

ALASKA 2019

PART 1: NOME & SEWARD, JUNE 2-12

PART 2: ST. PAUL ISLAND & BARROW, JUNE 11-19

This tour offers participants a chance to visit four very different areas of our largest state. We will spend four days exploring the sea coast and tundra around the hard scrabble town of Nome, where birds like Red-necked Stint, Aleutian Tern, Northern Wheatear, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Arctic Warbler and Bluethroat lend the avifauna a decidedly Siberian flavor. Dare I say that over the course of our time in Nome, the spectacular will become mundane? Long-tailed Jaegers, Arctic Terns and Willow Ptarmigan are just three examples of birds that will be seen with such regularity that they will eventually become a distraction from other less abundant target species. One of these target species will be Bristle-thighed Curlew, one of the world's rarest birds, with an estimated population of only around 10,000 individuals. The only known accessible breeding site for this species is on a dome ridge about 70 miles north of Nome and we will devote one entire day traveling to this area to search for curlews among the more abundant Whimbrel. Early June is a peak time for migrants to be moving along the coastal areas near Nome and past trips have recorded Yellow-billed and Arctic loons, Bar-tailed Godwit, Slaty-backed Gull, Red Phalarope and Spectacled Eider among the abundance of more common species. We will spend 4 nights in Nome, which will allow us plenty of time to explore all of Nome's most productive areas more than once and to take advantage of the ever-changing component of birds that are present at this season. Our second venue will be Kenai Fjords National Park, with its breathtaking vistas and scenery, where we will take an all-day boat trip to Northwest Fjord in search of seabirds like Kittlitz's and Marbled murrelets, Red-faced Cormorant, Pigeon Guillemot and Tufted and Horned puffins, and mammals like Orca, Humpback Whale, Sea Otter and Steller's Sea Lion. In the spruce stands outside of Seward we can look for more southerly species like Townsend's Warbler, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Pine Grosbeak, Varied Thrush and Red-breasted Nuthatch, as well as test our sparrow skills with unfamiliar races of Song (rufina) and Fox (unalaschensis). We will also stop at a well-stocked feeding station at the home of a truly unique, native Alaskan character, where Rufous Hummingbirds frequently visit. Finally, the boreal forests around Anchorage are home to species like Bohemian Waxwing, Spruce Grouse, Boreal Chickadee and American Three-toed Woodpecker.

St. Paul Island, part of the Pribilofs island group, lies in the middle of the Bering Sea. St. Paul is famous for its nesting seabirds where thousands of Parakeet, Least and Crested Auklets, Tufted and Horned Puffins, Northern Fulmar and Black-legged and Kittiwakes nest on sheer cliffs just a stone's throw from observers. Sprinkled among these hordes will be a few Red-legged Kittiwakes and Red-faced Cormorants adding a bit of spice to the spectacle. In addition to the nesting cliffs, St. Paul harbors many other interesting birds including Rock Sandpiper (very common), King Eider, Harlequin Duck and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch. Tufted Duck, Bar-tailed Godwit and Brambling are annual visitors and if winds are from the west any number of Asian vagrants can be make an unexpected appearance. Historically, the second week of June has been one of the premier times to find Asian passerines on St. Paul with Eyebrowed Thrush, Common Cuckoo and Brambling being examples of regular visitors.

The second part of the tour will take us far above the Arctic Circle to Barrow, America's northernmost town, where for 67 days during the summer months the sun never sets. Barrow is an experience, a true frontier town on the edge of the Alaskan wilderness surrounded by the icy waters of the Bering Sea and endless rolling tundra pocked with wetlands carved out by the constant shifting and melting of ice and its runoff. It is a fascinating landscape and somewhat otherworldly to those of us generally confined to the lower 48. It is also a harsh and unforgiving place with brutal temperature extremes, violent storms and endless darkness during the winter and endless daylight during the summer. The waters of the Beaufort Sea are often still ice-covered in mid-June and the winds off of the ice can make it feel more like December to the non-initiated. However, amidst this harsh and brutal land, two of the Far North's rarest birds can be found: Steller's and Spectacled eiders. Sadly, the numbers of both of these species has been rapidly dwindling and they are no longer as easy to find as they once were. Past trips have been successful though, and we hope that that trend will continue in 2019. In addition to the target eiders, Barrow has much more to offer the visiting birder. Colorful Red Phalaropes seem to be on every puddle and pond, a small number of Buff-breasted Sandpipers still perform their elaborate courtship ritual and the soft booming of displaying Pectoral Sandpipers is an unforgettable sight and sound. Pomarine Jaegers replace the Long-tailed and Parasitic variety that are so common further south and it's always possible to find a Slaty-backed Gull among the hordes of Glaucous Gulls. King Eider and Long-tailed Ducks can be abundant and Snowy Owls nest on the tundra outside of town and are sometimes even seen perched on houses inside the town limits. Barrow is always exciting and never boring. *The combination of habitats visited throughout the tour ensures a lengthy bird list that is certain to be filled with many life birds for everyone involved. That, coupled with the spectacular and unforgettable landscapes that will be the daily backdrop for our travels, is sure to make this trip one of the most memorable you have ever experienced.*

ALASKA 2019: PART 1

Day 1, June 2, Arrival in Anchorage: Participants should plan to arrive in Anchorage today by late afternoon. We will plan to meet for an orientation session in our hotel at 6:30 PM and then have dinner together. The hotel is within walking distance of a large lake that attracts a nice variety of waterfowl in early June. The mix of birds on the lake changes rapidly, but regular visitors include Greater Scaup, Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-throated Loon and red-necked Grebe. Since it doesn't get dark until 11:30 PM, anyone wishing to get an early start on their bird list can spend some time at the shore after dinner. Night in Anchorage.

Day 2, June 3, Anchorage area: We'll spend our entire first day birding in the Anchorage area where a nice mix of boreal forests and small wetland complexes will provide us an opportunity to see species like Boreal Chickadee, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Pacific Loon (in breeding plumage), Arctic Tern, Hudsonian Godwit, Red-necked Grebe, Bald Eagle etc. About an hour north of the city, a recent burn has attracted both Black-backed and American Three-toed woodpeckers in recent years and we will spend some time there if recent reports make it sound worthwhile. We have also had good success finding Spruce Grouse in a large forested tract of land only about 15 minutes from the hotel, and that will also be on our agenda. There is also usually a pair of nesting American Dippers at this site adding a nice bonus to the grouse hunt.

With Anchorage's many and diverse birding sites we are sure to have a full day with more possibilities than we will be able to fit in. Night in Anchorage.

Day 3-6, June 4-7, Anchorage to Nome-Nome area: After breakfast, we'll transfer to the airport for a flight to Nome where we'll spend the next 4 days exploring the three main roads that provide access to the surrounding tundra and coastal areas. Our schedule here will be flexible and will depend upon what is being seen during our visit. One certainty here is that we will devote an entire day to drive 75 miles north from Nome on the Kougarok Road to the only known North American nesting site of the near-mythical Bristle-thighed Curlew. In addition to the long drive, seeing this birds requires a rugged hike uphill on uneven terrain to the dome where they breed, but for those willing to take on the challenge, it is one of birding's most rewarding experiences. Even without the curlew, a day of birding on the Kougarok is always worth the time and effort. Willow thickets along the Nome River harbor Bluethroat and Arctic Warbler and rocky areas can produce Rock Ptarmigan and Northern Wheatear. Nesting raptors include Gyrfalcon (uncommon), Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier and Golden Eagle. Other expected birds include Gray-cheeked Thrush, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers and Common and Hoary Redpoll. Both the Teller and Council Roads also provide fabulous birding opportunities with chances for Willow Ptarmigan, King Eider, Northern Wheatear, Red-necked Stint, Pacific Golden-Plover, Thick-billed Murre, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Long-tailed and Parasitic Jaeger, Arctic and Aleutian Tern, Merlin, Northern Shrike, Golden-crowned, American Tree and Fox Sparrows, Red-necked Phalarope, Red-throated and Pacific Loon, Harlequin Duck, Lapland Longspur, Short-eared Owl and much more. The birding here is always exciting and one never knows what might be around the next bend. Making Nome even more exciting is the possibility of finding a rare Asian or Arctic stray. Past trips here have produced Yellow-billed and Arctic loons, Ivory Sabine's and Slaty-backed gulls and Spectacled Eider!

Day 7, June 8, Nome to Anchorage: After a final morning birding in Nome, we will catch a flight back to Anchorage where we will have an afternoon to rest, do laundry and prepare for the next leg of our adventure. Night in Anchorage.

Day 8, June 9, Anchorage to Seward: After breakfast we'll start the 2.5 hour drive south from Anchorage to Seward. We'll stop at Potter Marsh where Trumpeter Swan, Arctic Tern, Red-necked Phalarope, Red-necked Grebe, Mew Gull and a variety of ducks are common breeders. Proceeding south we will follow the shore of Turnagain Arm, traveling on what is arguably one of the most scenic drives in all of North America. Bald Eagles are abundant here and we may see 50-75 between Anchorage and Seward! The steep rocky cliffs on the east side of the highway are home to Dall Sheep and if we are lucky we'll see some that have come down close to the road to feed. We'll take our time and make frequent stops at wetlands and in the spruce forests, which begin about an hour north of Seward. Here we can explore an endless selection of trails and campgrounds where boreal species like American Three-toed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, Northern Goshawk and Boreal Chickadee roam the woodlands, Lesser Yellowlegs perform their aerial courtship maneuvers above the spruce stands and American Dippers cavort in the rushing streams. Upon reaching Seward we will visit Lowell Point where large concentrations of Harlequin Ducks and Barrow's Goldeneye often congregate. We'll also check the harbor area where Pigeon Guillemot, Black-legged Kittiwake and Marbled Murrelet can be seen and there is

often an abundance of Northwestern Crows foraging in the nearby campgrounds. Night in Seward.

Day 9, June 10, All Day Boat Trip in Kenai Fjords NP: Today will be spent on the water cruising the dramatic and dazzling coastlines of Resurrection Bay and the open water around the Chiswell Islands. The splendid scenery on this cruise is enough too justify the trip, but the birds and mammals we will see just might relegate the vistas to the realm of afterthought. Pods of Killer Whales are seen frequently on this trip, as are lesser numbers of Humpback Whales. Common seabirds will include Marbled Murrelet, Tufted and Horned puffins and Pigeon Guillemot, with lesser chances for Rhinoceros Auklet and Ancient Murrelet. Along the rocky shores we may find a few Black Oystercatchers and Bald Eagles and Black-legged Kittiwake will be abundant. In areas where glacial runoff creates unnatural currents in the fjords, we will look for the uncommon Kittlitz's Murrelet, a species that is declining and increasingly difficult to find. If it is a calm day we may also visit the Chiswell Islands where nesting Parakeet and Least auklets, Tufted and Horned puffins are common. After a full day on the water we'll return to Seward and enjoy a welcome dinner of fresh seafood at one of the town's harbor view restaurants. Night in Seward.

Day 10, June 11, Seward to Anchorage: We'll begin the morning with some spruce forest birding outside of Seward, focusing on species we have not yet seen. Pacific Wren can be found in small numbers near Seward, but there will also be more chances to see Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Hairy Woodpecker, Rufous Hummingbird, Varied Thrush, Orange-crowned and Wilson's warblers and other denizens of humid coastal forests. The remainder of the day will be spent driving back to Anchorage with a planned late afternoon arrival. Along the way we will look for any species we missed on the drive down and take plenty of time to stop for photographs of the sensational panoramic vistas that will present themselves at every curve in the road. Night in Anchorage.

Day 11, June 12, Flights Home or Part 2 Begins: Flights home from Anchorage for those people who are not registered for Alaska: Part 2. Registrants for Part 2 only, will have arrived the prior evening and will join the tour this morning. Those registered for both Parts 1 & 2 will continue on to St. Paul this morning.

ALASKA 2019: PART 2

Day 1, June 11, Arrival in Anchorage: Those people registered only for Alaska 2019: Part 2 will schedule their arrival in Anchorage today by late afternoon. Those who participated in Alaska 2019: Part 1 will return to Anchorage from Seward this afternoon. Our first official activity will be an orientation session and dinner at the hotel. This will be scheduled for 6:30 PM, although the time could change and the tour leader will update the schedule sometime today. Night in Anchorage.

Day 2-3, June 12-13, Anchorage to St. Paul: After breakfast we will take the shuttle to the airport for a late morning flight to St. Paul on the Pribilof Islands, a small formation of volcanic outcrops in the Bering Sea. Depending upon the flight schedules which change often and are also affected by weather, we will have one and a half to two full days to explore the St. Paul, the largest island in the complex. The highlight here are the nesting seabird cliffs where we will be

able to stand in close proximity to thousands of nesting Tufted and Horned Puffins, Least, Crested and Parakeet Auklets, Common and Thick-billed Murres, Northern Fulmar, Red-faced Cormorant and Black-legged Kittiwake. Perhaps St. Paul's most famous breeding resident is the Red-legged Kittiwake which can be found in lesser numbers among the hordes of cliff dwellers. The cliffs on St. Paul are a spectacle and the chance to stand within a few yards of these birds and observe their breeding behaviors is an opportunity that few people on earth receive. The interior of the island is a rather barren moonscape consisting of flat grassy wetlands and patches of tundra. Land birds here are scarce, but those that are present are exciting for birders confined to more southerly latitudes. Rock Sandpipers are common breeders on the island and Pacific Wren, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch are generally conspicuous and easy to see. In some years, McKay's Buntings nest on St. Paul and if they are present we should be able to see them with the help of local guides. In the offshore waters we may find King and Common Eider, Harlequin Duck, Long-tailed Duck and an assortment of other diving ducks. Making our time on the island more intriguing is the possibility of turning up an Asian stray. St. Paul is well-known for vagrant Eurasian shorebirds, but those are scarce by mid-June. However our visit will coincide with the period of the year when vagrant passerines from Asia are most often discovered. Some of the more frequently recorded visitors to St. Paul in mid-June are Common and Oriental Cuckoo, Eyebrowed Thrush, Olive-backed Pipit and Brambling. Obviously any of these would be thrilling, but even without them a June trip to St. Paul will leave an indelible memory etched upon your psyche. The harsh and relentless arctic winter will be giving way to the tundra's brief flirtation with summer when alpine meadows explode with colorful wildflowers and all creatures are in a frenzy to complete their reproductive duties before the icy darkness once again takes hold. The polar summer is cause for celebration and we will have a rare opportunity to witness and participate in this annual arctic rite of passage.

Day 4, June 14, St. Paul to Anchorage: After a final day on St. Paul we will catch an early evening flight back to Anchorage where we will transfer to our hotel. Night in Anchorage.

Day 5, June 15, Exploring the Glenn Highway: Due to the chance of delayed flights to and from St. Paul, this extra day around Anchorage has been included to this segment of the tour. Even if we arrive in Anchorage as scheduled the previous evening, it will be a short night and this will guard against the possibility of interference with the Barrow portion of the trip. So, after an early morning breakfast we will drive about 2 hours north of Anchorage on the Glenn Highway to search for Northern Hawk-Owl and other boreal denizens. An excellent and usually productive stretch of hawk-owl habitat can be found between MP 119 and 135 on the Glenn Highway and we will work this area looking for this often photogenic owl. We'll eat lunch at a small family owned lodge that grows its own produce in an elaborate greenhouse set-up and serves some of the best food on the entire trip. If time allows, upon returning to Anchorage we can look for Spruce Grouse near the hotel if there is anyone wanting to do so. After dinner we will prepare for the flight to Barrow. Night in Anchorage.

Days 6-7, June 16-17, Barrow: The flight to Barrow departs quite early, so we will shuttle to the airport and grab some breakfast there after passing through security. Upon arrival in Barrow we will check pickup our van, drop our luggage at the hotel and immediately begin exploring the 3 shorts roads leading from town into the surrounding tundra. The areas around Barrow are a

unique eco-system quite unlike any of the venues on the main tour. Situated more than 300 miles above the Arctic Circle at more than 71 degrees north, Barrow indeed sits at the top of the world...or at least the top of the world we can easily access in North America! The topography is flat and barren and pock marked with many shallow pools, a result of melting ice and standing water unable to seep through the permafrost. Barrow is a land of extremes where the sun isn't seen for 65 consecutive days during the winter! Fortunately, during our visit the opposite extreme will prevail and we will have essentially 24 hours of daylight. The weather can also be extreme, even in mid-June and temperatures in the 20's are likely with windy conditions being routine. Though this may sound like an inhospitable environment for any living creature, it is home to a highly sought after suite of birds that use this alien environment to breed and raise their young. Barrow is famous to birders as "the place" to see eiders in breeding plumage and the timing of our visit will give us excellent chances to Spectacled, Steller's and King eiders decked out in their colorful breeding garb. Striking Red Phalaropes also dot the shallow tundra pools along with their more widespread cousins, Red-necked Phalaropes.

In the native tongue, Barrow is called Utqiagvik, which means "the place we hunt snowy owls." Though the population of these beautiful white owls rises and falls based on lemming numbers, there are always a few around Barrow even in poor lemming years and we can expect to find some in our forays. Barrow is also the breeding grounds for Pectoral and Baird's Sandpipers, with the booming display flight of the Pectoral being a unique and memorable experience. In some years Buff-breasted Sandpiper are also present and rarities like Ruff and Red-necked Stint are always possible.

Other birds that are regular around Barrow in June are Brant, Tundra Swan, Greater White-fronted Goose (abundant), Long-tailed Duck (abundant), Pacific Loon and Red-throated loons, Pomarine Jaeger, Glaucous Gull, American Golden-Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-eared Owl, Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur. Though they are decidedly uncommon, Yellow-billed Loons are also regularly recorded on June trips. Night in Barrow

Day 8, June 18, More Barrow and Flight to Anchorage: After a final half-day in Barrow, we will have lunch at our hotel and go to the airport for our late afternoon flight back to Anchorage. Upon arrival we will collect our stored baggage and plan for a final dinner together at the hotel. Night in Anchorage.

Day 9, June 19, Flights Home: Participants will transfer to the airport for flights home.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 8 participants for all of Part 1 and for the Barrow portion of Part 2. For the St. Paul portion of Part 2, it will be possible to accommodate as many as 14.

TOUR COST: The tour is priced according to the following schedule.

ENTIRE TOUR: The cost of the entire tour will be **\$9350** from Anchorage. This includes a \$400 combined tour discount) A single supplement charge of \$1600 will be charged to those choosing a single room, or anyone who wants a roommate and for whom we are unable to provide one.

PART 1 ONLY: The cost of PART 1 will be **\$4250** per person from Anchorage. A single supplement of \$900 will be charged to those choosing a single room, or anyone who wants a roommate and for whom we are unable to provide one. The price includes round trip airfare between Anchorage and Nome, a 9.5 hour boat trip in Kenai Fjords NP, 10 nights of lodging (4 in Nome, 4 in Anchorage and 2 in Seward), meals beginning with dinner on Day 1 and ending with breakfast on Day 11 (note that the hotel restaurant in Anchorage does not begin serving breakfast until 6:00 AM. Anyone not participating in Alaska: Part 2 and departing before 6:00 AM will be on their own for breakfast on June 12, all ground transportation during the tour, guide service and park entrance fees. It does not include alcoholic beverages, tips, round trip airfare between your home and Anchorage or checked baggage fees on the flight to Nome.

PART 2 ONLY: The cost of Part 2 only will be **\$5500** per person from Anchorage. A single supplement fee of \$700 will be charged to those choosing a single room, or anyone who wants a roommate and for whom we are unable to provide one. The price includes round trip airfare between Anchorage and St. Paul Island and between Anchorage and Barrow, 8 nights lodging (4 nights in Anchorage, 2 nights on St. Paul Island and 2 nights in Barrow), meals beginning with dinner on June 12 and ending with dinner on June 18, all ground transportation during the tour, guide service and any park entrance fees. It does not include alcoholic beverages, tips, round trip airfare between your home and Anchorage or any checked baggage fees on the flights to Barrow or St. Paul.

ST. PAUL ONLY: The option for joining only the St. Paul portion of the tour will be available, but these spaces will be limited and the price will be \$3100 and the single supplement will be \$250. This includes 2 nights lodging in Anchorage (June 11 & June 14, round trip airfare between Anchorage and St. Paul, 2 nights and 3 days on St. Paul and all meals, transportation and guide service on St. Paul. It does not include any meals in Anchorage.

REGISTRATIONS & DEPOSITS: In order to reserve a space on any portion of the tour, a completed and signed registration form is required. Registration forms are available on the website www.otusasiotours.com

The deposit amount schedule for the tour is as follows:

Entire tour: \$1500 per person

Part 1 only: \$700 per person

Part 2 only: \$800 per person

Deposits should be mailed to:

Otus asio Tours at 900 Hillsborough Road Chapel Hill NC 27516.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made:

90 or more days before the tour departure date (March 4, 2019 or before): 50% of the deposit will be refunded

Less than 90 days before the departure date (March 4, 2019 or later) and after full payment has been received, refunds will be limited to that which can be recouped from vendors, airlines and booking agencies. This may be as little as 25% of the amount paid.

Registrants are strongly encouraged to consider purchasing trip insurance to protect them from financial loss due to their cancellation of the tour less than 90 days prior to departure. An excellent resource for travel insurance is squaremouth.com which is an online clearing house that will help you decide upon and purchase the best travel insurance policy for your trip.

TRAVEL DELAYS: Bad weather that causes travel delays is always a possibility in Alaska. In the event that this happens, we will do everything we can to organize and arrange alternative activities. We will also do our best to cancel forward bookings and apply any refunds to the extra costs incurred by additional time spent at the current location. However, any uncovered costs resulting from the delay will be the responsibility of the participants. This is another reason to purchase a trip insurance policy that will cover such contingencies.

TRANSPORTATION: We will be traveling in a 15-passenger van in Nome, Anchorage and Seward. On St. Paul we will have drivers and will use vehicles provided by the native corporation on the island. These are generally quite large and comfortable. In Barrow we will use an 11-passenger van.

PACE OF THE TOUR: This tour will be moderately demanding and will include several difficult hikes. The hardest will be the uphill hike through the tundra tussocks to the Bristle-thighed Curlew breeding site. This hike isn't particularly long, but walking across the tussocks is tiring and requires effort and concentration. After reaching the top of the ridge, it can sometimes take several hours to locate Bristle-thighed Curlew, which means that much additional time on your feet on difficult terrain. We may also walk a bit over spongy tundra on the Pribilofs and in Barrow and this also can be strenuous, however anyone in reasonably good physical condition should be able to participate in any of these forays. The remainder of the hikes will be on flat, mostly even trails and roads and should not be challenging for anyone in relatively good physical condition. The long hours of daylight can interfere with people's sleep patterns and are a temptation to stay in the field for ridiculously long hours. I try to minimize this as much as possible and remain on a normal daily schedule without regard to the length of the days. However, in the past some groups have opted for long days and short nights and after dinner outings are sometimes offered. Such things are always optional and there will always be available options for anyone wishing to retire for the day whenever they deem it appropriate to do so.

CLIMATE & CLOTHING: The weather in Alaska in early June is highly unpredictable, especially in Nome, St. Paul, Barrow and on the boat in Seward. To best prepare for this trip you will need to be ready for a variety of potential conditions. Dressing in layers is always the best option for such climatic conditions and a good supply of fleece or synthetic wool under and outer garments will be essential. You will also need a warm jacket, hat and gloves, warm socks and waterproof footwear that you can walk in comfortably. I recommend NEOS, which are excellent

lightweight boots that can be pulled over any type of footwear. These are an excellent choice for waterproof boots and will allow you to walk through wet and damp tundra situations comfortably. They are also lightweight and very easy to pack. (www.overshoesneos.com)

Rain gear or a poncho will also be necessary. It can be surprisingly warm in Alaska at this season and you will need to be prepared for that as well. In the areas around Anchorage and Seward temperatures could be in the mid-60's to mid-70's, although 50's is probably more likely. Nome will likely have highs in the 40's although in the past I have experienced much warmer weather there. In 2018 temperatures soared into the mid-60's! Whatever the temperature, it usually feels much colder in Nome because of the constant winds off of the Bering Sea, so hope for warmth but anticipate and be prepared for chilly days and nights. The boat trip is always cool to cold due to the winds of off the glaciers and cold surface waters. In Barrow it may never get above freezing and if it's windy and overcast will feel much colder. St. Paul is slightly more moderate, but temperatures there rarely climb above 50.

EQUIPMENT: Pack a pair of binoculars in good condition, along with a belt pack or daypack for your daily accessories. Some essential equipment to carry would include sunglasses, lip balm or chapstick and an alarm clock. It is always a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items and medications in your carry-on bag, so that in the event of lost luggage you will have your essentials.

BAGGAGE: The hotel in Anchorage will have a storage room that we can use to stow excess baggage when we travel to Nome and Seward. This is a difficult trip to pack for and limiting one's luggage given the nature of the tour can be challenging. At the same time, space in the van that we will use in Anchorage and Seward is limited, so we must try to minimize the load as much as possible. This is much easier to do with the option of leaving unnecessary items in Anchorage during some of our forays. The storage room is very secure, so concerns about theft are not an issue.

INTERNET AVAILABILITY: Wi-Fi is offered at all hotels on this tour although outside of Anchorage it is sometimes very slow and the service can be sporadic.

INFORMATION: For further information contact Jan Hansen at 919-259-9423 or otusasiotours@gmail.com.