



Newfoundland & Nova Scotia: Extreme Tides, Seabird Colonies, and Whales

July 8-18, 2025

Tentative Itinerary

Day 1 – Tuesday, July 8, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Arrive in the evening/night at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport in Nova Scotia.

Lodging: TBD, Halifax

Day 2 – Wednesday, July 9, Halifax to Truro, Nova Scotia

The group will meet for breakfast and introductions before heading out. If the tides allow, we will bird a little bit around Halifax before heading to the Bay of Fundy to experience the highest tidal difference in the world at up to 53 feet. The shape of the Bay of Fundy also creates a tidal bore, where the leading edge of the incoming tide forms a wave. We will visit the Bay of Fundy six hours apart to see the low tide with expansive tidal flats and the high tide, with birding destinations in between that may give sightings of Magnolia, Blackburnian, and Black-throated Green Warblers.

Lodging: TBD, Truro

Day 3 – Thursday, July 10, Truro to Liscombe, Nova Scotia

We will make our way from the “West Coast” to the “East Coast” (more like NW and SE, but this is how the locals refer to them). Stops along the way may have Black Ducks, Alder Flycatchers, and our first views of Swamp Sparrows. We will visit the Abraham Lake Nature Reserve to experience an old-growth Red Spruce forest, now a rarity in Nova Scotia. We will hike the 2.2-mile loop trail in search of Black-backed Woodpeckers, Swainson’s Thrushes, and warblers like Ovenbird, Black-and-White,

and Bay-breasted. Exploring Taylor Head Provincial Park could turn up Common Eiders, Boreal Chickadees, and Blackpoll Warblers.

Lodging: Liscombe Lodge, Liscombe

Day 4 – Friday, July 11, Liscombe, Nova Scotia

We will bird the trails around the lodge in search of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Red and White-winged Crossbills, and Mountain Chickadees. We will likely take a roughly 3-mile hike along the Liscombe River. Birding other areas in the vicinity (shorter drives today) could turn up Palm and Black-throated Blue Warblers, Northern Parula, Ruffed and Spruce Grouse, and Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Lodging: Liscombe Lodge, Liscombe

Day 5 – Saturday, July 12, Liscombe to Sydney, Nova Scotia

We will head to Antigonish Landing where we will search for Nelson's Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, and Yellow Warblers and then to Pomquet Beach Provincial Park to search for Piping Plovers, which are endangered in Canada. We will continue our drive north along the Bras d'Or Lake, a brackish lake that is tidal with the Great Bras d'Or Channel connecting it to the Atlantic Ocean and also less saline than the ocean with freshwater rivers emptying into the lake. With over 100 nesting Bald Eagle pairs, we should spot one and a stop at Whycomomagh Provincial Park could turn up Alder and Least Flycatchers, Blue-headed Vireo, Ovenbird, and Chestnut-sided Warbler.

Lodging: TBD, Sydney

Day 6 – Sunday, July 13, Cape Breton Island and Ferry from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland

We will explore the northeastern portion of Cape Breton Island with a stop at Morien Bay to search for Hudsonian Godwits, Black-bellied Plovers, and possibly White-winged Scoters or an early arriving Red Knot. A visit to Big Glace Bay could turn up Piping Plovers if we missed them earlier, Arctic Terns, and the African rarity, Western Reef-Heron, has been known to show up here.

We will catch the overnight ferry from North Sydney, Nova Scotia to Argentia, Newfoundland that will take around 16 hours to travel over 300 miles. The departure is likely to be around 5:30pm and is aboard a large ferry that is very stable, minimizing seasickness issues. However, rough weather is possible and those prone to seasickness should consult their doctor for the best and most effective medications. Sleeping accommodations will be booked onboard. The ferry passes near the Grand Banks, a series of underwater plateaus, that is one of the richest fishing grounds in the world that could bring sightings of pelagic birds like Great, Sooty, and Manx Shearwaters, Northern Fulmars, and Leach's and Wilson's Storm-Petrels, as well as Northern Gannets and possibly a South Polar Skua.

Lodging: Marine Atlantic Ferry, Atlantic Ocean

Day 7 – Monday, July 14, Cape St. Mary's to Trepassey, Newfoundland

We should depart the ferry mid-morning and then head south to Cape St. Mary's where we will experience the tussling and squabbling of over 20,000 Northern Gannets in the world's second largest colony. Many of the Gannets will be just 10 feet or so away as they fly in and out along the cliffs from their oceanic foraging. Thousands of Black-legged Kittiwakes, Common Murres, and Razorbills are also there, as well as smaller numbers of Thick-billed Murres and Black Guillemots.

Lodging: Edge of the Avalon Inn, Trepassey

Day 8 – Tuesday, July 15, Southern Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland

We will spend our time exploring the area around Trepassey including Cape Pine and St. Shott's, where we hope to pick up Willow Ptarmigan. If the Capelin (or caplin as the Newfies spell it) are running, we could have Humpback Whales near shore and possibly Minke Whales. In addition to searching for Boreal Chickadees, Blackpoll Warblers, and Pine Grosbeaks, we will be on the lookout for Caribou.

Lodging: Edge of the Avalon Inn, Trepassey

Day 9 – Wednesday, July 16, Trepassey to St. John's, Newfoundland

We will make our way along the scenic eastern shore of the Avalon Peninsula, where the mostly treeless barens transitions to spruce woodlands as we make our way north. If we missed Willow Ptarmigan the previous day, we will try again today and may see Caribou and Moose. We will have a number of stops along the way but will most likely

stop at La Manche Provincial Park to explore the spruce woodlands for Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Gray-cheek Thrush, Northern Waterthrush, and Blackpoll Warbler.

Lodging: TBD, St. John's

Day 10 – Thursday, July 17, St. John's and Witless Bay, Newfoundland

We will take a boat trip into Witless Bay to experience Newfoundland's premier seabird nesting colonies on the Bay's islands. We will have a seabird extravaganza today with over 300,000 Atlantic Puffin pairs and 400,000 Common Murre pairs along with Thick-billed Murres, Razorbills, Black Guillemots, Northern Fulmars, and 3 species of Shearwaters (Great, Sooty, and Manx). Humpback Whales are likely here along with the possibility of some Minke and Fin Whales. We will explore the Cape Spear headlands, the easternmost point of North America (excluding Greenland) where we may spot Common Eiders, Great Black-backed Gulls, Common Terns, and Swamp Sparrows. If there are any rarities around St. John's, we will reserve some time to chase them.

Lodging: TBD, St. John's

Day 11 – Friday, July 18, St. John's and Departures, Newfoundland

If we have time this morning, we will spend it searching for rarities that may be in the area's many ponds or along the coast before getting you to the airport for your flights home.

Trip Leaders

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TBD