

Great Basin Desert Tour



A celebration of Bio-diversity in the Desert

The hot arid regions of the southwest United States contain four distinct desert ecosystems: the Great Basin, the Chihuahuan, the Mohave, and the Sonoran deserts. Each of these eco-types are characterized by low rainfall and extreme temperatures and are sparsely populated. Indeed, there's a popular misconception that these deserts are scrub-wastelands, devoid of life, but this perception couldn't be further from the truth. This tour takes an in-depth look at the Great Basin desert region as it stretches north from Nevada into eastern Oregon and eastern Washington. This tour celebrates spring in the Great Basin desert, with the singing of meadowlarks and the dancing of Sage Grouse, as we explore a region that features some of the most majestic desert scenery, and the most fascinating desert wildlife, to be found anywhere in the world.

Every spring the air in the Great Basin Desert is sweetened by the smell of desert Big Sage (*Artemisia tridentata*). Big Sage is the dominant form in this ecosystem and indeed on this tour we'll have an opportunity to photograph every north American bird with "Sage" in its name including: Sage Grouse, Sage Thrasher and Sage Sparrow. We'll also be entertained by the antics of Burrowing owls and American Avocets in the Columbia Basin Wildlife Refuge. The tour presents many amazing opportunities to observe and photograph some of the region's most spectacular species in their natural environment.

Throughout the tour you'll be exposed to instruction, through workshops and hands-on experience, to apply and practice many different photographic techniques. We'll practice and learn techniques for in-flights, flash photography, macro-photography, composition, bracketing and shot-setup. In addition to providing photographic instruction we'll also be able to share an abundance of information about the local flora and fauna in the areas we explore. Jared is an experienced biologist and is very familiar with the ecology of the Great Basin Desert; he's an expert at finding and working around the wildlife of this region. We hope you'll join us for a photographic experience that you'll remember for a lifetime!

Itinerary

The following schedule details each day's activities however the sequence and activities may be adjusted to suit group preferences and, of course, the inevitable shifts in weather.

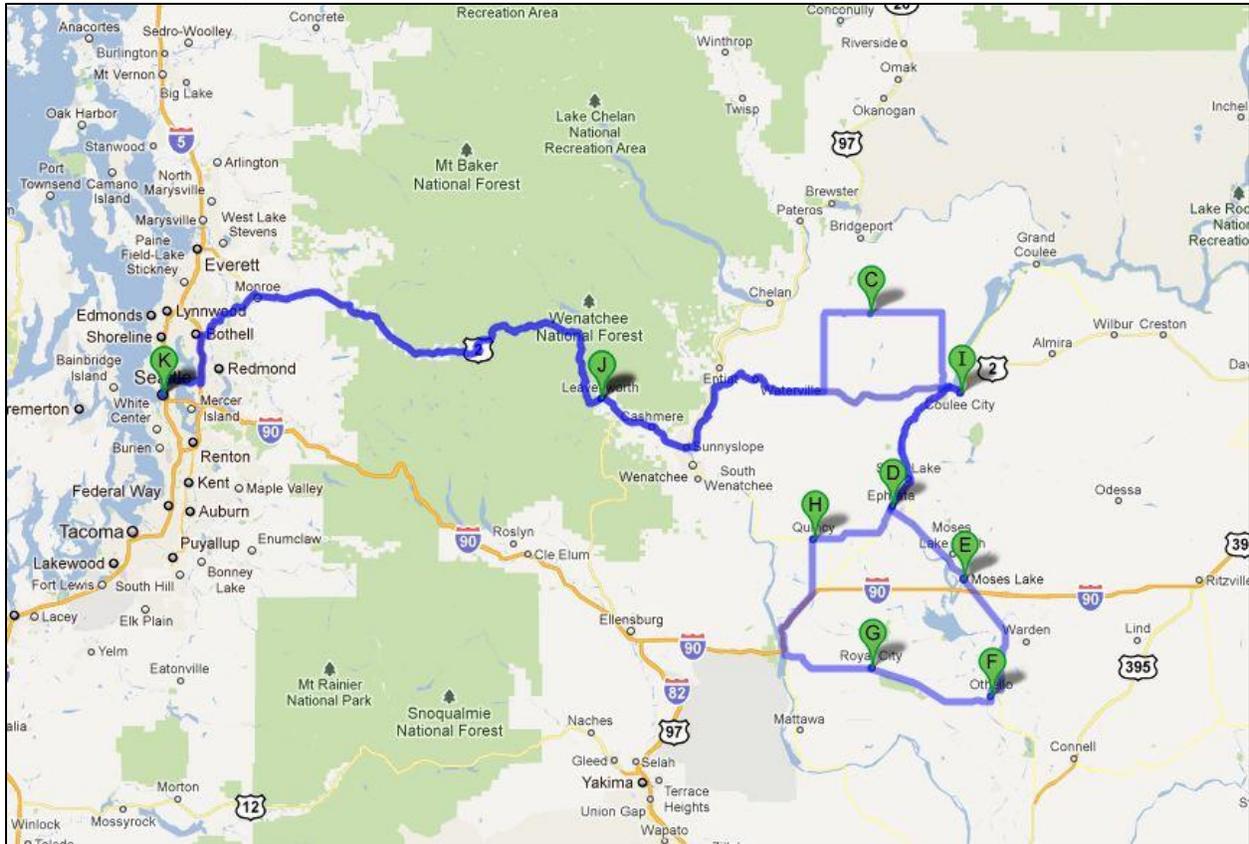
Day One	Meet in Seattle and pick-up clients from airport. Drive to Leavenworth for an evening at the Sleeping Lady Resort.
Day Two	Dawn with the birds of the Ponderosa forest before heading on to Mansfield to prepare for the dawn dance of the Sage Grouse.
Day Three	Dawn with the Sage Grouse and then an afternoon spent shooting Sage Sparrow and Sage Thrasher before heading to Coulee City for the evening. Meal and a-post dinner review of client images for pointers and instruction.
Day Four	Another dawn with the Grouse and then on to Jameson Lake to photograph meadowlarks, sage thrashers and sage sparrows. We'll also explore the lake for cormorants and grebes before heading to Soap Lake for dinner and a special presentation on the ecology of the Great Basin Desert.
Day Five	Dawn with avocets and black necked stilts. Then an afternoon spent photographing Burrowing owls near Ephrata. Dinner and an evening in Ephrata and another chance to review slides.
Day Six	Dawn with Burrowing owls, and then on to "Birders Corner" for an afternoon marsh shoot. We'll capture amazing images of yellow-headed blackbirds, grebes, waterfowl and, if we're lucky, snipes! An evening in Moses lake for dinner and R&R.
Day Seven	Head into the Columbia Basin National Wildlife Refuge where we'll explore Upper Goose Lake and Soda Lake in search of marmots, pelicans, falcons and scenic opportunities before spending the night in Othello.
Day Eight	Dawn back at "Birders Corner" before driving back up to Coulee city and then back to Mansfield to set up for Sage Grouse. We'll also explore the area to find other desert specialties like Say's Phoebe, Long-eared Owl and American Kestrels
Day Nine	One last Dawn with the Sage grouse before heading back to the Sleeping Lady Resort for a final evening slideshow and workshop.
Day Ten	A dawn shoot in the Ponderosa Pine forest before a final breakfast in Leavenworth – a neat Bavarian Style town. Then a wrap up discussion as we drive back to Seattle

For a sample of the opportunities you'll be exposed to check out our online tour gallery:

<http://www.hobbsphotos.com/index.php/galleries/view/81/>



Route Map



What to Bring

Deciding what gear to bring on a trip is a personal and subjective decision. You should consider cost (and budget), portability (although most of our photo-shoot locations are relatively close to a vehicle so weight and size of lenses is not a huge consideration) and versatility:

- Since wildlife photography is our prime objective, we recommend a telephoto lens ranging in size from 300 to 500mm, plus a 1.4x and/or 2.0 x tele-converters.
- For the macro workshop on our tour a macro lens is useful.
- To capture amazing desert scenic images be sure to bring wide-angle, "normal," and medium telephoto lenses to allow you to take advantage of a wide variety of subjects.
- A portable storage device to store and backup your amazing images!

Most of your lens needs can be fulfilled by high quality zoom lenses produced by the brand name camera manufacturers. A versatile camera bag might contain a 10-22mm zoom, 200-400mm zoom (or a straight 300mm telephoto) plus a 500mm F4 telephoto and a 1.4 and/or 2.0 extender.

Finally, since we won't be near any camera stores remember to bring spare batteries, charging devices, storage devices, polarizing filters and your flash unit. If possible, it's wise to bring an extra camera body in case your primary body malfunctions. It is extremely important to bring a tripod.

*The trip is ideally suited for 35mm digital photography but all formats are welcome.

Considerations

Proposed Tour Dates:

See website for next available tour dates.

Tour Cost:

Trip costs are updated on our website and are based on single occupancy rates. We will meet in Seattle on the scheduled tour start date. During the tour all meals, accommodation, transport and park entrance fees are included in the tour price.

Personal expenses not included in tour cost:

- Airfare to/from Seattle, Washington
- Alcoholic beverages
- Trip insurance or Medical expenses

Payment Terms:

- A **\$1,000.00** non-refundable deposit is required to reserve a space on this tour. The balance of the payment is due at least four weeks prior to the tour start date. For cancellations within 30 days of the tour start date all payments are non-refundable.

