



Birding Between 3 Rivers

**A midweek, active adventure during the peak
of spring migration, May 10 - 12, 2022**



Join storyteller and naturalist Brian “Fox” Ellis in this well-balanced blend of bird watching and history, culture and ecology. The trip is based at the Twinflower Inn in Bishop Hill, Illinois, a pre-Civil War hospital turned bed and breakfast, known for its hearty farm-to-fork meals. This trip is active, with easy to moderate hiking and flat water canoeing.

Beginning Tuesday afternoon at 2:00 we will gather for a stroll around the town of Bishop Hill taking in the history and ecology of this Utopia on the Prairie. Bishop Hill is a green oasis in the midst of the corn desert with nearly a thousand acres of restored prairie and old growth forest surrounding the quiet village. Fox is working with his neighbors to create a long-term project to re-green the entire town. We'll visit an established bluebird trail, a series of pollinator friendly gardens, and a new prairie seed nursery and pick-your-own fruit farm. Bishop Hill is also an internationally recognized historic site, one of the more successful nineteenth century utopian communities. Dinner will be a satisfying soup supper with fresh bread, and pie for dessert, followed by an intimate dinner theater performance, “An Evening with John James Audubon.”



Wednesday begins with breakfast at the Twinflower Inn before a van ride to Dixon Waterfowl Refuge at Hennepin-Hopper Lakes, an Internationally significant Birding Area, (IBA). We will hike the Oak Grove Trail with a range of warblers and woodpeckers. We will climb the tower where we might see black-necked stilts in their mating dance, yellow-headed black-birds, black-crowned night herons, white pelicans, bald eagles, harriers, and an abundance of waterfowl, shorebirds, and waders.

We might make two or three stops at wetland boardwalks and floodplain prairies along the Illinois River. Dickcissels, bobolinks, and warblers are on the list of possibilities. Lunch is at Jonah's Seafood Restaurant which has gorgeous views of the Illinois River. In the afternoon we will visit one of the largest old-growth, flood-plain forests in the Illinois River Valley, property recently acquired by the Peoria Audubon Society. There are nesting prothonotary warblers, a large rookery with several species of herons and egrets, and thrushes, vireos, and woodpeckers abound. We will then head south of Peoria with possible stops at Rice Lake or Banner Marsh. We will wrap-up this full and vigorous tour of the river with a sunset picnic and canoe trip at the Nature Conservancy's Emiquon Preserve. It is one of the largest wetland restoration projects in the country. Several of these locations are IBAs and more than 300 species are known to nest or pass through the area. This is structured as a Big Day. And our bird count could be close to 100 species!



Thursday, after breakfast at the Inn, we will head over to the Rock River to canoe a relatively wild stretch of river, then walk a stretch of the Hennipin Call as it enters the Mississippi, exploring wetlands and an upland forest. If weather and time allow, we might stop by two private preserves, rounding up our count on both water birds and spring migrating songbirds, before returning to Bishop Hill about lunch time.

Lunch is on your own. You can choose one of Bishop Hill's four great restaurants. You can then head home or linger to explore art galleries, museums, and shops to wile away the afternoon in Bishop Hill.

This is an all-inclusive adventure. Double occupancy is \$450 per person, and single occupancy is \$495. The fee includes guide services, ground transportation, two dinners, two breakfasts, and two lunches. Every room at the Twinflower Inn has a king-sized bed, a private bath and is decorated with Audubon's gorgeous birds. Three of the rooms have two beds if you want to bring a friend to share the room. One room even has three beds if you want two roommates and a \$25 per person discount. Depending on occupancy, we are limiting this trip to 6 -10 folks.

Our host is Brian "Fox" Ellis, an internationally renown storyteller, author and naturalist. He portrays John James Audubon and has been a featured speaker at birding festivals, nature centers, and science conferences across the country. He coordinated the effort to research and write, then managed the publication of the Illinois River Road Birding Map. He also works tirelessly towards prairie and wetland restoration, and reforestation all across Central Illinois.



To make reservations contact Fox at: 309-696-1017

or e-mail: foxtales@foxtalesint.com

Visit the Website: www.twinflowerinn.com

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Tuesday, May 10:

Check-in between noon and two
2:00 Walking Tour of Bishop Hill
4:00 Free time to settle in
6:00 Dinner at The Commons
7:00 An Evening with John James Audubon

Wednesday, May 11:

7:00 Breakfast
7:30 Depart for Dixon Waterfowl Refuge at Hennepin-Hopper; with possible stops at The Sun Foundation, Marshall and Woodford County Conservation Districts
12:00 Lunch at Jonah's Seafood, East Peoria
1:30 Chillicothe Bottoms; possible stops at Banner Marsh or Rice Lake
5:00 Picnic Supper at Emiquon
Evening Canoe tour of the Wetlands

Thursday, May 12:

7:00 Breakfast and
Early departure for Canoeing the Rock River, then hiking to the Mississippi River with possible stops at Loud Thunder & Andalucia Slough after lunch.
Back in Bishop Hill mid-afternoon

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