



MOUNTAIN CHICKEN CHASE

April 4th – 10th, 2026

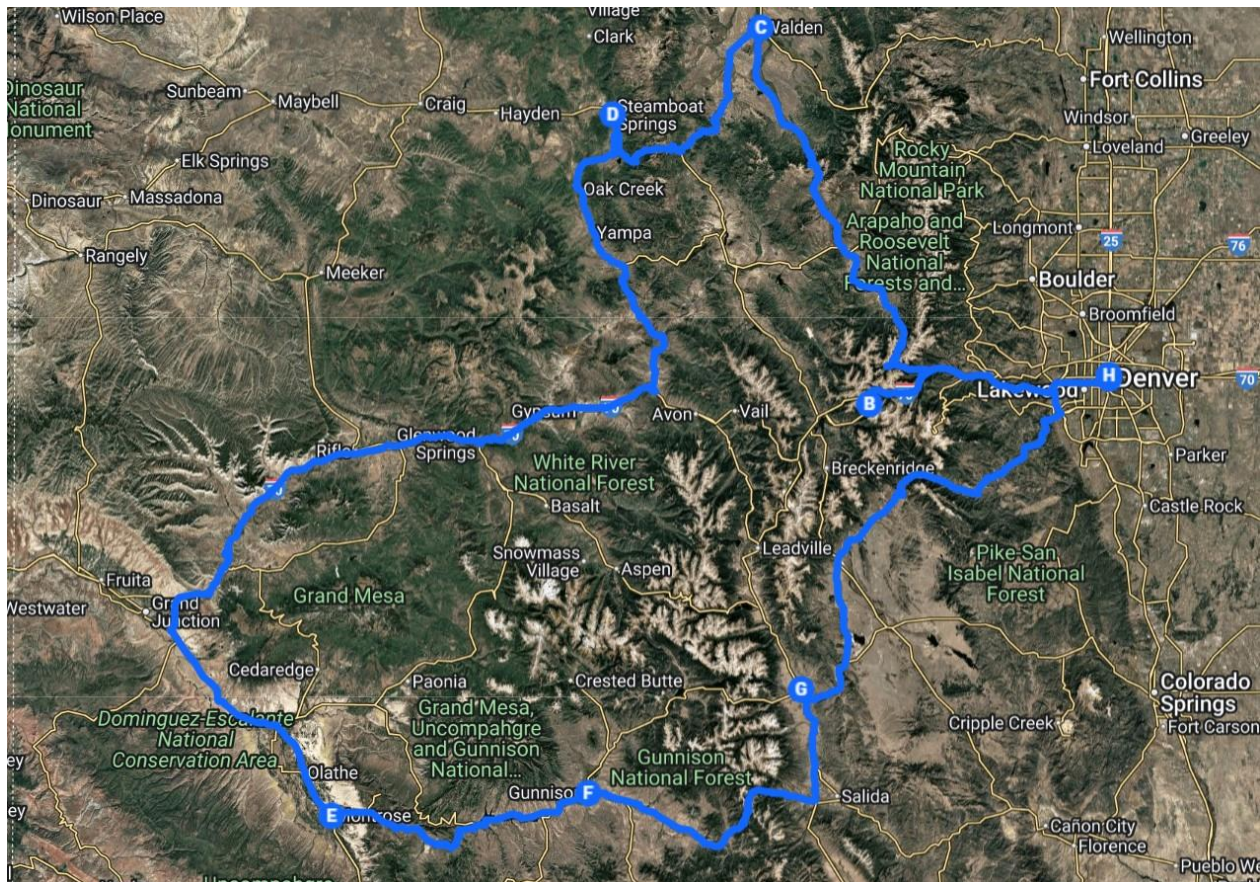


Set out to find all five species of Colorado mountain grouse on this adventure of a lifetime!

Itinerary in Brief

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

Day	Activities	Food	Lodging
1	Arrival in Denver, CO Transfer to Dillon	D	Dillon, CO
2	Loveland Pass for White-tailed Ptarmigan Feeders at Silverthorne Walden Reservoir Walden	BLD	Walden, CO
3	Greater Sage-Grouse Lek Arapahoe National Wildlife Refuge Rabbit Ear's Pass Steamboat Springs	BLD	Steamboat Springs, CO
4	Sharp-tailed Grouse Lek Coal Canyon Colorado National Monument Montrose	BLD	Montrose, CO
5	Black Canyon of the Gunnison N.P. Crested Butte Waunita Hot Springs	BLD	Gunnison, CO
6	Gunnison Sage-Grouse Lek Monarch Pass Buena Vista Denver	BLD	Denver, CO
7	Transfer to airport Departure	B	



Proposed route for the 2026 Mountain Chicken Chase



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

Itinerary

Day 1: Home | Denver | Dillon

- Arrival at Denver International Airport
- Subalpine birding near Loveland Pass

Targets

- **American Three-toed Woodpecker**
 - **Canada Jay**
 - **Steller's Jay**
 - **Mountain Chickadee**
 - **Brown Creeper**
 - **Pine Siskin**
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- Transfer to Dillon, CO
 - Dinner and trip orientation

Lodging: [Comfort Suites](#)

Meals included: D



Photographing ptarmigan at Loveland Pass



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

Day 2: Dillon | Loveland Pass | Silverthorne | Walden

- 7 am breakfast at hotel
- Loveland Pass to search for **White-tailed Ptarmigan**
- Silverthorne feeders

Targets

- **Brown-capped Rosy-Finch**
- **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**
- **Black Rosy-Finch**
- **Pine Grosbeak**
- **Clark's Nutcracker**
- **Canada Jay**
- **Barrow's Goldeneye**



Our group in 2025 trying to stay warm on top of Loveland Pass

- Transfer to Walden Reservoir

Targets

- American White Pelican
 - California Gull
 - Yellow-headed Blackbird
 - Sandhill Crane
 - Rough-legged Hawk
 - Prairie Falcon
 - Boreal Owl
- Group dinner
 - Optional nocturnal owling expedition

Lodging: [Antlers Inn](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



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



Pine Grosbeaks visit feeders in the mountains of Summit and Grand Counties

Day 3: Walden | Steamboat Springs

- **Greater Sage-Grouse lek**

- Targets**

- **Cassin's Finch**
 - **Mountain Bluebird**
 - **Sage Thrasher**
 - **Golden Eagle**
 - **Horned Lark**

- **Rabbit Ear's Pass**

- Targets**

- **Canada Jay**

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- **American Three-toed Woodpecker**
 - **Mountain Chickadee**
 - **Red-breasted Nuthatch**
 - **Red Crossbill**
 - **Clark's Nutcracker**
- Transfer to Steamboat Springs
 - Free time
 - Optional soak at hot springs

Lodging: [Nordic Lodge](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Viewing the Greater Sage-Grouse with the early morning light coming over the mountains offers spectacular photography opportunities

Day 4: Steamboat Springs | Colorado National Monument | Montrose

○ **Sharp-tailed Grouse Lek**

Targets

- Sandhill Crane
- Dusky Grouse
- Wilson's Snipe
- Vesper Sparrow
- Brewer's Blackbird



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

○ **Transfer to Colorado National Monument**

Targets

- Peregrine Falcon
- Woodhouse's Scrub Jay
- Pinyon Jay
- Juniper Titmouse
- Sagebrush Sparrow

- Sage Thrasher
- Rock Wren
- Canyon Wren
- White-collared Swift
- Lewis's Woodpecker



The canyon landscapes at Colorado National Monument will take your breath away

- Transfer to Montrose
- Group Dinner

Lodging: [Super 8 by Wyndham](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5: Black Canyon of the Gunnison | Crested Butte | Waunita Hot Springs

- Breakfast at hotel
- Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park to look for **Dusky Grouse**

Targets

- **Spotted Towhee**
- **Fox Sparrow (slate-colored)**
- **Virginia's Warbler**
- **American Dipper**
- **Woodhouse's Scrub Jay**

- Transfer to Crested Butte

Targets

- **Cassin's Finch**
- **Evening Grosbeak**
- **Rosy-finches**
- **Pine Siskin**
- **American Dipper**
- **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**

- Transfer to Waunita Hot Springs
- Dinner

Lodging: [Waunita Hot Springs Ranch](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



A Golden Eagle soars past us near Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park



A Dusky Grouse displays near the road in Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

Day 6: Waunita Hot Springs | Monarch Pass | Buena Vista | Denver

○ **Gunnison Sage-Grouse lek**

Targets

- **Fox Sparrow (slate-colored)**
- **Northern Saw-whet Owl**
- **Red-naped Sapsucker**
- **Mountain Bluebird**

○ **Monarch Pass**

Targets

- **Williamson's Sapsucker**
- **Any other subalpine species we are missing**

- Transfer to Buena Vista

Targets

- **Lewis's Woodpecker**
- **Pinyon Jay**

- Antero Reservoir

Targets

- **Northern Pintail**
- **Canvasback**
- **Redhead**
- **American Avocet**
- **Greater Yellowlegs**
- **California Gull**
- **Rough-legged Hawk**

- Return to Denver
- Final group dinner

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

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



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 and we will only be able to get distant views of the lek

Day 7: Denver Airport Hotel | Airport | Home

- Breakfast at hotel
- Transfer to airport
- Departure

Value

Per person (double occupancy): **\$2,000**

Single supplement: **\$400.00**

Includes:

- ✓ Driver and guide throughout the tour
- ✓ Ground transportation
- ✓ All hotels
- ✓ Meals listed on itinerary
- ✓ 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
- × Alcoholic beverages
- × Personal expenses
- × Activities and food not included on the itinerary
- × Optional tips
- × 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:

This tour is designed for intermediate birders and photographers. We consider the difficulty level to be moderate, with most of the birding being close to roadsides and trails with slight uphill and downhill. Expect early morning starts and long drives, but we will make sure the trip is broken up with plenty of out-of-vehicle time.

Transportation:

You will be traveling in a 12- or 14- passenger van with windows. The maximum group size will be 8 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.

Laundry:

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

Travel Insurance:

We do not provide travel (or medical) insurance. We strongly advise that you purchase a travel insurance package. Please read our **cancellation policy** 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 \$600 initial deposit upon registration (\$700 for single supplement). **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 more than 90 days from departure, you will be eligible for a full refund. If cancelled 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.