



# Steens and the Alvord Desert

October 2-6, 2019

## Tentative Trip Itinerary

**Wednesday, October 2** Meet at our departure location in Portland, Oregon. Group introductions and load vans. We'll look for late summer raptors as we travel through central-southeast Oregon, and our afternoon will include stops at the Crooked River, Sage Hen nature trail and Buena Vista Ponds Overlook for a short hike and overview of the Blitzen Valley before arriving at Frenchglen Hotel, our base of operations for the remainder of the tour.

**Lodging:** Frenchglen Hotel

**Thursday, October 3** After a hearty breakfast at Frenchglen, we'll head out for a full day exploring Steens Mountain via the loop road. Stops today include both Big Indian and Little Blitzen Gorges and a walk to the edge of the East Rim, one full vertical mile above the spectacular Alvord Desert. Along the way we'll keep our eyes open for Golden Eagles, Mountain Bluebirds, large flocks of Horned Larks and for possible glimpses of the elusive Black Rosy-Finch. If the night is clear, we'll offer an optional after-dinner walk near the hotel for stargazing.

**Lodging:** Frenchglen Hotel

**Friday, October 4** After breakfast, we'll head to P Ranch for a short walk along the Blitzen River, before pointing south towards the Alvord basin on the east side of Steens Mountain. Along the way, we'll bird the beautiful Catlow Valley and the famous Fields Oasis, where Great Horned Owls are known to nest along with a wide

variety of migrant songbirds. We'll picnic at Fields Station, and time and weather permitting we may also explore Alvord or Borax Lakes before returning to Frenchglen another home-cooked feast.

**Lodging:** Frenchglen Hotel

**Saturday, October 5** Today we'll make another run up the north side of Steens Mountain, exploring fall birds at Page Springs Campground and, time permitting, Fish Lake. We'll lunch among the aspen at Jackman Park and make a visit to the stunning, glacial valley called Kiger Gorge. In the afternoon, we'll visit Malheur refuge hotspots, possibly including Benson Pond or Headquarters.

**Lodging:** Frenchglen Hotel

**Sunday, October 6** We'll breakfast after an optional, early-morning bird walk to Barnes Springs, hoping for good looks at Lazuli Bunting and other open country birds. Then we pack up the vans and head back to Portland, stopping multiple times for birds along the way.

## Trip Leaders

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