Tour Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in the early afternoon at the Portland International Jetport (or by Amtrak, bus, or car if you prefer). Spend the evening in the historic Portland Old Port on Casco Bay and dine at your leisure, either with the group or going solo if you prefer, at one of numerous acclaimed local restaurants (Portland was recently called the "best place to eat in the Northeast" by the Times, and leads the local food movement). Overnight in Portland at the luxurious Portland Regency, a boutique hotel located in the heart of the historic Old Port district on Portland's restored waterfront.

Day 2: Our first stop will be Portland's Back Cove to search for ducks and other waterfowl. From there we will head to Scarborough Marsh, a wonderful example of cord-grass salt marsh habitat, which is home to several hard-to-find species (such as salt-marsh sparrow and Nelson's sparrow) as well as herons and egrets, gulls, terns, willets, and other shorebirds. We will take a guided canoe trip through the marsh with naturalists from Maine Audubon. Time permitting (and if participants are so inclined), we may stop by the famous L.L. Bean outlet store in Freeport on our way east. We will then visit Popham Beach State Park, one of the last sandy beaches before the coast turns rocky, which is home to endangered piping plovers and least terns. We will end the day in the bucolic harbor town of Camden, at the lovely Inns at Blackberry Common.

Day 3: We will spend this day exploring various facets of mid-coast Maine ecology and birdlife, starting at Weskeag Marsh, which is home to rails, shorebirds, osprey, and possibly bald eagles. We will also visit Clary Hill, a blueberry barren. This is a typical habitat in downeast Maine, where rocky soil provides a
good habitat for wild blueberries. Clary Hill is home to red-shouldered hawk, upland sandpiper, vesper sparrow, and other hard-to-find species. We will also visit a local peat bog, home to unique birds and carnivorous plants such as the sundew. Overnight in Camden at Inns at Blackberry Common.

**Days 4-7:** We head down to Port Clyde and catch a ferry to Monhegan Island. On the ferry ride out we may spot bald eagles, gannet, shearwaters, and other pelagic species, as well as dolphins, seals, and whales. We will stay in a tiny fishing village at Monhegan House Inn, where we will be treated to delicious breakfasts and a home-cooked lobster dinner, with lobster caught that day near the island's working waterfront.

We will spend three days and three nights on this enchanted island, a birder's paradise and legendary muse to artists including Edward Hopper, the Wyeths, and dozens of others. Painters, photographers, and of course birders still flock to this beautiful island, and so do birds; seeing 25 to 30 species of warbler in one day is not uncommon. Though the island is small, it has an astonishing range of habitats, from towering cliffs and primeval spruce forests to a freshwater pond, marsh, and sandy beach. While there are very few roads or vehicles, the island is crisscrossed with numerous trails and footpaths. We will explore the island at a leisurely pace tailored to the desires of the group. Not up for much walking? Stroll the boardwalk by Ice Pond and see dozens of species of migratory songbirds. Want something more challenging? Hike through the mossy spruce forests of Cathedral Woods to towering Burnthead Cliff on the far side of the island. The village where we'll stay also features several art galleries, a museum, and a historic lighthouse.

On Day Five we will take a chartered boat trip further offshore to Eastern Egg Rock, home to Maine's famed Atlantic puffins, the southernmost nesting population on the East Coast. We will circle the island and get wonderful views of these charming and colorful seabirds. Other species nesting on the island include the rare roseate tern, as well as common and arctic tern and several species of gulls. While on the water we will learn more about Audubon's Project Puffin seabird restoration project.

After our final morning on Monhegan, we will return to Portland for our final night at the Portland Regency.

**Day 8:** The tour concludes this morning in Portland with breakfast and a final stroll through the Old Port or birding along the beach, time permitting.