



RAFTING TRIP

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Rafting the Marsh Fork and Canning Rivers June 25, 2018 - July 2, 2018

Join Audubon Alaska for a rafting trip of a lifetime along the Marsh Fork and Canning Rivers in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This exclusive, small group adventure is set in a spectacular wilderness of raw, towering mountains, drained by pristine glacial rivers. Enjoy excellent hiking, phenomenal birding and wildlife watching against one of the most stunning backdrops on the planet. Led by two experienced river guides from Wilderness Birding Adventures, and escorted by Michelle LeBeau, Deputy Director of Audubon Alaska, experience a place and time untouched by modern life.

EXPERIENCE THE ARCTIC

This eight-day raft trip begins in the mountainous upper reaches of the beautiful Marsh Fork, just north of the continental divide. This little traveled river lies in the heart of the designated wilderness area of the Arctic Refuge. Here an intricate chain of life maintains an exquisite balance in a land of extremes. It is home to large herds of caribou, Dall sheep, wolves, brown bears, red fox, and wolverine. A variety of birds sing throughout the 24 hours of daylight and a multitude of tiny flowers flourish in the brief summer. Floating northeast through the mountains, we paddle our way to the main stem

of the Canning River. While still in the Brooks Range, here the landscape begins to expand and the vistas widen. The raft trip ends near the last foothills, where the river continues out to the coastal plain and the Arctic Ocean.

AMERICA'S LAST GREAT WILDERNESS

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a wild place unlike any other in America. Its unparalleled diversity also makes it some of the most productive habitat in the Arctic. The Refuge is a sanctuary for millions of birds, vast herds of caribou, polar bears, and more. America's Arctic Refuge was set aside as a safe haven for wildlife by President Eisenhower in 1960.

GENERAL ITINERARY AND OTHER INFORMATION

Day 0: Our trip begins in Fairbanks, Alaska. The day before the trip, we will gather the group, talk over logistics, check personal gear, and answer last minute questions.

Day 1: We'll fly in a nine-passenger single engine plane from Fairbanks to Arctic Village, a small Gwich'in Indian village on the south side of the Brooks Range. There we meet our



bush pilot who will shuttle us in two or three-person loads in a smaller single-engine plane to a tundra landing strip alongside the upper Marsh Fork. This scenic flight is worth the trip alone! We'll set up camp at the put in.

Day 2: This will be our first river day. We'll pack up our dry bags, review paddling and boating safety, and load the boats before starting out. Usually a section of tundra separates our first camp from the main channel of the river. Thus, our first full day typically involves shuttling all our gear about 1/3 mile to the river. On this trip we take a paddle raft and an oar raft. The oar raft is powered by one guide at the oars. The passengers relax, bird, photograph, etc. The paddle raft is powered by five participants, with a guide in back ruddering and calling out commands. Paddlers get some exercise in that boat, but also have chances to take a photo or scan with binoculars. We'll stop along the river to view wildlife, take an occasional short hike, and for lunch along the river.

Days 3-7: Our approach to this trip is to enjoy a mix of hiking and floating days and our camp areas are not set in advance of the trip. Weather and water levels will likely factor into our pace and daily activities. At some camps we'll stay two nights at that same spot. On the layover day, we generally plan a day hike. Those who prefer to relax may wish to stay near camp.

Day 8: Weather permitting, our bush pilot will return for us and shuttle us back to Arctic Village for our scheduled flight back to Fairbanks, arriving around 6 p.m. Of course, these human plans are subject to revision by the forces of nature, such as weather and water levels—the essence of true wilderness travel.

This trip is for those in reasonably good physical condition as we will be traveling under our own power and out of contact with “civilization” for our entire eight days. The trip is not especially strenuous, although we sometimes get challenging weather in the form of windstorms, rain, and snow. If the river is low, the first day of rafting often involves the need to get out of the rafts from time to time to ease them over gravel bars. Temperatures typically range between the 40s and upper 60s (Fahrenheit), with swings possible in either direction to freezing and/or the 70s. In spite of, or even because of these challenges, the trip offers countless experiential rewards for those who travel through this amazing refuge.



Photo: Dave Shaw

TRIP DETAILS

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Rafting the Marsh Fork and Canning Rivers
June 25, 2018 - July 2, 2018

Base Price: \$5,300 per person for 8 days, 7 nights
This exclusive trip is limited to 7 guests.

What's included: Round-trip transportation between Fairbanks and our start and end points on the Marsh Fork and Canning Rivers, all meals and group gear in the Refuge (including tents, rafting, and kitchen gear), and two knowledgeable and skilled guides from Wilderness Birding Adventures. (Personal gear, lodging in Fairbanks, and transportation to/from Fairbanks are not included.)

Make a Reservation: contact Michelle LeBeau;
(907) 276-7034 or mlebeau@audubon.org



Photo: Nils Warnock