

BIRD TREKS

CHINCOTEAGUE NWR & the DELMARVA PENINSULA DELAWARE - MARYLAND - VIRGINIA

Dates Tuesday, 26 December through Sunday, 31 December 2017: 6 days & 5 nights

We'll visit **Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge** for its abundance of waterfowl, seabirds, and Brown-headed Nuthatch, plus Wild Ponies, Delmarva Fox Squirrel, and River Otters.

The islands of the 17-mile **Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel**, one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World, and one INCREDIBLE birding locale.

Ocean City Inlet, historic **Fort Story**, **Kiptopeke State Park**, and the quaint village of **Willis Wharf**.

Species likely to be seen include . . .

Red-throated Loon
Northern Gannet
Great Cormorant
Canvasback
Common Eider
Harlequin Duck
Black Scoter
Surf Scoter
Clapper Rail
Short-eared Owl
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Red-shouldered Hawk



Rough-legged Hawk
Bald Eagle
American Oystercatcher
Purple Sandpiper
American Woodcock
Marbled Godwit
Whimbrel
Long-billed Dowitcher
Pileated Woodpecker
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Pine Warbler
Eastern Towhee
Fox Sparrow

Bald Eagle, what a fine bird!
- - *John Puschock*

Additional rarities may include . . .

King Eider
King Rail
Black-headed Gull

Little Gull
Black-legged Kittiwake
a lingering western Hummingbird

Western Kingbird
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird

[Mammals and Day 1 thru 3 are on page 2]

Mammals that we may see . . .

River Otter
Chincoteague Pony

Delmarva Fox Squirrel
Sika Deer

Harbor Seal
Red Fox

Species lists from our previous **Delmarva New Year's Tours** are available on our website:

<http://www.birdtreks.com/birds-previously-seen/CHINDEC.pdf>

We have found between 113 and 128 species on this 6-day December coastal tour.

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CHINCOTEAGUE National Wildlife Refuge & the Delmarva Peninsula of DE-MD-VA

26-31 December 2017

Day Agenda

- 1 Plan to fly into the **Philadelphia International Airport**. From there you will take a shuttle or taxi to the **Inn at Nottingham** in Chester County, PA, located approximately 40 miles west of the airport. If you prefer to drive directly to Nottingham, we'll supply directions. It is easily reached from US 1. You may park your car at the Inn for the duration of the tour at no cost. If you can be in Nottingham by late afternoon, we will meet you for an early dinner, then go owling for a couple of hours. We will have recently completed our local Christmas Bird Count and should know the locations of some reasonably accessible **owls**, possibly **Northern Saw-whet**, **Barred**, **Long-eared**, and **Short-eared**, in addition to the more common **Great Horned** and **Eastern Screech-Owl**. Overnight at the Inn at Nottingham.
- 2 We'll pack up the van and head south. Today's birding stops may include Bombay Hook NWR, Port Mahon, Indian River Inlet, and Ocean City Inlet. We're likely to find many **puddle** and **bay ducks**, a few **shorebirds**, and **raptors** including **Bald Eagle**, **Northern Harrier**, and possibly a **Rough-legged Hawk**. A thorough search of the blackbird flocks may yield a **Yellow-headed** or **Brewer's Blackbird**. There is an occasional **Snowy Owl** near Bombay Hook and regular **Harlequin Ducks**, **Common Eiders**, **Red-throated Loons**, and **Canvasbacks** at Ocean City. Overnight in the Village of Chincoteague, Virginia.
- 3 Our day's birding will begin at Chincoteague NWR to look for **Marbled Godwit**, **American Oystercatcher** and, with any luck, an **American White Pelican**. There is usually a nice variety of **shorebirds**, **herons**, **egrets**, and **raptors** along the causeway. We'll sort through all of the common waterfowl for uncommon species, perhaps a **Eurasian Wigeon**. Scanning the ocean and beach is likely to produce **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, **Northern Gannet**, **Red-throated Loon**, flocks of **scoters** and **cormorants**, and often a few **Brown Pelicans**. We'll finish the day along the Wildlife Drive where we may see a **Peregrine Falcon** or **Merlin**, a few new **shorebirds**, and flocks of **Snow Geese** that will hopefully contain a **Ross's Goose**. **Sika Deer** and **Chincoteague Ponies** are normally quite easy to see, while **Delmarva Fox Squirrels** can be more of a challenge, but are findable. A second night in Chincoteague.

[Day 4 begins on page 3]

- 4 Further down the coast, the flats at Willis Wharf and Oyster are known for their shorebirds, especially **Marbled Godwit** and **Whimbrel**. We will strive to find **Saltmarsh Sparrow**. Later in the day we'll visit Kiptopeke State Park and Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR. The hedgerows at Kiptopeke hold a nice variety of **sparrows**, the marsh has **Clapper** and **Virginia Rails**, and **falcons** may fly overhead. A few of the unusual birds that we've found in this area on previous tours include **Dickcissel**, **Lark Sparrow**, **Lapland Longspur**, **Snow Bunting**, **Black-headed Grosbeak**, **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**, **Western Kingbird**, and Virginia's first **Vermilion Flycatcher** - - WOW, great birds! Overnight in Kiptopeke.
- 5 Pre-breakfast birding is likely to produce **American Woodcock** in our spotlight. Owls that we have previously called or squeaked into view at Eastern Shore include **Barn**, **Short-eared**, **Long-eared**, **Northern Saw-Whet**, **Eastern Screech**, and **Great Horned**. The islands and nearby waters of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel will yield a number of new species. Expect **Northern Gannet**, **Great Cormorant**, **Purple Sandpiper**, and **Red-throated Loon**. We'll check carefully for **King** and **Common Eiders** and **Harlequin Duck**, all of which are annual here. **Harbor Seals** sometimes make an appearance, and even a **Humpback Whale** is possible. The cypress swamp at Seashore State Park may produce **Barred Owl** and **Pileated Woodpecker**, and Fort Story will have many **Bonaparte's Gulls** and perhaps **Pine** or **Palm Warbler** among the **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. We once found a **Common Murre** here, one of only several Virginia records. We'll drive back across the Chesapeake Bay as we return for our second night in Kiptopeke.
- 6 Our first stop as we head north will be Pocomoke Swamp to look for **Pileated Woodpecker**, **Barred Owl**, **Eastern Bluebird**, and **Fox Sparrow**. Ocean Pines may have **Redhead**, **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, and **Ring-necked Duck**. A nice variety of **waterfowl** can be found at Silver Lake in Rehobeth, and hopefully a **Snowy Owl** will make an appearance at Cape Henlopen. The tour will end at the Inn at Nottingham, PA to retrieve your car, or you can spend New Year's Eve there if you wish.

Click on this link for a **map of the tour route**:

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=215986731009322774066.000465b84263828dc7cd4&msa=0&ll=38.743373,-75.448608&spn=1.251045,2.469177>

Harlequin Ducks
always create a
wave of excitement.

- - Tom Amico,
tour participant



[Important details are on page 4]

Leader This Mid-Atlantic New Year's Tour is scheduled to be led by **Bob Schutsky**. Bob has birded this area extensively for decades. We will be in touch with local hotlines and personal contacts to help seek out local rarities.

Price \$1995 per person based upon double occupancy and a minimum of three participants. Single accommodations are available for an extra charge of \$305. We will take a maximum of seven participants. On rare occasion we may extend the maximum to ten participants.

Includes Expert guide service, **ALL meals**, all entrance fees, lodging for all five nights of the tour, and ground transportation from Nottingham. **ALL tips** are included in the tour fee, except for anything that you may wish to give to your tour leader(s).

Does not include the cost of your flights to Philadelphia or ground transportation to Nottingham, alcoholic beverages, and items of a personal nature.

Extra Services We offer the services of our exclusive BIRD TREKS travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel. Lori has 32 years of experience in the travel industry. Contact her at Bailey Travel/Travel Time toll-free at **1-800-224-5399**, direct at **717-855-2128**, or e-mail her at **lori@trvltime.com**. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free phone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There is a small fee for these services.

Deposit A \$400 deposit assures your reservation on the tour. The balance is due 26 October 2017. This tour is very popular. Make your end-of-the-year plans now for six days of wonderful mid-Atlantic Coastal birding.

Refund and Cancellation Policy With written notice more than 60 days prior to the first day of the tour, 100% of your deposit will be refunded, minus a \$75 service fee. With 30-60 days notice, you will receive a 50% refund of the full cost of the tour. No refund can be made with less than 30 days notice. You will receive a full refund if you provide a replacement for your spot on the tour. No partial refund can be given once the tour begins. We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment. Contact **Allianz Global Assistance** and mention **BIRD TREKS, ACCAM # F021096**. You can easily apply via the Internet at **www.allianztravelinsurance.com** or by phone at **1-866-884-3556**.



Hooded Merganser will be among the many species of waterfowl that you can expect to see.

- - Tom Amico
tour participant

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