

Spring migrants in the Big Apple

Birdwatching Breaks is pleased to offer this short break to New York during the spring migration period of early May. Despite its size and population, the city of New York has many sites for the visiting birdwatcher. Our main interest is birding within Central Park as well as the Jamaica Bay area which is a short distance from the centre of the city.

■ This tour can be combined with Montana on page 94.

Days 1-2: Fly to New York and transfer to our accommodation near Central Park. Our main interest is visiting and birding within the park which is a short distance away. Central Park has a wide range of habitats in a relatively compact area including meadows, grassy hillocks, rocky crags, woodland, streams, ponds, lakes, and a reservoir.

Our first birding stop is at The Ramble and a stand of beech trees which attract migrant warblers in spring including Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Canada and American Redstarts. Cherry Hill is nearby, where the larger trees attract Scarlet and Summer Tanagers. Baltimore Oriole, Swainson's Thrush and Red-eyed Vireos are all regularly seen in spring. Skulking species inhabiting the bushes include Song Sparrow, Grey Catbird and Brown Thrasher. Rowboat Lake is worth checking for Green-backed Heron and Double-crested Cormorant and sometimes produces Belted Kingfishers. The area around the Summer House can be excellent for migrants with regular sightings of Yellow-



Prairie Warbler Photo: Neil Norvock

Dates

Sunday May 7th - Wednesday May 10th 2017

Leader: Chris Bradshaw

Group size: 7

Birds: 120-150

rumped and Palm Warblers, Chipping, Field and White-throated Sparrows and Indigo Buntings.

At this time of the year it is possible to see migrant Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Cedar Waxwing and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Raptors tend to be scarce but may include Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. An area of woodland known as Locust Wood attracts Red-bellied, Downy and on rare occasions Red-headed Woodpeckers. We end the day at the North Woods, another productive area for birdlife.

Day 3: Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is one of the best places in New York City to observe migrating species. A series of ponds, marshes and other wetland habitats attract a wide range of birds. The mudflats and muddy edges attract American Oystercatcher, Grey and Semipalmated Plovers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Dunlin, Semipalmated and Stilt Sandpipers and both Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitchers. Jamaica Bay is particularly good for nesting herons and egrets which include Great and Snowy Egrets, Little Blue, Tricoloured and Green Herons and both night herons. Other species we may find include Glossy Ibis, Osprey, Clapper Rail, Willet, Laughing Gull, Forster's Tern, Barn



Summer Tanager Photo: Suzanne Bowden

Owl, Willow Flycatcher, American Redstart, Saltmarsh Sparrow, Marsh Wren, and Boat-tailed Grackle. In the afternoon, we visit Breezy Point for breeding Piping Plover, American Oystercatcher, Common Tern, Least Tern, and Black Skimmer. As dusk starts to fall, we return to Jamaica Bay to witness the extraordinary sight of displaying American Woodcock by the visitor centre.

Day 4: Our last full day in New York begins with a visit to the botanical gardens which can be a haven for spring migrants and birds coming to breed. Twin Lakes, with its mixed habitat of forest and marsh, is probably the best area for migrants. The attractive Wood Duck is resident and breeds in nest boxes whilst the larger trees are home to Great Horned Owls. In spring Eastern Phoebe, Red-winged Blackbirds and the tiny Ruby-throated Hummingbird return to breed. As we wander around the gardens, we may encounter migrant warblers including Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Cape May, Blackpoll, Black and White, Northern Parula, Yellow and Ovenbird. Overhead there is a chance of American Kestrel and Red-tailed Hawk. If conditions are favourable, we may

find Warbling Vireo, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Peewee and Tufted Titmouse. The ponds of the garden often entice Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift and Tree Swallow to come down and drink. In the afternoon, we revisit Central Park to see if anything new has appeared over the last day or so. Early evening transfer to the airport for a late evening flight back to the UK with arrival on the following morning.

Prices

Ground Price: £1,000
 Single room: £100
 Deposit: £100
 *Air Fare: £500

This holiday is fully inclusive of accommodation and meals, transport, permit fees, guidance, tips and taxes.

Not included: drinks, insurance, items of a personal nature.

**Please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights*