



MAINE Puffins Plus

June 6-10, 2019

Tour leaders: Josh Engel & Adam Sell

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Maine in summer is a classic vacation destination, and with good reason. The beautiful scenery, stunning coastline, delicious seafood, and lush forest make it a great place to visit. For birders, it has the added allure of seabirds colonies, abundant breeding birds, and extensive wetlands and boreal forests. Ours was a fantastic Maine summer birding experience—a boat trip featuring puffins, pelagic birds, and a whale, 17 species of warblers, hotels with stunning ocean and river views, and a classic lobster dinner.

Top 5 birds as voted by the group

1. Atlantic Puffin

2. Upland Sandpiper

3 (tie). Black Guillemot/Razorbill/Red Crossbill*

***Red Crossbill made the list even though it was only seen by half the group!**



Atlantic Puffins and Razorbills on Petit Manan Island. Photo by Josh Engel.

Day 1, June 6. Arrival in Bangor, to Mount Desert Island.

The group met up at the airport and Bangor and off we went to the beautiful Maine coast on a perfect, sunny, early summer day. Our first stop was a waterfront picnic area of Acadia National Park just before reaching the island, where we had lunch and enjoyed large numbers of White-winged Scoters with a few Black and Surf mixed in. Not a bad mix of sea ducks for June! An adult Bald Eagle was also sitting on a small island in the bay.

We continued on to walk along a quiet forest road on the west side of Mount Desert Island. It was quiet in the afternoon, but we had nice views of a female Blackburnian Warbler collecting nesting material from the ground and heard or saw Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-headed Vireo, Ovenbird, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Brown Creeper. We continued down the coast to the Seawall Picnic Area of Acadia, where the scenery was spectacular and the birding excellent. We had great views of two New England specialties, Common Eider and Black Guillemot, along with Laughing Gull, Common Loon, more scoters, and even a distant Harlequin Duck. We finished the day at our nearby hotel that was across the street from the ocean, where a few people saw a Purple Finch right outside the hotel.

Day 2, June 7. Mount Desert Island and Puffin/Whale Watch boat trip.

It took us a few minutes to leave after an early breakfast—we had to enjoy the Purple Finches around the hotel parking lot first! Eventually we drove to the east side of the island to start our “real” birding at Sieur de Monts Springs in Acadia. It was a lovely morning. Even though the local Barred Owl chicks must have fledged in the last couple of days and were nowhere to be found, we had wonderful views of a singing Alder Flycatcher along with a smattering of other eastern forest birds. Our next stop to view a Peregrine Falcon nesting area—but like the owls the falcons themselves were nowhere to be found. We did see some nice birds at the viewpoint, including scope views of American Redstart and Cedar Waxwing.



Razorbills out at sea. Photo by Josh Engel.

It was finally time for the much anticipated boat trip out of Bar Harbor. We motored out and headed towards Petite Manan Island. Some Black Guillemots and Common Eiders were along the way, but once we got the island things picked up. We had great views of many Atlantic Puffins and Razorbills, flying, swimming, and sitting on the island. Most people saw Arctic Terns among the many Commons. After enjoying the seabird show, we headed further out to see. Eventually we came to an area where pelagic birds were active—many Wilson's and a few Leach's Storm-Petrels, Northern Gannet, Red-necked Phalarope, and small group of Common Murres, along with Gray Seals. Then all of the sudden a Minke Whale surfaced right near the boat! It surfaced several more times at close range, giving most aboard great views. Our last stop was at Mount Desert Island, where some in the group saw Black-bellied Plovers and others saw a Common Raven, and everyone saw many Harbor and Gray Seals. We finally returned to the harbor, tired and happy.

But our excitement wasn't quite done. After a rest back at our seaside hotel, we had a wonderful dinner of fresh lobster at a local lobster pound, with views over a picturesque Maine harbor where those very lobster were unloaded earlier in the day.

Day 3, June 8. Mount Desert Island to Machias.

It was another gorgeous morning on the coast of Maine. We started it by birding the coast just a minute's drive from the hotel (after a short delay to look at Black-throated Green Warbler and other birds around the hotel parking lot again). We had more good looks at Common Eider, Black Guillemot, Common Loon, and White-winged Scoter. We packed our bags and headed to one of Acadia's most famous places—the top of Cadillac Mountain, the highest mountain on the eastern seaboard and one of Acadia's best viewpoints. Common Raven flew over here and Eastern Towhee was calling. We had one more stop on Mount Desert Island, this time to look for Bobolink. They were right where they were supposed to be and we had awesome views of them displaying, singing, and sitting on posts. Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows were also going into nest boxes here.

We said goodbye to Acadia and continued on up the coast. Our next birding spot was Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge, where Spruce Grouse had been seen recently. But it was a beautiful Saturday afternoon and the trail was busy with hikers and their dogs and no Spruce Grouse showed up for us. We did see Magnolia Warbler, "Yellow" Palm Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, and a few others, and enjoyed the beautiful forest.

Next up was the Blueberry Barrens, as the blueberry growing country is known. We had quite the adventure getting there, but our vans impressed and before long we were looking at Upland Sandpipers at very close range. We didn't even need scopes, they were so close. We drove a short distance down the road and in no time at all were looking at a Vesper Sparrow that sat up on a rock for many minutes, allowing for very satisfying scope views. We made one more stop on our way—this time for shorebirds—but the high tide covered the mudflats and all we were able to find was a Greater Yellowlegs and a group of American Black Ducks.

We arrived to Machias and checked in to our hotel with beautiful balcony views overlooking the Machias River. A few people who stood outside enjoyed a great show of Osprey and Bald Eagle, both hunting in the river. We ended the day with a delicious local seafood dinner.



Upland Sandpiper in the Blueberry Barrens. Photo by Josh Engel.

Day 4, June 9. Burn Road and West Quoddy Head State Park.

We had an early departure for the interior, to Burn Road, a quiet gravel road that goes into the forest and is well known for its boreal birds and breeding warblers. Well, boreal specialties like Black-backed Woodpecker and Spruce Grouse were nowhere to be found, but we enjoyed generally excellent birding, including 15 species of warblers. We had great looks at many birds, including Olive-sided Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Broad-winged Hawk, Northern Parula, Canada, Pine, Magnolia, Nashville, “Yellow” Palm Warbler, and much more. We also had fun looking at moose tracks, moose, bear, and coyote scat, and numerous butterflies and dragonflies that were active in the warm, sunny weather. We didn’t see another human for the entire 4+ hours we were there. As we were leaving, Kristen spotted a Red Crossbill sitting on top of a tree and her lucky car had excellent views of a small group of these cone loving finches.

After lunch and a rest back at the hotel—where some in the group watched a Bald Eagle steal a fish from an Osprey, then fend off another eagle—we headed to the easternmost point in the entire USA, West Quoddy Head State Park. We arrived and started scanning the sea and emergent rocks when someone in the group excitedly said “porcupine!” We were thrilled to see it ambling across the lawn before disappearing into the dense grass. Black Guillemot, Common Eider, and Common Loon were in the waters offshore, and a few people got on a flyby Razorbill. We took a walk through the beautiful and somewhat haunting black spruce forest of the point, looking for but not finding Boreal Chickadee, until it was time to head back to Machias. It was another day full of wonderful birding and beautiful scenery.

Day 5, June 10. Roque Bluffs and departure from Bangor.

We had one final morning to enjoy the Maine coast, so we headed to the nearby Roque Bluffs State Park. It was a peaceful, beautiful morning. A male Surf Scoter was in the bay along with the now usual suspects, like Common Eider, Black Guillemot, and Common Loon. Song Sparrow and Yellow Warbler showed nicely as well. In more wooded areas we heard our first Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Warbling Vireo, and Swainson's Thrush of the trip and got nice views of Blue-headed Vireo and Black-throated Green Warbler. It was finally time to take one last look at the Machias River, load up the vans, and head back to Bangor for our departure. It was a great trip with a fantastic group of people, stunning scenery, and excellent birding.



Cape May Warbler. Photo by Josh Engel.

BIRD LIST. 111 species (including 7 heard only and 3 leader only). Taxonomy follows the Clements/eBird Checklist, 2018 update. Former (or alternate) English names are in parentheses. (H) = heard only; (L) = tour leader only. The global IUCN red list status is listed for threatened and near-threatened species: CR=Critically Endangered, EN=Endangered, VU=Vulnerable, NT=Near-threatened.

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

American Black Duck

Anas rubripes

Common Eider (NT)

Somateria mollissima

Harlequin Duck

Histrionicus histrionicus

Surf Scoter

Melanitta perspicillata

White-winged Scoter

Melanitta deglandi

Black Scoter (NT)

Melanitta americana

Common Goldeneye (L)	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>
Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
Chimney Swift	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>
Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
Spotted Sandpiper (L)	<i>Actitis macularius</i>
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>
Common Murre	<i>Uria aalge</i>
Razorbill (NT)	<i>Alca torda</i>
Black Guillemot	<i>Cepphus grylle</i>
Atlantic Puffin (VU)	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>
Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>
Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
Leach's Storm-Petrel (VU)	<i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megasceryle alcyon</i>
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates villosus</i>
Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryacopus pileatus</i>
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>

American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>
Eastern Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>
Alder Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax alnorum</i>
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>
Great Crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>
Blue-headed Vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>
Warbling Vireo (H)	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>
Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>
Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>
Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>
Winter Wren (H)	<i>Troglodytes hiemalis</i>
Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (H)	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
Eastern Bluebird	<i>Sialia sialis</i>
Swainson's Thrush (H)	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>
Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
House Finch (H)	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>
Purple Finch	<i>Haemorhous purpureus</i>
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
Pine Siskin	<i>Spinus pinus</i>
American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>
Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>
Vesper Sparrow	<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>
Savannah Sparrow (L)	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Swamp Sparrow	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>

Eastern Towhee (H)	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>
Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Common Grackle	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>
Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>
Northern Waterthrush (H)	<i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
Nashville Warbler	<i>Oreothlypis ruficapilla</i>
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>
Cape May Warbler	<i>Setophaga tigrina</i>
Northern Parula	<i>Setophaga americana</i>
Magnolia Warbler	<i>Setophaga magnolia</i>
Blackburnian Warbler	<i>Setophaga fusca</i>
Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>
Chestnut-sided Warbler	<i>Setophaga pennsylvanica</i>
Palm Warbler	<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>
Pine Warbler	<i>Setophaga pinus</i>
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Setophaga virens</i>
Canada Warbler	<i>Cardellina canadensis</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>

MAMMAL LIST. 8 species. We also saw tracks and scat of Moose and scat of bear and coyote. As there is no standard list of names for mammals, the names used here are simply commonly used names. Alternate names are in parentheses. IUCN Red List status listed for threatened and near-threatened species: CR=Critically Endangered, EN=Endangered, VU=Vulnerable, NT=Near-threatened.

Eastern Chipmunk - *Tamias striatus*
 Gray Squirrel - *Sciurus carolinensis*
 American Red Squirrel - *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*
 North American Porcupine - *Erethizon dorsatum*
 Harbor Seal - *Phoca vitulina*
 Gray Seal - *Halichoerus grypus*
 White-tailed Deer - *Odocoileus virginianus*
 Minke Whale - *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*



North American Porcupine at West Quoddy Head Lighthouse, the easternmost point in the United States. Photo by Josh Engel.



Birding on the coast in Acadia National Park. Photo by Josh Engel.



Minke Whale on our Puffin & Whale boat trip out of Bar Harbor. Photo by Josh Engel.



The view from our hotel rooms in Machias. Photo by Josh Engel.