



Birding Vacation Policies

Birding Vacations are intended to be relaxing and fun. To ensure these intentions meet your expectations, please carefully read the policies below.

If you have any questions about a specific vacation, please contact Birds Connect Seattle Program Director Christine Scheele (christines@birdsconnectsea.org).

DURING THE VACATION

What is included?

Please carefully read the details of the birding vacation you are interested in or registered for. What is included in the fee varies with each vacation. The vacation fee never includes the following: items of a personal nature, snacks outside of meals, alcoholic beverages, and laundry.

Double occupancy pricing

Fees are based on double occupancy lodging. Most birding vacations have the option of single-occupancy lodging, in exchange for additional fees paid by a singular person to have their own room. You can select a single occupancy ticket during registration. In some instances, space limitations may necessitate that single-occupancy registrants share a room for part of a trip. In such cases, we will reimburse an appropriate portion of the fees.

When you register as a single participant, you can request to be assigned a roommate. In the comments section of the registration form, please specify if you prefer to bunk with a roommate of a specific gender. If another participant meets that requirement and has requested a shared room, we will pair you up. If no one else in the group is looking for a roommate, then the full single-occupancy fee would need to be applied.

Health and Physical Ability

Your comfort, safety, and enjoyment, and that of the group are our top priorities. If you have any health concerns, accessibility needs, or physical limitations that might affect your participation in any part of the vacation (for example, mobility difficulties, diabetes, asthma, heat intolerance, etc.), please let us know in detail and in writing (in the registration form) when you reserve your space. This helps us plan ahead to keep you safe and supported.

Participants should be able to ride in any seat in our vehicles, and able to enter and exit vehicles. We also ask that you be able to follow the daily schedule as planned. The accessibility notes included in the vacation description describe the general distance, pace, and conditions for planned walks or hikes. Please let us know if you have questions or concerns or would like more details about any portion of the planned itinerary. We're happy to provide any vacation details you or your doctor might need to determine if the trip is a good fit.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited indoors or in vehicles while on a Birds Connect Seattle vacation. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking in proximity to your travel mates.

PARTICIPANT PAYMENTS & CANCELLATIONS

A deposit equaling approximately half the vacation fee is due at the time of registration. This deposit is the only way to guarantee your place on the vacation. Online payment is preferred.

Payment in full is required 60 days before the vacation departure date.

Participant cancellation

If a participant cancels a reservation:

- More than 60 days before the vacation departure date, the deposit is refunded, minus an administrative fee equal to 10% of the deposit.
- From 60 days to 30 days before the vacation departure date, the deposit is non-refundable.
- Less than 30 days before the vacation departure date, no refunds of any kind are given.

TRAVEL INSURANCE & VACATION CANCELLATION/CHANGES

Travel insurance and vacation cancellation insurance

We strongly recommend the purchase of vacation insurance and vacation cancellation insurance to protect yourself from unforeseen losses due to accidents, illnesses, or unforeseen events. Furthermore, we strongly advise you to purchase a vacation insurance plan to assist you with illness and unforeseen medical issues. **Birds Connect Seattle does not provide or arrange insurance; this is your responsibility.** If you must cancel your participation on a birding vacation, vacation cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement. If you are uninsured and have a medical issue during the vacation, your costs could be extremely high, especially if emergency evacuation is required.

Read the terms, conditions, and exclusions. Check with your insurance agent regarding the coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover accidents or illnesses during your vacation. Bring all required documentation with you on the vacation.

If the vacation leader deems it necessary for you to remove yourself from a vacation at any point due to medical reasons, all expenses associated with isolating, receiving care, and transportation are your responsibility. Birds Connect Seattle cannot offer any refunds for missed days of the vacation due to medical reasons.

Please make sure that your emergency contact will be available during the duration of your vacation should we need to contact them regarding questions related to medical issues, care, and transportation if required.

Cancellation due to unforeseen events

In the event of cancellation either 60 days before or during a vacation due to unforeseen events such as but not limited to natural disaster, military activities, social uprising, or other dangerous conditions not within the control of Birds Connect Seattle; no refund will be issued.

Cancellation due to insufficient registrations

At times, Birds Connect Seattle must make the difficult decision to cancel a vacation due to insufficient registrations. Unless otherwise noted, a full refund or credit will be issued in this instance only.

Date changes

In rare instances, Birds Connect Seattle must change a vacation date due to circumstances outside our control. Unless otherwise noted, if a participant cannot attend during the new dates, a full refund or credit will be issued in this instance only.

Vacation leader changes

Leaders and schedules are often determined far in advance. If we have a change in a vacation leader, we reserve the right to do so and will strive to inform participants as early as possible. No refund will be issued in the event of a vacation leader change. Additional leaders will be added to vacations according to the group size and will be specified in the vacation itinerary.

HEALTH & ILLNESS POLICY AND PROTOCOLS

As you explore with us, promoting health and safety is our top priority. We travel with health and safety measures developed in consideration of guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health organizations.

Refunds Related to Illness

Should a participant be unable to join (or continue on) with their vacation due to illness or medical reason, all costs associated with isolating and/or later rejoining the vacation are the participant's responsibility. This is also true for delays getting home after a vacation as well as early departures or evacuations. We cannot credit, refund, or prorate costs for days missed due to illness or injury. We strongly recommend that you purchase vacation cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a vacation. Many travel insurance providers offer plans that cover illnesses or expenses.

Prevention

We strongly recommend that you take steps to avoid illness (flu, COVID-19, common cold, etc.) for two weeks before the start of a vacation in order to protect your vacation experience (and investment) and that of other participants and our guide(s). Getting sick just prior to the vacation will have potential repercussions for both you and the entire group. This means being careful to:

- Wear a well-fitting and effective (N-95 or KN-95) mask in indoor public settings you visit during this period, or if in close proximity to someone who appears to be ill.
- Wear a mask in airports and on planes and other public transportation, especially en route to your vacation start.

On-Vacation Protocol

Vacation participants will be in close proximity during much of the vacation and are encouraged to work together to keep each other safe and healthy throughout the journey. Please note that on-vacation health protocols may change on short notice. Simple common courtesy will go a long way in making the vacation experience better for everyone. While we generally do not require mask-wearing on vacation unless local regulations require it, our leaders have latitude to require mask wearing at any time during a vacation as they deem appropriate. You must follow the vacation leader's directives. You are, of course, always welcome to wear a mask while on vacation if that is your preference. We ask that you wear a mask as a courtesy when with the group if you are exhibiting any symptoms of illness, respiratory virus, flu, or allergies. Your vacation leader has the authority to require that you do so while in proximity to the group, in vehicles or in any indoor settings. Please advise the leaders immediately if you feel sick or are exhibiting any sickness symptoms while on vacation. If a participant is sick while on vacation, the leader may require them to stay back and rest at the hotel if circumstances allow. This is for the participant's own good, as well as the good of the group. In rare instances, for example, in the case of acute illness, rejoining the vacation might not be possible.

OTHER POLICIES

Responsibility

Birds Connect Seattle and/or its agents act only as agent for the passenger regarding travel, whether by railroad, automobile, boat, or airplane, and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity in connection with the service of any automobile, motor coach, launch or any other conveyance used in carrying out this program or for the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the program. Birds Connect Seattle and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delays or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, pandemic, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as vacation rates provide arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. No refunds will be issued for any unused portion of the vacation. We also reserve the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a program member. Baggage is at the owners' risk entirely. Neither Birds Connect Seattle nor our operators accept liability for any carrier's cancellation penalty incurred by purchasing a nonrefundable ticket in connection with the vacation. Program price is based on rates in effect when the event is published and is subject to change without notice to reflect fluctuations in exchange rates, tariffs, or fuel charges.

Birds Connect Seattle reserves the right to change these terms and conditions at any time without prior notice. If any changes are made, the revised terms and conditions will be posted on the website immediately. Please check the latest information posted herein to inform yourself of any changes.