

Friends Connecting to Friends

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National Parks in Southern Utah by Natalie and Harold Woomer

We love visiting our national parks. For scenic beauty, they are hard to beat. One of our favorite places to visit is southern Utah's national parks. The scenery is spectacular and it's so different from the east coast.

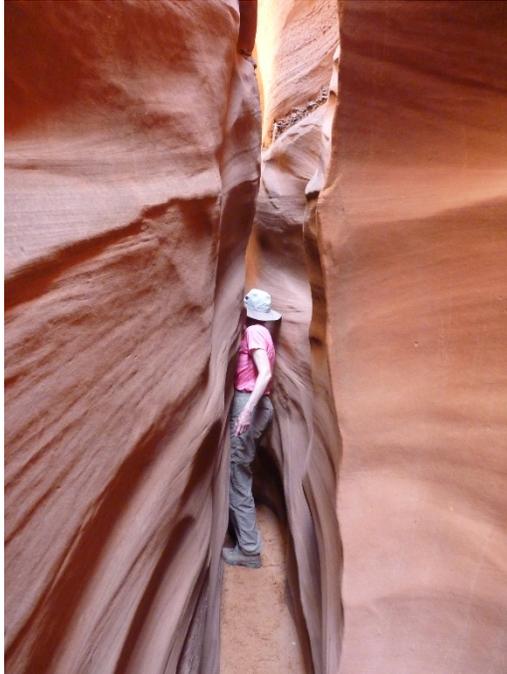
We fly into Las Vegas and then drive northeast about 2 ½ hours to reach Utah and Zion National Park. If you like to hike, there are many great hikes from hiking through the canyon, hiking in the Virgin River with steep canyons on either side or hiking up the mountains to get great views of the canyon. If you aren't afraid of heights, the views are hard to beat from the top of Angel's Landing, though that trail can be crowded at times.



Highway 12 toward Boulder

Some other spectacular parks are within a two to three hour drive from Zion and the scenery on the drive is amazing. You could also visit:

- The North Rim of the Grand Canyon, which is in northern Arizona: The views at the North Rim are spectacular and we really enjoyed them. It is a lot less crowded than the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.
- Bryce Canyon National Park: Bryce Canyon is like no other place that we've been. It's full of towers of rocks called "hoodoos", and we felt like we were on another planet.
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument: Has some great hiking including narrow slot canyons. One of our favorite drives is along the north side of the monument from Escalante to Boulder on Highway 12.
- Kodachrome Basin State Park: It has very interesting, colorful rock formations.



Spooky Gulch at Bryce National Park

If you want a longer trip, you could continue east across Utah and visit Capital Reef, Canyonlands and Arches National Parks. Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Lake Powell are also in the general area. We once did a trip where we visited all of the national parks in southern Utah and then did a loop back to Las Vegas, stopping at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and crossing the Hoover Dam along the way. The drive across northern Arizona is long and somewhat boring, but it does give you the chance to experience Monument Valley near the Utah-Arizona border.

Here are some pointers for traveling to Utah. The driving is easy because there are so few roads. Check for average weather temperatures when planning your trip. Some of the areas have desert-like temperatures and other areas are at a high elevation so they are much colder and can be snowy in the winter. Zion is very hot and crowded in the summer so go another time if possible. The North Rim of the Grand Canyon is at a higher elevation and is closed from mid-October to mid-May.



Point Imperial at the Grand Canyon North Rim



Observation Point Trail at Zion National Park

Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Jamestown, NY by Marcia Watson

In the summer of 2018, my husband Gene Scarpulla and I made a road trip through Pennsylvania and New York to participate in several different events, including a family wedding. The centerpiece of the trip was a visit to the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, NY. The Institute is a tribute to the life and work of Peterson, the renowned ornithologist, wildlife artist, and field guide author, who passed away in 1996. Gene is the editor of *Maryland Birdlife*, the scientific journal of the Maryland Ornithological Society, and he had made advance arrangements with the Institute to search for some data in their archives.

With our trip being focused on the hunt through the archives, neither Gene nor I had given much thought to what the Roger Tory Peterson Institute might have in their actual public exhibits. To be frank, we probably would never have visited without the impetus to search through the archives, but we're glad we did: the Institute has a rich collection of Peterson's artwork, memorabilia, and assorted belongings, beautifully and professionally displayed in a modern stone and wood building that is nothing short of stunning. The exhibits bring to life, in a dramatic and memorable fashion, the seminal role that Peterson played in birdwatching and ornithology. Any birder, and non-birders as well, would enjoy a day or more roaming through the Institute.



Roger Tory Peterson Institute

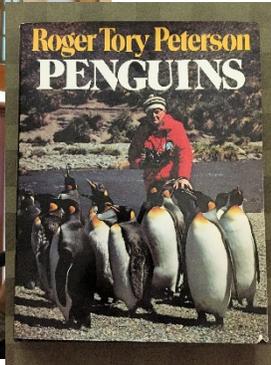
Jamestown, NY, was Peterson's boyhood home, and the modest family house (still used as a residence, not open to the public) stands a few blocks from the modern building that houses the Institute. The Institute's grounds include 27 acres of woods and meadows, with a network of trails, a freshwater pond, and a stream. A butterfly garden graces the front entrance area. Peterson himself roamed these same woods and fields as a young boy.



The exhibits in the building include Peterson's original artwork for his field guides and pieces produced for magazines and coffee-table books. A corner exhibit shows an easel, paints, and bird study skins, evoking Peterson's workroom. There are mesmerizing displays showing his handwritten personal journals, his equipment such as cameras and binoculars, his passport, even his boyhood grade school report. These tangible articles invoke something of the personality of the man, and show how dedicated he was, from an early age, to the art and science of ornithological illustration.

One display, tucked into a nook by the foot of the grand staircase, puts a spotlight on Peterson's iconic 1955 book, *Wild America*, co-written with James Fisher as a memoir of their epic 100-day, 30,000-mile trip to the great birding hotspots of North America. The display includes a screen running a continuous loop of a digitized version of the 16 mm film that Peterson shot during the *Wild America* journey. The movie originally had no soundtrack, but the digitized version includes Peterson's own voice as narrator, using a taped recording from a lecture that he gave in conjunction with a showing of the film. A comfortable padded bench in front of the screen invites visitors to sit and watch as much of the film as they choose.

Upstairs, the second floor holds more artwork, including a corner with a number of paintings of penguins. In a glass case nearby is the very clothing worn by Peterson on his Antarctic expeditions to study the penguins. You probably cannot recall the outfit from memory, but one glance at the red parka, yellow pants and striped woolen beanie will immediately call to mind photographs you have no doubt seen of Peterson, binoculars in hand, wading through flocks of penguins.



The second floor also houses the administrative offices of the Institute's staff and the archives area. Because we were given access to the archives, we had a glimpse of the size and extent of the Institute's holdings that are not on view to the public. Here, metal shelves are piled high with boxes and boxes of equipment and papers. There, lying casually on a shelf, was a canvas bag containing a tripod, labeled for travel in Peterson's own handwriting. Shallow wooden drawers hold

hundreds of unframed pieces of art. Another area provides controlled climate cases for Peterson's collection of bird study skins, which are available to visiting scientists upon request.

The attractive gift shop near the front entrance has tee shirts and hats, coffee mugs and pottery, and of course, the entire collection of Peterson Field Guides available for purchase. There are also some signed, limited edition prints of Peterson artwork available.

Also located on the first floor is a beautiful library, enhanced by oak tables and chairs crafted by Stickley Furniture in upstate New York. The library is an inviting place to sit and peruse the many publications on the shelves, including contemporary magazines such as *Birding* and *Audubon*. The library includes part of Peterson's personal collection of books, as well as those that he authored, and it has copies of most of the important field guides of the world, among other ornithological references.

While Gene was digging through the archives, I took the opportunity to explore the trails through the Institute's surrounding woods and meadows. Even on a hot summer afternoon, I was able to find northern breeders such as Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-headed Vireo, Magnolia Warbler, and Northern Waterthrush. I particularly enjoyed the pond area, which was swarming with dragonflies and enlivened by singing Common Yellowthroats.

The Institute is enhanced by many nearby birding opportunities. Across the road is a larger wooded tract, known locally as the 100-acre Woods (memories of Winnie the Pooh?), which is managed by the nearby Jamestown Community College. The woods contain a network of walking trails, open to the public, and include some good bog



habitat. Another highlight of our trip was a visit to the Audubon Community Nature Center, about 15 miles away. The Nature Center has well-marked trails on 600 acres of woods and wetlands, along with an outstanding indoor exhibit area.

We came away from Jamestown with new appreciation for Peterson and his work, and with long-lasting memories of the beauty of this section of New York State.

If you go: The Roger Tory Peterson Institute (<https://rtpi.org>) is in Jamestown, New York, in the southwestern corner of the state, at the fringe of the Finger Lakes region. The Institute building is not open every day, so check the website for current hours. There is a small admission charge, and the non-profit Institute, a 501 (c)(3) organization, appreciates donations. Jamestown lies at the southeastern end of Chautauqua Lake, and as such is a prime summer vacation spot, so advance lodging reservations are needed in the warm months.

North Tract Summer Nature Photos by Greg Crites



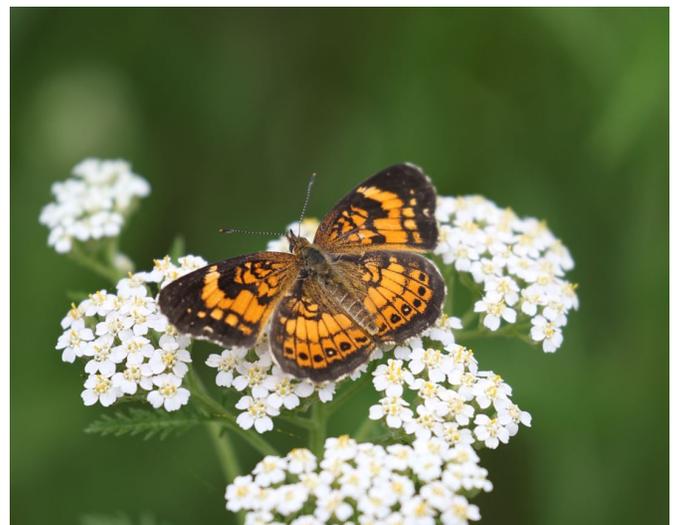
Fritillary on Milkweed



Hummingbird on Honeysuckle



Damselfly Wings Unfolded



Pearl Crescent