denver, CO
6	Breakfast at hotel Transfer to airport Departure	B	None



Destinations for the proposed 6-day, 5-night itinerary



Your guide will greet you at the airport in Denver, Colorado

Itinerary

Day 1: Home | Denver, CO | Georgetown, CO

- Arrival to Denver International Airport
- Transfer to Georgetown, CO (1 hrs 30 min)
- Dinner

Lodging: [Georgetown Mountain Inn](#)

Meals included: D



The main street of Georgetown, Colorado looks like it could be right out of a Western movie



White-tailed Ptarmigan in its winter plumage in April on Loveland Pass



Day 2: Georgetown, CO | Silverthorne, CO | Buena Vista, CO | Gunnison, CO

- Early breakfast at hotel
- Loveland Pass to search for White-tailed Ptarmigan (21 min; 16.3 miles)
- Transfer to Silverthorne (26 min; 18.3 miles)
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Brown-capped Rosy-Finch*
 - *Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch*
 - *Black Rosy-Finch*
 - *Pine Grosbeak*
 - *Clark's Nutcracker*
 - *Canada Jay*
 - *Barrow's Goldeneye*
- Transfer to Leadville for Lunch (42 min; 36.6 miles)
- Transfer to Buena Vista (40 min; 34 miles)
- Birding in McPhelemy Park
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Lewis's Woodpecker*
 - *Pinyon Jay*
- Transfer to Gunnison (1 hr 30 min; 81 miles)
- Dinner

Lodging: [The Inn at Tomichi Village](#)

Meals included: B, L, D



Clark's Nutcrackers can be found foraging for pine seeds in the woodlands and forests around Buena Vista, Colorado



Enjoy a night at the Inn at Tomichi Village near Gunnison, Colorado



Photo: National Audubon Society

The Gunnison Sage Grouse is an endangered species that was first discovered in 2006. Observation of GUSG leks are strictly controlled by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. We have obtained permits to join a privately guided tour with a State Wildlife Biologist

Day 3: Gunnison, CO | Delta, CO | Craig, CO

- 4 am: Gunnison Sage Grouse Lek (25 min; 22 miles)
- 8 am: Breakfast at hotel
- Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (1 hr 30 min; 63.2 miles)
 - **Target Birds:**
 - Dusky Grouse
 - Canyon Wren
 - Red-naped Sapsucker
 - Fox "slate-colored" Sparrow
- Coal Canyon (1 hr 34 min; 82.4 miles)
 - **Target Birds:**
 - Chukar
 - Virginia's Warbler
 - Gray Flycatcher
- Transfer to Craig, CO (2 hrs 18 min; 135 miles)
- Dinner

Lodging: [Hampton Inn and Suites](#)

Meals included: B, L, D



Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and its steep canyon walls are home to Canyon Wrens while the surrounding pinyon pine – oak woodlands provide habitat for Dusky Grouse



Dusky Grouse are a little trickier to find, so we will spend a couple of days looking for them. Our first attempt will be at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and our second attempt in the area north of Steamboat Splice to find birds of the desert southwest



Photo: Zac Pohlen/Flickr Creative Commons

There are several reliable Sharp-tailed Grouse leks to the north of Steamboat Springs. We will visit these, along with some prime Sharp-tailed habitat north of Craig. The Sharp-tailed mating display may be my favorite of all: the male lowers his head, spreads his wings, stamps his feet, and rapidly flicks his sharp tail high in the air in contest with rival males. It is downright extraordinary

Day 4: Craig, CO | Walden, CO

- Early morning start: Sharp-tailed Grouse Lek (51 min; 41.4 miles)
- Search for Dusky Grouse
- Steamboat Springs feeders
- Transfer to Walden, Colorado (1 hr 30 min; 71.5 miles)
- Walden Reservoir and Arapahoe National Wildlife Refuge
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *American White Pelican*
 - *California Gull*
 - *Yellow-headed Blackbird*
 - *Sandhill Crane*
 - *Rough-legged Hawk*
 - *Golden Eagle*
 - *Prairie Falcon*
 - *Boreal Owl*
- Dinner

Lodging: [Antlers Inn](#)

Meals included: B, L, D



The Arapahoe National Wildlife Refuge protects over 24,000 acres in the middle of North Park

Day 5: Walden, CO | Denver, CO

- Early morning start: Greater Sage Grouse Lek (25 min; 17.6 miles)
- Transfer to Moose Visitor Center at State Forest State Park (45 min; 40.1 miles)
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Cassin's Finch*
 - *Brown-capped Rosy Finch*
 - *Evening Grosbeak*
 - *Pine Siskin*
 - *American Three-toed Woodpecker*
 - *Red Crossbill*
 - *5 species of Grebes*
- Transfer to Poudre Canyon (1 hr 21 min; 60.7 miles)
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Northern Pygmy Owl*
- Stops at Timnath Reservoir and Fossil Creek Park (40 min; 25.4 miles)
 - **Target Birds:**



- *Cinnamon Teal*
- *Eared Grebe*
- *Horned Grebe*
- *Say's Phoebe*
- Transfer to hotel near Denver International Airport (1 hr 20 min; 70 miles)

Lodging: [La Quinta Inn and Suites](#)

Meals included: B, L, D

Day 6: Denver, CO | Home

- Breakfast at hotel
- Transfer to airport (16 min; 10 miles)
- Departure

Lodging: None

Meals included: B



Trip leader Ryan Dibala with a group of guests near the Continental Divide



Price per person: Starting at \$1,500* per person, single supplement \$400

Cost is based on Double Occupancy

*Pricing varies between \$1,500 and \$2,250 per person and is scaled on the total number of trip participants.

- 4 pax: \$2,250
- 5 pax: \$1,900
- 6 pax: \$1,700
- 7 pax: \$1,500

Includes:

- ✓ Driver and professional bilingual guide throughout the tour
- ✓ Ground transportation
- ✓ All hotels
- ✓ All meals
- ✓ All fees and permits
- ✓ Water and snacks throughout the trip
- ✓ General Liability insurance and auto insurance
- ✓ 24-hour assistance in case of emergency

Does not include:

- × Flight
- × Medical insurance
- × Travel insurance
- × Evacuation costs
- × Drinks and Alcoholic beverages
- × Personal expenses
- × Activities and food not included on the itinerary
- × Optional tips to local drivers and guides
- × Laundry and other items of personal nature

Please note that this itinerary cannot be 100% guaranteed, as it is only a rough guide and can be changed due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.



What You Need to Know

Tour Pace:

The tour pace is moderate with long drives. Mornings that include lek viewing will consist of rising an hour or so before dawn to be on the lek at the appropriate time. We will make sure to include ample restroom breaks and stops for birding on durable surfaces and trails between destinations. Additionally, we will include time for bird photography, if needed. In general, breakfasts and lunches will be quick, and dinners will be longer and more relaxing.

Transportation:

You will be traveling in a 12- or 14- passenger van with windows. The maximum group size will be 7 people, including the guide. There will be sufficient room for personal baggage.

Lodging:

You will be staying at a combination of 2- and 3-star hotels and lodges throughout the tour. Each accommodation has been diligently vetted for quality and assurance. Please see websites at hyperlinks above.

Altitude:

Denver is located at 5,280 ft above sea level. Highest elevations will be reached at Loveland Pass (11,991 ft above sea level) on Day 2. Please consult with your doctor if you have medical conditions that may be exacerbated at high elevations. You may experience some minor irritations such as a slight headache and mild dizziness, but symptoms should disappear as we descend to lower elevations. You may consider taking Diamox (Acetazolamide) and/or Acetaminophen before traveling to higher elevations, but please consult your doctor. Eat a lighter meal before heading to higher altitude, stay well-hydrated, and try to avoid caffeine and alcohol.

Weather:

You should be prepared for all kinds of weather on this trip. In mid-April, the mountains of Colorado continue to experience winter-like conditions and snow squalls and blizzards are not uncommon. Bring plenty of warm layers and winter hats and gloves. You will need these, especially during early mornings while we view leks. Sunscreen, lip balm, and sun hat are all recommended, as the sun can be very intense at the higher altitudes we will be visiting on this trip.

Laundry:

Laundry services are available at all hotels on this trip, however, please note that laundry fees are not included in the tour pricing.



Internet:

Wi-Fi is available in all hotels we will be staying at.

Meals:

Most of the meals will be fixed menu options where you will always have a vegetarian option. Please inform of us of any dietary preferences or restrictions in advance.

Travel Insurance:

We do not provide travel (or medical insurance). We strongly advise that you purchase a travel insurance package, in the event of trip cancellation. Please read our **cancellation policy** on our terms and conditions listed below.

READY TO BOOK THIS TOUR?

Registration and Payment Information:

Registration and all payments, including initial deposit, should be made through our trip portal on [We Travel](#). We do accept credit cards for an additional 2.9% fee, but you may also pay by bank transfer or check. We request a \$1,000 initial deposit upon registration. **Full payment is due 90 days prior to tour departure.**

CANCELLATIONS: If we cancel a tour due to low attendance, severe weather, COVID-19, or other unforeseen event, participants may either move their payments to another trip of their choice or receive a full refund. If you cancel your spot on a tour we intend to operate more than 90 days from departure, you will be eligible for a full refund. If cancelling within 90 days of departure, no refund will be given UNLESS we are able to fill your spot(s) with another participant(s). In that situation, \$250 will be withheld for administrative purposes, but the remainder of your payment will be refunded. We highly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or a family member prior to or during a trip.