



Pacific Northwest Trip: Hiking and Birding the Rogue Valley Tentative Itinerary

Monday, May 20

On our first morning we'll make a quick meet and greet at the Clackamas Town Center, and hit the road heading south. Most of the morning will be dedicated to making miles, and pit stops, and we'll try to make it all the way to the Rogue River for a picnic lunch. From there we'll enjoy a leisurely afternoon of birding the area before heading to Medford, where we'll stay for the entirety of the trip.

Tuesday, May 21

Our first full day of exploration will take us to the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, the first national monument in the country set aside specifically for biodiversity. This unique landscape, at the confluence of three mountain ranges, hosts unique geology, botany, and an abundance of mammals, birds, and butterflies. We'll enjoy a hike to Hobart Bluff (an easy, 2.4 mile in and out) hoping for encounters with Hermit Warblers and Lazuli Buntings. As the day warms up, we'll hope to see butterflies like California Crescent, rarely found anywhere else in Oregon.

For the afternoon, we'll continue east to the Hyatt Prairie area for a picnic lunch, and then spend the afternoon exploring the reservoirs and prairies, and visit Vesper Meadow, a conservation and education initiative in the area, and home to a healthy population of Oregon Vesper Sparrows, a threatened subspecies of concern.

Wednesday, May 22

Today we'll head to the dry habitats north of Medford, starting with a hike up Upper Table Rock, which offers a scenic view of the Rogue River Valley, beautiful wildflowers, and our best opportunity to find Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The hike is a somewhat steep 1.1 miles to the top,

which we'll take at a leisurely pace, with an option for a slower bird walk on the trail for those who don't feel the need to summit.

Afterwards we'll visit Lower Table Rock, where a short nature trail gives great opportunities for California Towhee, another rare breeder in the state.

We'll enjoy a picnic lunch at Touvelle State Park, one of the top birding hotspots in the area on the banks of the Rogue River, where Acorn Woodpeckers have a huge communal granary. In the afternoon we'll visit the nearby Denman Wildlife Management Area, where varied habitats hold everything from Yellow-breasted Chat to American Bittern and Ash-throated Flycatcher.

Thursday, May 23

On our final day, we'll head up Mt. Ashland, the highest peak in the Siskiyou mountains. On trails around the ski area and campground we'll look for mountain species like Cassin's Finch, Thick-billed Fox Sparrow, and the elusive Green-tailed Towhee.

Heading north, we'll lunch at Wolf Creek before finishing the drive back to Portland, with a goal of arriving by 6 pm.