

Michigan's Isle Royale & Minnesota's Hawk Ridge With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



Aug. 27 – Sept. 4, 2020

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Isle Royale, an island archipelago in Lake Superior, is a true wilderness gem. There are no cars allowed to cross to the island, and all must come ashore by boat or float plane. There is one lodge on the main island, where this tour stays, and miles of beckoning trails. Isle Royale National Park and the Rock Harbor Lodge concession staff provide a host of interpretive programs; we can choose from these and our own inspirations. Owner Peg Abbott has a long history with the island, first visiting it with her Michigan high school biology class for this same week in the early fall.

Far away from the rest of the world, enjoy an immersion in North Woods nature. At one time two miles of ice covered this island, set in the largest freshwater lake in the world. Today the park is recognized as a Biosphere Reserve, a pristine example of Northern Biome forests, lakes, bogs, and island shorelines. Its rock spine is ancient, and scored by the movements of retreating glaciers, some 10,000 years ago. We spend four nights on the island, and our tour price includes the round-trip ferry from Grand Portage, Minnesota, a route that lets you see the island's full northern scenic coastline in its entirety. Plan on an active trip, with opportunities to hike and paddle (canoe or kayak), and yet return to nice accommodations and dining at day's end. Hikes can be gentle or challenging, with two leaders we give you options to fit your energies each day.

We access Isle Royale via Minnesota, enjoying the bonus of fall migration reaching its peak on the coastal ridgeline above Duluth. Hawk Ridge has a professional staff monitoring the migration, and by going twice, we see a variety of species, hopefully catching some "waves." Warbler migration here and on the island can also be good.



Tour Highlights

- Encounter hundreds of raptors on Hawk Ridge above Duluth
- Travel north along Lake Superior's scenic coastline
- Cross the ocean-like waters of Lake Superior to Windigo and Rock Harbors of Isle Royale
- Enjoy five nights in lakeside accommodations on Isle Royale, one of the most remote of our national parks
- Visit Grand Portage National Monument
- Immerse yourself in North Woods ecology, with iconic species like Moose, Beaver, and Common Loon
- Celebrate with a final night at historic Naniboujou Inn

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Tour Summary

9-Day / 8-Night Isle Royale Nature Tour

\$3490, from Duluth

Airport is Duluth International (DLH)



Itinerary

Thurs., Aug. 27 Arrive in Duluth | Hawk Watching

Please plan to arrive in Duluth, Minnesota, today. Those flying should arrive at Duluth International Airport (DLH). For those that plan on hawk watching, arrive no later than 2:00 PM; we coordinate pick-ups after we receive flight information from everyone. Those arriving after 2:00 PM, 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. Hawk Ridge is a high point on the northern edge of Duluth; here one of nature's most 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 along the lakeshore. They concentrate in impressive numbers 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 here today.

We then check into our hotel — with views of Lake Superior — before heading to a favorite local restaurant for our welcome dinner.

Accommodations at the Hampton Inn, Duluth (D)

Fri., Aug. 28 Park Point | Scenic Coastal Drive | Grand Marais | Grand Portage

This morning after an early breakfast at our hotel, those that wish to can do some local birding around Duluth. Depending on the weather and how migration is going, we



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may explore Park Point or if spectacular movement is going on, return to 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 and it's a favorite sheltering spot for warblers.

By 10:30 AM we return to pack up and head up the coast, enjoying an early lunch at 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!

We then make our way north, heading to the Grand Marais area for some sightseeing and an early dinner. This is an artsy town with great restaurants and a picturesque harbor. We do need to continue on to our hotel, another half hour away at Grand Portage, to be in a good position to catch our ferry the following day.

Accommodations at Grand Portage Lodge Casino (B,L)

Sat., Aug. 29 Ferry to Isle Royale National Park

We are up early today, for we are bound for Isle Royale, and the ferry departs at 7:30 AM. We set off on the *Voyageur II*, a two-hour crossing to the western tip of the island. On our way to Rock Harbor, we then cruise along the north side of the island, a beautiful way to see its secret coves, lush forest, and possibly even some wildlife. We pass McCargoe Cove and Belle Isle, perhaps letting backpackers off at



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these landings. We arrive at Rock Harbor by 3:00 PM, time enough to settle in and stretch our legs on one of the beautiful trails.

Dinner is in the lodge's cozy dining room; your cabins have porches overlooking Lake Superior!
Accommodations at Isle Royale Lodge (B,L,D)

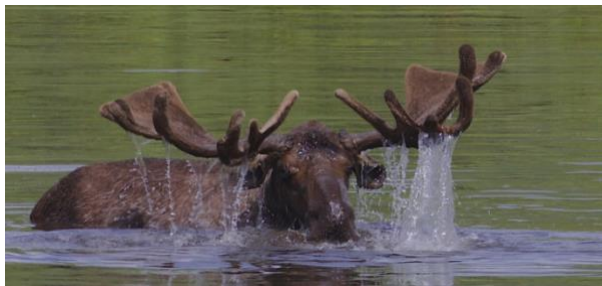


Sun., Aug. 30 – Wed., Sept. 2 Isle Royale National Park

We have four full days on the island, and each day we offer a mix of hikes at varied paces, opportunities to canoe or kayak, boat excursions with a local naturalist, island birding, studying geology, learning about the Moose and Wolf studies, and we enjoy free time to just relax.



This is a wilderness park, with just the one lodge, and little other development other than trails and the marina. Fall asleep to the lapping of waves on Lake Superior. Enjoy the simple rhythm of all meals at the lodge, unpack once for the four nights, and immerse yourself in North Woods nature. We time the visit for lack of crowds, and lack of pesky mosquitoes and black flies. We also time our visit for fall migration, and we hope for a good show of warblers!



Isle Royale is a treasured Biosphere Reserve, a fine example of the Northern Biome, with forests, lakes, bogs, and Lake Superior shorelines. Enjoy learning more at park ranger talks and explore from our home base at Rock Harbor; a water taxi is available so we can take shuttles to facilitate the best hiking. Avid hikers can return from one of our trips on the trail that follows the Island's backbone, the Greenstone Ridge. You might even enjoy fishing or an evening kayak or canoe. Isle Royale is the home of the Peterson Wolf Research Center and you guide provides information on wolves and moose over time, as this is the longest-running predator-prey study known, commencing in 1958.



Experience the slowness of island time; the sense of place one gains on Isle Royale can be profound.

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Accommodations at Isle Royale Lodge (B,L,D each day)

Thurs., Sept. 3 Isle Royale | Grand Portage

The boat from the Minnesota side only operates twice a week ... today is the day! On the return, we see the opposite side of the island as you complete a circumnavigation of this remote and beautiful national park.

We depart at 8:00 AM, after breakfast, and make stops at Daisy Farm, Chippewa Harbor, Malone Bay, and Windigo before the open water crossing. We land about 3:00 PM and take time for a short visit to Grand Portage National Monument. The visitor center is excellent here and a short walk through the buildings of the Fort gives us a leg-stretch.

We have a half hour drive to a delightful and historic Inn for our final evening. The dining room is an especially colorful experience and the grounds offer sheltering trees to Cedar Waxwing, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and migrating warblers.

Accommodations at Naniboujou Lodge, Lake Superior shoreline (B,L,D)

Fri., Sept. 4 Return to Duluth | Option to Bird Hawk Ridge | Departures

We have a two-and-a-half-hour drive back to Duluth, so please plan departures for flights after Noon.

Those with later afternoon flights can take one more peek at the action on Hawk Ridge. Birding enthusiasts may want to plan on staying on after the tour to enjoy the weekend activities at this primo raptor viewing site. (B)



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Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Their website will show a grid of tour cost and your age category for you to make selections. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Cost of the Journey

\$3490 DBL / \$4360 SGL from Duluth, Minnesota. The tour price includes airport transfers, all accommodations, most meals as specified in the itinerary, round-trip ferry ride to and from the island, professional guide services, local guides, local park entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses. It does not include roundtrip airfare to Duluth, or items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone, drinks from the bar, gratuities for portage, or personal services.

Travel Information

You are responsible for planning your arrival to Duluth, Minnesota. Those that wish to see the migration of raptors atop Hawk Ridge should arrive no later than 2:00 PM on August 27 or better yet, come in the night before to rest up from your travels and have more time. Departing flights should be made after noon on September 4. We can be back to the airport by 11:00 AM for those with midday flights.

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