



## MONTANA OWL WORKSHOP

MAY 1 - 5, 2009

*High, wide, and handsome, Montana is the country's fourth largest state. Its biological diversity reflects its immensity. Among its great plains, river breaks, mountains, marshes, and alpine tundra, Montana lists over 400 species of birds, 108 species of mammals, 13 species of amphibians, and 18 species of reptiles. Join researchers for three full days of owl hooting, tooting, observation, and research. Montana boasts the largest number of breeding owl species in any state in the United States. Fifteen species of owls occur in Montana, of which 14 species breed: Flammulated Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Boreal Owl, Eastern and Western Screech Owl, Burrowing Owl, Northern Hawk-Owl, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Barn Owl, Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Great Gray Owl. Snowy Owls are regular winter visitors. Although all species will not likely been seen, chances are good for 5-7 species (including Northern Pygmy and Boreal), and with some luck, 8-9 species are possible (including Great Gray).*

*We will assist researchers of the Owl Research Institute who are conducting a long-term study of Long-eared Owls. We will capture, band, weigh, measure, and record other biological data on these owls. We will collect and dissect owl pellets. We will discuss the natural history of Montana owls, as well as evolutionary adaptations in owls: how do owls hear, see, fly silently, conceal themselves, hunt, and other interesting characteristics. One evening (weather permitting) will be used to "owl prowling" for Western Screech Owl. We will take a short hike to potential nesting sites and look for this secretive owl.*

*We will check woodpecker and natural holes in trees for cavity nesting Pygmy and Saw-whet owls. We will observe the elaborate "sky dancing" courtship display of ground-nesting Short-eared Owls. We will also check stick nests in tree groves and woody thickets for the other species of owls. Please remember that the schedule, locations, and numbers of owls can change, depending upon prey species populations and the timing and whereabouts of the owls.*

**Day 1: Arrival in Missoula, Montana.** Participants should make arrangements to arrive in Missoula today and transfer to the hotel, where rooms will be reserved in their names.

We will meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 PM and drive to one of Missoula's many restaurants for a welcome dinner.

NIGHT: Doubletree Hotel, Missoula

**Day 2: Mission Valley.** This morning after breakfast, we will meet in the lobby at 8:30 AM. We will be packed and ready for our departure to the Mission Valley. Along the way we will look for Pygmy Owls and Long-eared Owls around Missoula before heading north for the hour trip to Charlo and the Mission Valley. We will return to Nine-Pipes Lodge for dinner.

NIGHT: Nine-Pipes Lodge

**Day 3: Mission Valley.** This morning after breakfast, we will meet in the lobby at 8:00 AM. We will collect and dissect owl pellets in the field. We will then search for Pygmy, Saw-whet, and Great Gray owl nests. We also hope to observe the "sky-dancing" display of the Short-eared Owls in the evening. After an early dinner, we will get together for an evening viewing or calling for owls.

NIGHT: Nine-Pipes Lodge

**Day 4: Mission Valley.** After breakfast, we will make a long drive to search for Boreal owls at their nests before heading back to Missoula. This evening there will be a farewell dinner at one of Missoula's best restaurants.

NIGHT: Doubletree Hotel, Missoula

**Day 5: Departure for Home.** Tour participants may depart at any time on this day.

## **Tour Leaders**

Denver Holt is a wildlife researcher and founder and president of the Owl Research Institute and the Ninepipes Center for Wildlife Research and Education, located in Charlo, Montana. His particular focus since 1978 has been researching owls and their ecology. He has published numerous papers for scientific as well as popular publications, and co-authored a children's science book on owls. He has conducted research in North and Central America. He has led numerous birding and nature tours throughout the U.S., Central America, and Africa. He is an avid naturalist with additional interests and knowledge that include insects, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, plant identification and geology. The Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society named Denver as Biologist of the Year for 2000. His research on Snowy Owls was published in the December 2002 issue of National Geographic Magazine, featuring a Snowy Owl on the cover.

Megan Fyelling is a wildlife biologist who earned a bachelor's degree in Zoology before moving to Montana to pursue her career. She has studied birds and their ecology

throughout the western U.S. and enjoys birding as a hobby. Most recently, she has worked for the Avian Science Center at the University of Montana as part of a fire ecology study and also currently works in wildlife genetics. Megan has also volunteered for several organizations including the Owl Research Institute, Bird's Eye View Education Program, and RaptorView Research. Aside from wildlife, her interests include skiing, botany, reading, hockey, and backpacking.

**FINANCIAL AGREEMENT:** The fee for the tour is **\$1350 per person for double occupancy**. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to dinner on Day 4, lodging as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leader/s. It does not include airfare, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$250**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**CLOTHING:** This time of year in Montana, it is advisable to dress for the unexpected as temperatures can range from 30 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. We recommend cold weather, warm weather, and wet weather clothing. A hat, gloves, coat or jacket, shelled parka or overcoat, and boots are a must. We recommend light, layered clothing, as opposed to bulky, heavy clothing. Leisure clothing, such as running shoes, short sleeved shirts, and sweat pants can be a welcome addition.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leader will have a spotting scope; but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. Other items you should bring are an alarm clock, sunscreen, and mosquito repellent.

**SUGGESTED READING:**

Burt, William H., and Richard P. Grossenheider, *Field Guide to the Mammals of America North of Mexico*. Peterson Field Guide Series #5. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Clark, William S. and Brian K. Wheeler. *A Field Guide to Hawks - North America*. Peterson Field Guide Series #35. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

Dunn, Jon L. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* (4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> edition). Washington, D.C.:National Geographic Society, 2002 or 2006.

Ehrlich, Paul R., David S. Dobkin and Darryl Wheye. *The Birder's Handbook. A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988.

Kaufman, Kenn. *A Field Guide to Advanced Birding*. Peterson Field Guide Series #39. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

Peterson, Roger Tory. *A Field Guide to Western Birds*. Peterson Field Guide Series #2. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

Zimmer, Kevin. *The Western Bird Watcher. An Introduction to Birding in the American West*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985.

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on WPNT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your WPNT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

**CANCELLATION POLICY** Refunds will be made in accordance with the following schedule only if cancellation is made 45 days or more before the departure date, the deposit less \$100.00 is refundable or the entire deposit may be applied to a future tour. If cancellation is made between 45 and 30 days of departure, the deposit is not refundable but any payments above the deposit toward the balance of the fee will be refunded. There will be no refunds for any cancellation made 30 days or less before departure.

**RESPONSIBILITY** The tour leaders and their agents provide services as described in the itinerary section of this notice from the initial destination point. We are not responsible in regard to travel to or from the beginning and ending destination points of the tour. We assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity, which may occur through the acts of default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger to or from the tour. We can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay, changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, acts of God, or other causes. All such losses will have to be borne by the passenger, as rates for tour participants pertain only for the tour times as stated in the accompanying itinerary. We reserve the right to change lodging location to substitutes of same quality or changes in the itinerary if necessary. We reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with full refund being constituted as full settlement to the passenger. If for any reason we find it necessary to change the tour guide or guides, notification will be given to tour members and they will have the right to cancel their participation and to receive a full refund. No refunds will be made for any portion of a tour. We retain the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

We suggest passengers purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect themselves from unforeseen circumstances that may arise regarding their travel. We suggest you inquire with your travel agent about this coverage.

**WAIVER:** The undersigned acknowledges that we provide no services beyond those described in the itinerary and the dates contained therein. The undersigned further agrees to hold us harmless for loss due to injury, sickness or delay and additionally, any act of

any company or party in connection with travel to or from the tour. The undersigned acknowledges that we are not an agent of or for any person, company or service provider and that our sole obligation is to provide the tour elements as described in the accompanying itinerary.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Reservation Form: MONTANA OWL WORKSHOP*

PLEASE RETURN TO: DENVER HOLT OR MEGAN FYLLING  
P.O. BOX 39  
CHARLO, MT 59824

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ space(s) for the Montana Owl Workshop.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodation: Double \_\_\_\_\_ Single \_\_\_\_\_ Share \_\_\_\_\_  
(Roommate to be assigned by the tour guides)

I/We are: Non-smokers \_\_\_\_\_ Smokers \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed please find advance payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. (\$300 per person)  
\*Please make checks payable to Wild Planet Nature Tours or WPNT

How did you hear about us: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We have read and agree to the terms and conditions for this program.

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

