

12-day (11-nights) Washington Biodiversity Tour

This itinerary describes the “car-camping” tour. If you choose to join a tour that provides hotels/cabins, the stops and locations are approximately the same. We recommend the camping tour because we will see more birds and wildlife while staying at the campgrounds. We have wonderfully comfortable tents and sleeping pads.

Day 1, Seattle: You are responsible for booking your own flight into the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA). You will be met at the airport and transferred to a hotel close by. Activities for the day depend on your arrival in Seattle.

Day 2, Heart O’ Hills: Tour begins with travel to the Bainbridge ferry terminal. The downtown Seattle ferry is 35 minutes across Puget Sound, and arrives at Bainbridge Island. From Bainbridge it is a 2-hour drive (90 miles) to Hurricane Ridge in Olympic National Park where we will do some easy walking and sightseeing. We will have a picnic lunch and spend the afternoon there. Hurricane Ridge is at an elevation of 5,242 feet and has amazing views of Olympic National Park. From Hurricane Ridge, it is a 30-minute drive (12 miles) to Heart O’ Hills campground in Olympic National Park, where we will be camping for the night.

Day 3, Salt Creek: From Heart O’ the Hills it is a 1-hour drive (45 miles) to the Sol Duc Valley in Olympic National Park. Along this route we will make several stops for viewing waterfalls and Lake Crescent. From the Sol Duc it is a 1-hour drive (45 miles) to Salt Creek, which is along the waterfront cliffs of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. At low tide there is great tide-pooling, and the park has trails for hiking. We will camp at the Salt Creek County Park for the night.

Day 4, Mora: From Salt Creek it is a 1-hour drive to Rialto Beach in Olympic National Park. Along the way we will stop at the Sol Duc fish hatchery. In the Rialto area we will also be visiting the Quileute Tribe at La Push (20-minutes each way). Rialto is a spectacular beach for sea-stacks and La Push has great tide-pooling and beach walking. These locations are also great for marine life and birds. We will be camping at Mora in Olympic National Park and this campground is located in the marine-climate coastal rainforest and there are trails for hiking.

Day 5, Cape Disappointment: From Mora, it is a 1-hour drive (45 miles) to the Hoh Rainforest in Olympic National Park, where we will visit for a nature walk and viewing wildlife, such as deer and elk. From the Hoh Rainforest, it is a 1-hour drive (40 miles) to Kalaloch Lodge, where we will stop for a picnic lunch and look for birds and marine life, such as whales. From Kalaloch, it is a 3-hour drive (145 miles) to Cape Disappointment State Park where we will camp for the night. Along the route we will stop at the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. Cape Disappointment is a 2,023-acre camping park on the Long Beach Peninsula, fronted by the Pacific Ocean and looking into the mouth of the Columbia River and is an excellent area for birds, wildlife, and hiking. Lighthouses stand sentinel atop windswept cliffs and waves collide where the Pacific Ocean meets the Columbia River. The scenery is spectacular.

Day 6, Mount St. Helens: From Cape Disappointment, it is a 2-hour drive (90 miles) to Seaquest, a 505-acre state park, where we will camp for one night. Across the street from the campground is the Mt. St. Helens Visitor Center. From

the visitor center it is a 1-hour drive (45 miles each way) to the Johnston Ridge Observatory for a good look at the volcano. There will be numerous stops along the way for birding and walking.

Day 7, Yakima: From Seaquest to the Oak Creek Wildlife Area, it is a 2.5-hour drive (160 miles). The Oak Creek wildlife area is along the Tieton River and there are easy trails for walking along the river, and we will have a picnic lunch here. The area includes a total of 67,100 acres and the topography is dominated by steep, rocky slopes, and a series of ridges and canyons. A wide variety of wildlife species are visible throughout the area, including elk, mule deer, California bighorn sheep, mountain goats, forest grouse, turkey, quail, chukar, and a myriad of small mammals. The area also provides habitat for a variety of neo-tropical and upland birds, raptors, reptiles, and amphibians. From Oak Creek it is a 20-minute drive (25 miles) to the Yakima Sportsman State Park, where we will camp for one night. The campground is located on 266 acres along the Yakima River and the flood plain sustains a natural wetland of marshes, grasses, and ponds. There are 2-miles of hiking trails.

Day 8, Steamboat Rock: From Yakima it is a 2.5-hour drive (145 miles) to the Steamboat Rock 600-acre state park. This beautiful park is located on a peninsula in Banks Lake and is surrounded by sagebrush meadows with rocky buttes. Rising 800 feet, Steamboat Rock was carved by Ice Age floods into a dramatic, lake-dotted canyon, the park's landscape dates back at least 13,000 years. Known as "scabland," the area appears barren, but it is teeming wildlife, spring flowers and sagebrush. We will camp one night at this location.

Day 9, Spokane: From Steamboat Rock it is a 20-minute drive (15 miles) to the Grand Coulee Dam where we can take a tour of the dam site if you choose. From Grand Coulee, it is a 2-hour drive (100 miles) to Riverside Park, just outside of Spokane, where we will camp for one night. Riverside State Park occupies 9,194 acres along the Spokane and Little Spokane rivers just north of Spokane. With nearly 200,000 feet of shoreline, Riverside is home to Ponderosa pines, lakes, marshes, and a wide variety of wildlife.

Day 10, Pateros: From Riverside it is 40-minute drive (25 miles) to the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. Here is one of the best places to see moose in Washington State. There is a 6-mile driving loop and numerous stops for short walks. We will have a picnic lunch here. From Turnbull, it is a 3-hour drive (150 miles) to the town of Pateros, located along the Columbia River. Along the way we will stop at the Bridgeport Bar Wildlife area. This is an excellent place for birding and walking along the Columbia River. Just outside of Pateros is the Alta Lake State Park, where we will camp for one night. Alta Lake State Park is a 174-acre camping park where mountainous pine forests meet the desert.

Day 11, Seattle: On this day we head back to Seattle. From Pateros it is a 4-hour drive (190 miles) back to Seattle. There are numerous stops along the Columbia River and in the Northern Cascade Mountains to make the day enjoyable.

Day 12, Drop off at the Seattle airport. We will be staying at a hotel close to the airport.