

Northern Minnesota: Bearskin Lodge and Boundary Waters Tour

with Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



Sept. 10 – 16, 2016

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Naturalist Journeys, LLC.



Far away from the rest of the world, enjoy an immersion in North Woods nature. During the late afternoons and evenings you can relax in front of the fire, and enjoy the sauna, hot tub, or a lakeshore campfire. Our hosts from Bearskin Lodge make some fine meals for us, and we also sample local restaurants.

We see fabulous boreal birds, canoe in the Boundary Waters, and explore the shores of Lake Superior while immersing ourselves in its history. The pace and schedule of this trip is flexible, with a nice mix of hiking, canoeing, birding, and learning local history. Staying back at the Lodge to enjoy the fire or a quiet walk or canoe is allowed!



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Tour Highlights:

- Relax in cozy lodgings at the edge of the Boundary Waters.
- Enjoy vistas along Lake Superior, the world's largest freshwater lake.
- Explore the Boundary Waters on a canoe excursion.
- Witness some of the fabulous waterfalls and cascades that feed Lake Superior.
- Visit the artsy harbor town of Grand Marais.
- Learn about Ojibwa culture and Voyager history at Grand Portage National Monument.
- Marvel at migrating raptors soaring over Hawk Ridge.

Led by Dodie Logue

Dodie is an artist, a horse trainer and an avid birder. Her interest in birds has taken her all over the United States, including Alaska, as well as to Central and South America. She is a certified bird bander and has done surveys and banding in the US and Ecuador. Dodie splits her time between the Southwest and the Midwest, where she has worked to turn her 120-acre farm back into a native landscape, including wetlands and 50 acres of tall grass prairie. She has been involved with numerous citizen scientist projects and is a member of PAN (Project Art for Nature), a group of Midwestern artists who make art about critical habitat and educate the public about it. She loves nothing better than spending all day out in the field hiking and observing. Dodie has recently moved to Portal, Arizona.



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Sat., Sept. 10 Arrive in Duluth / Hawk Watching

Please plan to arrive in Duluth, Minnesota today. Those flying should arrive at Duluth International Airport (DLH). For those who plan on hawk watching, arrive no later than 2:00 PM; we will coordinate pick-ups after we receive flight information from everyone. Those arriving afterwards, please plan to taxi to our waterfront hotel.

We drive right up to Hawk Ridge to get a quick read on how raptor migration is going; this is the time for Sharp-shinned and Broad-wing Hawks to be pouring through in the late afternoon. We then check into our hotel — with views of Lake Superior — before heading to the Brew Pub next door for dinner.

Accommodations at the Hampton Inn, Duluth (D)



Sun., Sept. 11 Park Point / Hawk Ridge / Dinner at the New Scenic Cafe

This morning after breakfast at our hotel we do some local birding around Duluth. Depending on the weather and how migration is going, we may explore Park Point and/or Hawk Ridge.

Park Point is a thin strip of land that juts into Lake Superior and almost touches Wisconsin. It has the open water of Lake Superior on one side, and the harbor where large barges deliver goods on the other. During migration this can be a fantastic spot for unusual sightings.

Hawk Ridge is a high point on the north edge of Duluth; here one of nature's remarkable spectacles can be witnessed each fall. Most raptors are reluctant to cross large bodies of water; when they migrate and encounter Lake Superior, the birds naturally veer south along the lakeshore. They concentrate in impressive numbers here and are thrilling to watch as they traverse the ridge, often at or below eye-level. The Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve has over four miles of hiking trails; you can explore the geology, flora, and wildlife.

Lunch today is a picnic at Park Point or at a favorite local restaurant, the Duluth Grill, depending on weather and the intensity of migration. After a full day of birding, we head to the New Scenic Café, located about 10 miles north of Duluth. The menu is creative and the food is fantastic. Plus, it has a great view of Lake Superior!

Accommodations at the Hampton Inn, Duluth (B,L,D)

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Mon., Sept. 12 North Shore Drive / Arrive at Bearskin Lodge

After breakfast at our hotel we drive north along the scenic Lake Superior shoreline and west on the Gunflint Trail to Bearskin Lodge. We make stops along the shore to enjoy Lake Superior views, do some rock-hounding, and scan for migrating warblers and raptors at the various stops and overlooks.

The shoreline consists of high rocky outcroppings in some areas, and smooth rocky beaches in others. We stop for lunch or have a picnic along the way, and visit Two Harbors to see the historic lighthouse and marina. In Grand Marais we go to a grocery store (there is a wonderful co-op!) to allow everyone to get breakfast provisions for the week. Our plan is for you to pick up breakfast foods for the following mornings. All lodgings have kitchens, so this is a leisurely choice to start the day (no restaurant is close at hand for breakfast).

Once we arrive at Bearskin we get settled into our accommodations. If we arrive in good time, we are able to explore our surroundings — take a sunset walk, maybe even get out on the water for a late afternoon paddle, or enjoy a hot tub or sauna! Dinner this evening is at our lodge.

Accommodations at Bearskin Lodge (L,D)

Tues., Sept. 13 Canoe at the Lodge / Chik-Wauk Museum / Dinner at Gunflint Lodge

Today, after breakfast on your own, we head out in canoes or kayaks with a guide to explore the area from a different vantage point. The Boundary Waters Wilderness is a unique area of over 1-million acres located in northeastern Minnesota. Retreating glaciers left behind rugged cliffs and crags, canyons, gentle hills, towering rock formations, rocky shores, sandy beaches, and several thousand lakes and streams, interspersed with islands and surrounded by forest. We're far from big-city life, and after a few hours on the water you gain a sense of clarity and peace.

Bring binoculars! Chances of seeing Common Loon, a variety of ducks, and possibly even a Moose are good. Our route is down to the wilderness boundary, on East Bearskin Lake right from our lodge. We start with a brief canoe lesson or refresher, with more help available for those who need it. We have a picnic lunch once back at our lodge.



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In the afternoon we drive north on the Gunflint Trail. At the very end of the "trail" (which is really a road that ends in the wilderness near the Canadian border), we stop at Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center. The center presents the area's cultural and natural history through interpretive and interactive exhibits. Learn about the prehistoric beginnings and people who helped shape today's unique rural community, including Native Americans, Voyageurs, miners, loggers, resort owners, and current residents. We spend some time here looking at the exhibits and hiking and birding.

Afterwards we head back down the trail, stopping at the historic Gunflint Lodge, an historic lodge on beautiful Saranac Lake, for a great dinner.

Accommodations at Bearskin Lodge (L,D)

Wed., Sept. 14 Cascade Falls / Oberg Mountain Hike / Dinner in Grand Marais

Today we have a local naturalist and author joining us for some hiking and exploring. First we stop at Cascade River State Park. Dropping 900 feet in the lower three miles, Cascade River takes a steep final run in the last quarter mile as it drops 120 feet through a deep, churning gorge. It is a beautiful and exhilarating sight! We enjoy a picnic lunch at Cascade Park, a beautiful spot right on the shore of Lake Superior.

Next, we hike the Oberg Mountain Loop, one of Northern Minnesota's most scenic hikes. Oberg Mountain rises 1,000 feet above Lake Superior; with 9 scenic overlooks, it is especially beautiful in fall. The 2.3-mile hike takes about 1.5 – 2 hours, and is a great place to witness the beauty of changing leaves ... and the birding is great too! We hike at a leisurely pace, on alert for the northern woodpeckers and more.

Chel Anderson is our speaker and a great addition to the day. Chel came to live and work on Minnesota's North Shore in 1974. Since then she has worked in various positions for the Superior National Forest. In 2001 she received the Minnesota Chapter of The Nature Conservancy's Conservation Award for her work, passion, and ability to inspire. She recently published a book (with co-author Adelheid Fischer) called *North Shore*, a wonderful overview of the area. She knows the biology, geology, and history of the area like no one else!



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For dinner we head to Grand Marais. Chel joins us to continue our questions and conversations; if there is time we may be able to do a little shopping.

Accommodations at Bearskin Lodge (L,D)

Thurs., Sept. 15 Naniboujou Lodge / Grand Portage National Monument / Pigeon Falls

Breakfast is on your own at your leisure. Mid-morning we head up the shore of Lake Superior, stopping to bird and have lunch at the historic Naniboujou Lodge. The Lodge opened in 1927 and was originally a private club. Probably the most memorable aspect of the Lodge is the wondrously painted dining room. Cree Indian designs cover the walls and the 20-foot-high domed ceiling (resembling the shape of a canoe). Guests marvel at its originality. The almost psychedelic Cree Indian designs covering the walls and ceiling are like a North Woods Sistine Chapel. This work of art continually amazes and intrigues, echoing the elegance and style of another era. We spend some time in the surrounding grounds looking for migrating birds, which may be feeding in the mature trees in the yard.

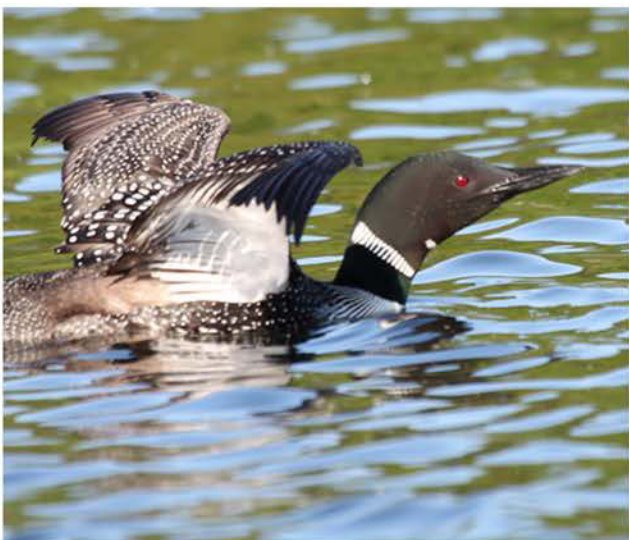


After lunch our destination will be Grand Portage, a mere five miles from the Canadian border. We spend the afternoon exploring the history of the Ojibwa people and the North West Company of the North American fur trade at Grand Portage National Monument. We take in the sights and smells of a bustling depot reconstructed over its original footprint. Each building is staffed by knowledgeable employees dressed in clothing of the late 1700s, performing activities needed by the North West Company. Canoe building, carpentry, making bread, working with flintlock muskets, gardening, crafting baskets, and carving paddles were just some of the activities necessary to make the North West Company one of the most successful companies during the fur trade era. There are films and a bookstore and trails, and plenty of history and nature to absorb. If there is time, after exploring the Monument we go just a bit further north to see Pigeon Falls, the highest falls in Minnesota. Tonight we dine back at our Lodge, and close our northern journey with an evening campfire. (L,D)

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Fri., Sept. 16 Depart Bearskin Lodge for Flights from Duluth

Today we leave the lodge and head back to Duluth along the scenic shores of Lake Superior. We cannot realistically get to the airport before 10:00 AM, so please plan accordingly. If you cannot manage an afternoon flight out, you can stay over another night and fly out the next day as you wish — we can happily recommend accommodations.



Book your Boundary Waters experience today!
Contact us: info@naturalistjourneys.com or
866.900.1146 / info@caligo.com or 800.426.7781.

Ask us about Travel Insurance and Carbon Offset for your tour.

COST OF THE JOURNEY: Cost of the journey is \$2195 per person, double occupancy / \$2495 single occupancy, from Duluth, MN. This cost includes accommodations for six nights, most meals as specified in the itinerary (all but breakfasts at Bearskin Lodge, where we will stop for groceries and you can fix in your cabins), airport welcome and transfers, land transportation during the tour, professional guide services, park and other entrance fees, canoe fees, and miscellaneous program expenses.

Cost does not include: round-trip airfare to and from Duluth, items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone, drinks from the bar, or gratuities for luggage handling or personal services.

Travel Information: The airport for this tour is Duluth, Minnesota, and we will arrive in time for airport pickups after 2:00 PM on Saturday, Sept. 10. We drop people at the Duluth airport by 10:00 AM on Friday, Sept. 16.

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© Photo Credits: Page 1: Lake Superior, Dodie Logue (DL); Moose, Peg Abbott (PA); Common Loon, Robert Hautman (RH), Wildflowers, Richard Becker (RB). Page 2: Mist on the lake, DL; Dodie Logue, Lynn Feryus (LF). Page 3: Freighter on Lake Superior, DL, Autumn trees, Ed Pembleton; Cooper's Hawk, DL. Page 4: Beach walk along Lake Superior, PA; Lighthouse RB. Page 5: Bear, DL; Boundary Waters, DL; Gull, DL. Page 6: Naniboujou Lodge, DL; Trees with lake, DL. Page 7: Lake Superior, DL, Common Loon, RH.