



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

GRAND BOLIVIA

PART I

**EASTERN LOWLANDS, BENI GRASSLANDS
& INTER-ANDEAN VALLEYS
SEPTEMBER 9–23, 2025**

PART II

**FOOTHILLS, CLOUD FOREST
& ALTIPLANO
SEPTEMBER 21–OCTOBER 3, 2025**

©2024

The landlocked nation of Bolivia has always been less well known in the birding world than its neighbors Brazil, Peru, Argentina, and Chile. Now, though, an excellent modern field guide and an ever-improving tourist infrastructure make Bolivia one of the most appealing destinations in South America. The country's spectacular Andean habitats, from snow-capped volcanoes and misty cloud forests to vast marshlands and cactus-clad deserts, are home to no fewer than 1,450 bird species—in an area barely a tenth the size of the United States!



A pair of the endemic Red-fronted Macaw © Andrew Whittaker

Among all those birds are about 25 species found exclusively in Bolivia, and at least a hundred more are near-endemics, hardly ranging beyond the country's borders. Many species that do occur elsewhere are more easily and reliably seen in Bolivia than elsewhere in their range, thanks to an abundance of intact habitats, most of them easily accessible by road, and a system of parks and preserves protecting large tracts of land in the Andes and the rich lowlands. Rheas, macaws, toucans, flamingos, seedsnipe, antpittas, hummingbirds, cotingas, fruiteaters, antbirds, and mountain tanagers are among the many exciting birds we can hope to enjoy in the exceptionally diverse habitats preserved here.

Bolivia's human culture is just as captivating as its remarkable biodiversity. While the country has enjoyed significant social and economic improvements over the past quarter

century, this modernization has not lessened the power and persistence of the Bolivian people's venerable and colorful traditions.

Bolivia is a country of awesome landscapes and mega biodiversity to match. Our Grand Bolivia tours offer a comprehensive immersion in this remarkable country in two very different and excitingly bird-rich areas. Either section may be taken as a stand-alone trip, or the two can be combined for a truly grand experience.



Lush Yunags Forest © Andrew Whittaker

PART I: EASTERN LOWLANDS, BENI GRASSLANDS & INTER-ANDEAN VALLEYS offers a spectacular opportunity to visit a wide range of Bolivia's many habitats, including dry chaco scrub, semi-arid valleys, cloud forest, grasslands, gallery forests, palm islands, and rich Pantanal wetlands, each with its own distinctive and diverse set of birds. We will devote some of our efforts to enjoying two of the rarest macaws in the world; both are spectacular, and both are endemic to Bolivia. We will spend a night in a delightful ecolodge in the very center of the breeding and roosting area of the magnificent Red-fronted Macaw, which is entirely restricted to these arid valleys on the eastern slope of the Bolivian Andes. We will also visit the sole remaining stronghold of the Blue-throated Macaw in the bird-rich palm "islands" of the Llano de Moxos, in Beni state. All told, we are likely to see as many as 450 species of bird during our time together!

PART II: FOOTHILLS, CLOUD FOREST & THE ALTIPLANO is a slightly shorter tour with a focus on Bolivia's higher-elevation habitats, including polylepis woodland, cloud forest, altiplano grassland, and brackish lakes. We will spend two days on the shores of famous Lake Titicaca. Our route is carefully planned to give us time to slowly acclimate to the high

elevations visited at the end of the trip, a strategy that helps protect against altitude-related difficulties or illness. (NOTE: Please see the section on altitude immediately following the day-by-day descriptions below for more information on altitudes on this tour.) Here, too, our final bird list will be impressively extensive, likely approaching a total of 350 species, many of them not seen on Part I. Combining the two parts, you can expect an incredible total of nearly 600 different species!



Hooded Mountain Tanager © Andrew Whittaker

GRAND BOLIVIA PART I

EASTERN LOWLANDS, BENI GRASSLANDS & INTER-ANDEAN VALLEYS

September 9–10, Days 1–2: Arrival in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Most flights from the United States will depart on Day 1, arriving at Santa Cruz's Viru Viru International Airport (airport code VVI) early on Day 2. After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by our ground agent for the transfer to our group hotel, Camino Real Hotel Santa Cruz, where a room is reserved in your name. The hotel gardens offer a nice introduction to local birds, with good numbers of parakeets often roosting in the nearby trees.

We will have an early lunch and a short rest before gathering in the mid-afternoon to bird the city's botanical gardens and a rich area of wetlands. A half century ago, Santa Cruz was a sleepy village with sandy streets, few conveniences, and an uncertain future. Today, this is a modern, bustling city, the economic hub for all of eastern Bolivia. Though its booming economy relies heavily on mining, lumber, agriculture, and gas and oil, there are still many areas of good habitat on the outskirts of the city. The wetlands and woodlands will provide our first introduction to the local avifauna.

The wetlands, depending on water levels, can come up trumps with Burrowing Owl, Ringed Teal, White-cheeked Pintail, Brazilian Teal, Wattled Jacana, ibises, spoonbills, and a variety of migrant shorebirds. In the park, we can hope to see the Speckled Chachalaca, Picazuro Pigeon, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Purplish Jay, Blue-crowned Trogon, Turquoise-fronted Amazon and Scaly-headed Parrot, Guira Cuckoo, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Bolivian Slaty Antshrike, Black-backed Grosbeak and Hooded, Guira, and Sayaca Tanagers. At times, hundreds of Bare-faced Ibis and Snail Kites roost here. We also have a good chance of encountering Black Howler, Brown Capuchin, South American Coati, or even the rare and endemic White-eared Titi Monkey. Past tours have even seen the small cat known as the Jaguarundi. We also have a very good chance at the enigmatic Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth, fairly common here.



Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth and baby © Andrew Whittaker

NIGHTS

Day 1: In transit

Day 2: Hotel Camino Real, Santa Cruz

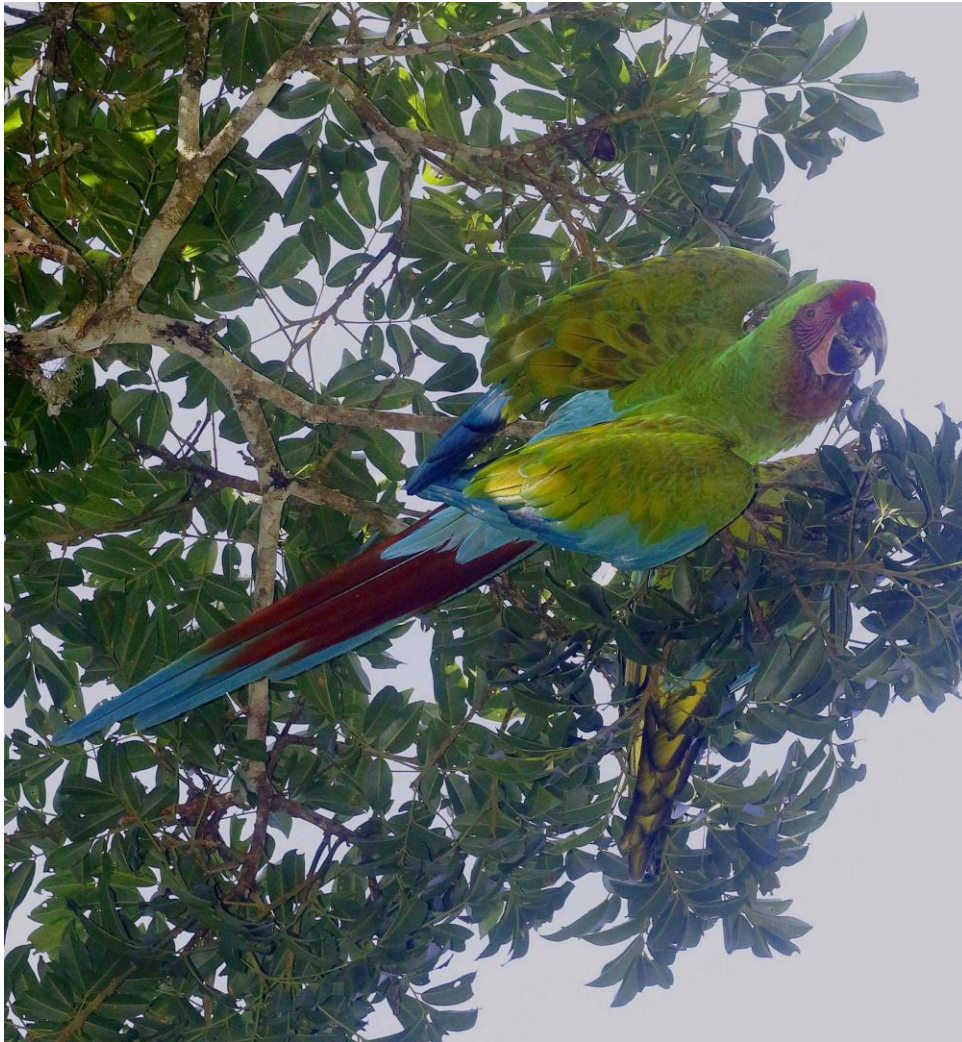
September 11, Day 3: Departure for Los Volcanes. After an early breakfast, we will drive west into the forested foothills of the Andes. A birding stop en route could turn up the beautiful Yellow-collared Macaw, Picui Ground Dove, Red-crested Cardinal, Saffron Finch, White Woodpecker, or Barred Antshrike. Our primary objective here is the localized White-bellied Nothura.

The Bolivian Yungas, a transitional zone between the moister forests of the Upper Amazon and the semi-arid grasslands of the Andean puna, is home to a number of notable birds more readily seen here than elsewhere in their range, including the Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, Large-tailed (Yungas) Dove, Buff-bellied Hermit, Green-cheeked Parakeet, Ochre-cheeked Spintail, Slaty Gnateater, Golden-rumped Euphonia, Yungas Manakin, and Two-banded Warbler. Among the more common species in these forests and streamside woods are Blue-headed Parrot and Turquoise-fronted Amazon, Channel-billed Toucan, Red-necked Woodpecker, Ocellated Piculet, Purplish and Plush-crested jays, and Dusky-green Oropendola.



Birding the lodge at Los Volcanes © Andrew Whittaker

We'll arrive mid-morning at Los Volcanes, a tranquil ecolodge surrounded by lush forest and steep sandstone cliffs. The entrance road to the lodge affords incredible views of the peaks of Amboró National Park, and our drive will be accompanied by the unforgettable chorus of Gray, Tataupa, and Brown tinamous. Another specialty here is the White-throated Piping-Guans that roost around the clearing, where we can hear their wing-rattling display flight. Later in the afternoon, Military Macaws and Mitred Parakeets often gather in the lodge clearing, an excellent opportunity to watch and to photograph these imposing parrots.



Military Macaw © Andrew Whittaker

NIGHT: Refugio Los Volcanes

September 12, Day 4: Los Volcanes and Amboró National Park. The red sandstone cliffs and lavish tropical forests surrounding Los Volcanes make for a stunning show of color at dawn and dusk. We will explore the area on foot, walking well-maintained trails in search of the area's wildlife and botanical treasures, which include some 270 species of birds and an abundance of bromeliads and orchids. With a bit of luck, we may even encounter some of the forest's mammals. Placid streams and crystalline pools are home to the Sunbittern, Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Riverbank Warbler, and Black Phoebe, while sheer cliffs are inhabited by the King Vulture, Andean Condor, and even Harpy or the rare Solitary Eagles. In the forest itself, we hope to meet up with the rare and poorly known Subtropical Pygmy-Owl, Black-streaked Puffbird, or the endemic Bolivian Tapaculo; we may even be rewarded with a shy Barred Forest Falcon or the very rare bamboo-loving Bolivian Recurvebill. A flash of vivid scarlet and blue in the understory could reveal a wonderful male Yungas Manakin, while one of the special birds of the understory here is the highly localized Slaty Gnatcatcher.



Male Slaty Gnatcatcher © Andrew Whittaker

Other avian delights include the taxonomically complex Short-tailed Anthrush, Red-necked Woodpecker, and the rare Blue-browed and stunning White-winged tanagers. Roving flocks may contain Two-banded Warblers, Sclater's Tyrannulets, Black-capped Antwrens, Plain Antvireos, Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaners, Ocellated Woodcreepers, and Black-goggled Tanagers.

We will head out after dark to try for Spectacled Owl, Black-banded Owl, Rufescent and Tawny-bellied screech-owls, Rufous and Band-winged Nightjars, and Ocellated Poorwills.

NIGHT: Refugio Los Volcanes

September 13, Day 5: Inter-Andean Valleys, hummingbird gardens, and Red-fronted Macaw Lodge.

We will get an early start this morning, bidding farewell to the paradise of Los Volcanes and driving back up to the main road to meet our bus. We'll gradually enter slightly drier habitats, good for Picui Ground Dove, Ultramarine Grosbeak, Black-capped Warbling Finch, and Red-crested Finch. We will visit a charming couple's house to enjoy their hummingbird feeders. Several species should be busy here, with possibilities of Golden-tailed Sapphire; Lesser, Sparking, and White-vented Violetears; White-bellied Hummingbird; Planalto and Great-billed Hermits; and the dazzling Fork-tailed Woodnymph.



A male Fork-tailed Woodnymph– Photo Andrew Whittaker

Other species could include Western Fire-eye, Ultramarine Grosbeak, Large-tailed Dove, Variable or Giant Antshrike, Variable Oriole, Pearly-vented Tody-Flycatcher, and Rusty Flowerpiercers. We will enjoy a great lunch in the quaint square of the historic town of Samaipata.

Early afternoon will find us passing through stunning dry forest with majestic columnar cacti. Lower down in the valleys, fertile farmland is found as we work our way west to cozy Red-fronted Macaw Lodge.

We expect to arrive at the lodge in the late afternoon to a lovely greeting from the staff. Red-fronted Macaw is owned and operated by the Asociación Armonía, a Bolivian non-profit dedicated to preserving Bolivia's birds and their habitats. The eponymous macaws, endemic to this region, nest and roost in the adjacent cliffs, and our VENT group's stay at this lodge (with four shared bathrooms) is not just a rare opportunity for a close encounter in good light with these gorgeous birds, but also a real contribution to research and the protection of these magnificent parrots.

NIGHT: Red-fronted Macaw Lodge



Spectacular scenery and birding from Red-fronted Macaw Lodge © Andrew Whittaker

September 14, Day 6: Red-fronted Macaw Reserve and Samaipata. Early this morning we will position ourselves for more close-up encounters with this most spectacular of all the macaws. The same cliff provides a home to Mitred and Turquoise-fronted Parrots and a large colony of Cliff Parakeets (recently recognized as a species distinct from the Monk Parakeet). Overhead, we may also see Southern Martins, Andean Swifts, Cliff Flycatchers, or a Peregrine Falcon or Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle.



Red-fronted Macaws © Andrew Whittaker

We will return to the lodge for a hearty breakfast on the veranda, where the birdfeeders can be busy with White-fronted Woodpeckers, stunning Blue-and-yellow Tanagers, and yet another pair of endemic species, the Bolivian Blackbird and Gray-crested Finch. Around the lodge, we may find Spot-backed (Chaco) Puffbird, Striped Woodpecker, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, Greater Wagtail Tyrant, White-tipped Plantcutter, Cliff Flycatcher, Masked Gnatcatchers, Crowned Slaty Flycatcher, Hepatic Tanager, Golden-billed Saltator, and a host of warbling-finches including Ringed and the lovely Black-and-chestnut. Having taken full advantage of the best hours of the morning, we will bird our way back to the charming town of Samaipata and a picnic lunch. Along the way, we will try for Bolivian Earthcreeper, Stripe-crowned Spinetail, Streak-fronted Thornbird, Sururi Flycatcher, Moss-backed Sparrow, and Bolivian Warbling Finch in the chaco scrub.

At an altitude of more than 5,000 feet, this delightful small town's colonial buildings and historical monuments are set against a background of succulents and towering palm trees. In the sixteenth century, Guarani warrior tribes from the south invaded the valley and defeated both Incas and Chanés; similar incursions continued for nearly 300 years. Today's old Samaipateño families are the descendants of Spanish colonists, many of them of Sephardic origin, and the Guarani invaders. Beginning in the 1880s, Arabs also settled in Samaipata, to be followed by a few Croatians and Italians.

We plan to check in to our hotel in mid- to late afternoon. This evening we will offer a short night-birding excursion in front of the lodge for owls and Scissor-tailed, Band-winged, and Rufous Nightjars.

NIGHT: El Pueblito Hotel, Samaipata

September 15, Day 7: The Golden Road Cloud Forest. Weather permitting, we will leave very early for some pre-dawn owling along the Golden Road, where our goal will be to find the poorly-known Cloud-forest Screech-Owl and the beautiful Buff-fronted Owl. Following breakfast in the field, we will continue birding at our exceptional cloud forest site, where past tours have found the Black-and chestnut Eagle, Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, Masked Trogon, Bicolored Hawk, Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater, Blue-banded Toucanet, the endemic Rufous-faced or White-throated Antpitta, Barred Antthrush, White-eared Soltataire, Bolivian Brushfinch, White-striped Brushfinch, and a host of colorful tanagers, including the Golden-naped, White-winged, and Beryl-spangled. Two distinctive isolated forms here are likely candidates for elevation to full species status: the amazing orange-crowned race of Saffron-crowned and the stunning *flavinucha* Blue-winged Mountain Tanager.



A male Masked Trogon © Andrew Whittaker

Flocks here can contain Crimson-mantled and Golden-olive Woodpeckers, Bronzy Inca, Tropical Parula, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, Montane and Olive-backed Woodcreepers, Pearled Treerunner, Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner, Spectacled Redstart, White-throated and Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulets, Barred Becards, and Common Chlorospingus of the endemic “fulvous-throated” subspecies *fulvigularis*. Rarer species sometimes found here include the Subtropical Pygmy-Owl, Black-winged Parrot, Blue-capped Puffleg, Hazel-fronted Pygmy-Tyrant, Rufous-bellied Bush-Tyrant, Plumbeous Tyrant, and Moustached Flowerpiercer.

Weather permitting, we will plan on a cooked field lunch before dropping down to the drier valleys, where a different set of species awaits. Birds here could include the Huayaco Tinamou, the highland forms of both Olive-crowned Crescentchest and Blue-crowned Parakeets (both candidates to be split), Gray-hooded Parakeets, Blue-tufted Starthroat, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, and the king of the antbirds, the Giant Antshrike. This portion of our route more than deserves the informal name “The Golden Road.”



A female Giant Antshrike © Andrew Whittaker

After a mid-afternoon break in the hotel, we will head back out to bird somewhere closer to town. Depending on their breeding success this year, we may even be lucky enough to visit a colony of truly magnificent Andean Condors.

NIGHT: El Pueblito Hotel, Samaipata

September 16, Day 8: The Laguna Quirusillas Area and Moist Yungas Forest. A pre-dawn start will find us taking dirt roads through agricultural areas mixed with Chaco woodland, home to such exciting species as the wondrous Cream-backed Woodpecker, the recently split Yungas Guan, and two endangered species, the Tucuman Parrot and Red-faced Guan. Other highlights could include Giant Antshrike, White-throated Antpitta, and the endemic Rufous-faced Antpitta.



The endemic Rufous-faced Antpitta © Andrew Whittaker

The reserve's picturesque lake is a great place for breakfast while noisy flocks of parrots circle overhead. The reed-lined shores are home to Southern Yellowthroat, Rufous-sided Crake, and the smart-looking Plumbeous Rail with its tricolored bill. Woodland species to look for here include Crimson-crested and Smoky-brown Woodpeckers, Pale-legged Warbler, Brown-capped Redstart, Bolivian Tyrannulet, Ochre-faced Tody Flycatcher, Swainson's Flycatcher, White-winged Black Tyrant, Orange-headed Tanager, and Moss-backed Sparrow.

We plan to return to Samaipata for an excellent lunch and a short break at the hotel, followed by a birding visit to a nearby site before returning for another tasty homemade dinner and bird list.

NIGHT: El Pueblito Hotel, Samaipata

September 17, Day 9: Return to Santa Cruz. After some pre-breakfast birding near the lodge, we will head directly for Santa Cruz, with stops to look for any special birds we may have missed so far. Lunch will be at a marvelous German restaurant serving homemade sausages and imported ice cream. We expect to arrive at our hotel in Santa Cruz by mid-afternoon; the remainder of the day will be restful, with time for a break or a swim in the pool before preparing for tomorrow's flight to the rich Pantanal wetlands of Trinidad.

NIGHT: Radisson Hotel, Santa Cruz

September 18, Day 10: Flight to Trinidad; the Bolivian Pantanal. A morning flight will take us to the frontier city of Trinidad in the ranching heartland of the Bolivian department of Beni; it is just a short drive from the airport to our hotel. North and slightly west of Santa Cruz, the remote, sparsely populated Beni region features grassland, scrub, gallery forest, marsh, and seasonally inundated woodland, a combination similar to that found in the more open parts of the Brazilian Pantanal. Depending on our arrival time, we may be able to bird the nearby marshes before lunch at one of our favorite restaurants in town.



Whistling Heron © Andrew Whittaker

There is no need to travel far to begin birding this very rich area. Many birds are seen right at the edge of town, where scrub vegetation and seasonal lagoons host large numbers of raptors and wading birds. Among the many species we are likely to see are the Jabiru, Whistling Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, Long-winged Harrier, Southern Screamer, Anhinga, Yellow-collared Macaw, Cobalt-rumped Parrotlet, Campo Flicker, Black-backed Water Tyrant, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Red-crested Cardinal, Black-capped Donacobius, Rusty-collared and the local black-backed form of White-bellied Seedeater, Southern Lapwing, and a variety of ibis and migrant shorebirds.

NIGHT: Hotel Boutique del Rey, Trinidad

September 19–21, Days 11–13: The Beni Wetlands. The rediscovery in the wild of the endemic Blue-throated Macaw by Charles Munn in 1992 made major headlines in conservation circles. A few other sites for this fine parrot have been found since, but the entire population is estimated to consist of only about 350 individuals. A new nest box project, local education, and the opportunity for ranchers to profit from ecotourism have at least helped stabilize the population. The macaws are the prime reason for our visit to this area, but we will see many other birds here in this birder's paradise.



The Blue-throated Macaw is a trip highlight and an endangered endemic © Andrew Whittaker

The wetlands here are extraordinarily rich in bird diversity, and because the habitat ranges from open to only lightly wooded, many of the birds are easy to see. Our stay in this area should produce a very long list of birds, likely including the Greater Rhea, Maguari Stork, Black-collared Hawk, Hoatzin, Black Skimmer, Wattled Jacana, Limpkin, White-tailed Goldenthrout, and the wild-looking Red-billed Scythebill.



Red-billed Scythebill © Andrew Whittaker

Other neat species should include Rufous-fronted and Greater Thornbirds, Mato Grosso Antbird, Hudson's Black Tyrant, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, and Orange-backed Troupial. We will also be looking for the rare Large-billed Seedfinch—and what appears to be an undescribed greenlet species currently included in the Gray-eyed Greenlet complex.

Another favorite site is only a short drive away. Rich gallery forests here are home to Black Howler, the rare Beni Titi, and Capuchin monkeys. We will enjoy chattering flocks of Velvet-fronted Grackles (an endemic subspecies), which share the dim understory with shy Razor-billed Curassows. One of our targets is the endemic nominate subspecies of the Plain Softtail (the other two forms are certainly good candidates for elevation to full species status), or we could locate a roosting Great Potoo. Many colorful species are here to enjoy, from Blue-crowned and Black-tailed Trogons to Chestnut-eared and Lettered Aracaris. We might replicate the success of our past two tours in finding the very localized Sulphur-bellied Tyrant Manakin or the spectacular Band-tailed Manakin. And of course, we will keep a sharp eye out and our ears tuned in for the almost mythical Uniform Thrush, an endemic species heard on last year's tour.

On Day 12, we'll take an exciting early morning boat trip along the Mamoré River, a major tributary of the mighty Amazon, in search of Amazon River Dolphins. Adults are pink, inspiring the alternative name Pink

River Dolphin. With luck, we may even encounter a group of rare Bolivian Red Howlers. Another principal objective of this pleasant excursion is to find the threatened Orinoco Goose.



Endangered Orinoco Geese © Andrew Whittaker

Thankfully, this cool-looking goose is still present in good numbers here. Sunbitterns daintily patrol the creek banks along with Green Ibis and Pied Lapwing, while Large-billed Terns hunt the river for fish. We will keep our eyes open for soaring Slender-billed Kites, perched Crane Hawks, or Gray-headed Kites on the tree-lined banks. We could also observe foraging Gray-cowled Wood-Rails or an Undulated Tinamou or Razor-billed Curassow coming down to drink.

NIGHTS: Hotel Boutique del Rey, Trinidad

September 22, Day 14: Return to Santa Cruz, or join Grand Bolivia Part II. Depending on our flight times, we may have time for some relaxed birding this morning before we take our mid-morning flight to Santa Cruz, with a stop in Cochabamba.

Those continuing on **Grand Bolivia Part II: Foothills, Cloud Forests, and Altiplano** will leave the plane in Cochabamba and transfer to our pleasant downtown hotel, where we will meet up with newly arriving participants.

Those returning home after Part I will continue to Santa Cruz's Viru Viru International Airport (airport code VVI), where they will be met by our ground agent and transferred to our nearby hotel in town. Dinner tonight is on your own.

NIGHT: Hotel Camino Real, Santa Cruz

September 23, Day 15: Departures. Those not continuing on Grand Bolivia Part II will be transferred to the Santa Cruz airport this morning for international flights home.

GRAND BOLIVIA PART II FOOTHILLS, CLOUD FORESTS & ALTIPLANO

September 21–22, Days 1–2: Arrival in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, or in La Paz, Bolivia, and Internal Flight to Cochabamba. Most flights from the United States will depart on Day 1, arriving at Santa Cruz's Viru Viru International Airport (airport code VVI) or La Paz's Alto International Airport (airport code LPB) early on Day 2. After passing through immigration and customs, you will take a connecting domestic flight to Cochabamba, arriving that same morning. You will be met in Cochabamba by our ground operator and transferred to our group hotel, where a room will be reserved in your name, and you will meet the group from Bolivia Part I.

Those continuing from **Grand Bolivia Part I** will arrive in Cochabamba from Trinidad on Day 2, September 22.

Cochabamba is the ideal base for our exploration of the rich Yungas cloud forest, drier valleys, and high Andean punas at the focus of this second part of our tour. Depending on flight times, we will begin mid-afternoon of Day 2 with a visit to nearby Laguna Alalay, right on the edge of the city. This initial outing should let us make the acquaintance of a number of high Andes species, including the Silvery Grebe (of the Andean subspecies *iuninensis*) and the even lovelier White-tufted Grebe.



White-tufted Grebes © Andrew Whittaker

Ducks will include the striking Rosy-billed Pochard, Red Shoveler, White-cheeked Pintail, and Puna Teal. Slate-colored Coots will be abundant, while songbirds here include the wonderful Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Yellow-winged Blackbird, and Wren-like Rushbird. Depending on water levels, migrant shorebirds from the Arctic can be common, among them both yellowlegs, flocks of Baird's Sandpipers, and spinning Wilson's Phalaropes. Our prime target will be the stunning Andean Avocet, usually found in smaller numbers. Colorful Andean and Chilean flamingos are also occasional visitors to Laguna Alalay.

NIGHTS

Day 1: In transit

Day 2: Toloma Gran Hotel, Cochabamba

September 23–24, Days 3–4: Tablas Monte. The paved road to Villa Tunari climbs out of the Cochabamba Valley and over a mountain pass at 11,700 feet before descending gradually through miles of lush Yungas forest. We'll leave our hotel early both days to spend the day at the higher elevations along this road, between about 7250 and 9250 feet; we will have breakfast and lunch in the field. Our precise schedule and localities will depend on the weather, and fog and low clouds may occasionally force us to descend to bird at lower elevations where it is clear. A clear morning here can be excellent for raptors, including the lovely Black-and-Chestnut Eagle, White-rumped and White-throated Hawks, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Bicolored Hawk.

Deserted sideroads offer plenty of opportunities to enjoy orchids, mosses, and colorful bromeliads. On our birding walk through the pristine Yungas forest, we will be hoping to encounter the rare Black-winged Parrot, the exquisite Hooded Mountain-Toucan, and endemics such as the Rufous-faced and Bolivian Antpittas, Black-throated Thistletail, and Bolivian Brushfinch.



The highly sought-after Hooded Mountain-Toucan © Andrew Whittaker

Among the hummingbirds, we have good chances at the Sword-billed Hummingbird, Rufous-booted Racket-tail, dazzling Long-tailed Sylph, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, and the tiny Tyrian and Scaled Metaltails. Tanagers are similarly well represented by Grass-green, Blue-and-black, Blue-capped, and Rust-and-yellow tanagers, along with Blue-winged (an endemic subspecies), Chestnut-bellied, Hooded, and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers.



Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager © Andrew Whittaker

Other species could include Scaly-naped Amazon, Yungas Pygmy-Owl, Golden-headed and Crested Quetzals, Pale-footed Swallow, Chestnut-collared Swift, Band-tailed Pigeon, Trilling Tapaculo, Light-crowned Spinetail, Band-tailed Fruiteater, Rufous-headed Pygmy-tyrant, Spectacled Redstart, and a variety of chat-tyrants.

Weather permitting, after a delightful lunch, we may drive lower down in search of such great birds as the striking Blue-banded Toucanet, the rare Yungas Tody-Tyrant, White-capped Dipper; Torrent Duck, Yungas Manakin, Black-striped Puffbird, the rare Green-throated Tanager, and White-cheeked Solitaire. Past tours have even recorded the rare Stripe-faced Wood-quail. We plan to return to our hotel by late afternoon on both days for a great Bolivian dinner.

NIGHTS: Toloma Gran Hotel, Cochabamba

September 25, Day 5: Cerro Tunari. This morning we will get an early start on our drive toward snow-capped Cerro Tunari. We may attain elevations as high as 12,500 feet today.

Passing through agricultural fields that are simply alive with birds in the early morning, we have a good chance at encountering such notable species as the endemic Cochabamba Mountain Finch and the rare and sought-after Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager.

We will also keep our eyes open for Andean Tinamous, which sometimes parade around the edge of the fields. Spectacular Olive-crowned Crescentchesters (of the highland race) sing their odd song from low

scrub, while Maquis Canasteros skulk in thorny brush. Three breathtaking species of hummingbirds occur here: the Giant Hummingbird, the gorgeous Red-tailed Comet, and the nearly endemic Wedge-tailed Hillstar.



Red-tailed Comet © Andrew Whittaker

Dainty Gray-hooded Parakeets, Black-hooded and Peruvian Sierra Finches, Greenish Yellow-Finches, Ringed and Rufous-sided Warbling Finches, and Golden-billed Saltators scour the fields for seeds. Roadside scrub holds the very locally distributed Fulvous-headed Brushfinch, while endemic Bolivian Warbling Finches display on the cactus-clad hillsides, and Rock and Bolivian Earthcreepers sing from their favorite boulders.

Our bus will climb ever higher as we search roadside polylepis forest for the Giant Conebill, endemic Gray-bellied Flowerpiercer, White-winged Black Tyrant, Brown-capped and Tawny tit-spinetails, Creamy-breasted Canastero, and Yellow-billed and Tufted tit-tyrants. Bubbling streams are home to Cream-winged Cinclodes, and we will keep an eye peeled for White-capped Dipper or Torrent Duck, too, while we may spot Andean Swifts, Variable Hawks, or Mountain Caracaras overhead.



Mountain Caracaras © Andrew Whittaker

Higher still, surrounded by spectacular snow-capped peaks, the treeless plateau of the puna is studded with huge boulders and threaded with crystalline streams. It is here that we enter the realm of the Andean Condor, Aplomado Falcon, Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, Andean Flicker, Glacier Finch, and, with luck, the rare White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant. Small pools attract Crested Ducks, Yellow-billed Teal, and Andean Geese. Cactus flowers are irresistible to the Andean Hillstar, a dazzlingly plumaged hummingbird known to range as high as 16,400 feet above sea level. We will be on the lookout, too, for the well-camouflaged but uncommon Boulder Finch and the Puna Tapaculo.

We plan to be back at our hotel in the late afternoon, with time for a well-earned rest before gathering again for dinner and the daily bird checklist.

NIGHT: Toloma Gran Hotel, Cochabamba

September 26, Day 6: La Paz and Lake Titicaca. A short morning flight will take us from Cochabamba to the bustling city of La Paz and its international airport. Our stunning views from the plane are a foretaste of what awaits us as we land amid an incredible landscape of snow-capped mountains. At these heights, the arid areas between river valleys are only sparsely vegetated; in the river bottoms, forests of tall eucalyptus line the waterways, and cultivated fields and settlements are interspersed with patches of pampas grass, willow, mesquite, and pepper trees.



Birding at Lake Titicaca © Andrew Whittaker

At 12,000 feet, La Paz is the highest capital city in the world. Over these past days, starting at 8,000 feet in Cochabamba, we have carefully and gradually climbed ever higher in an effort to make our time around La Paz more comfortable; on past tours, we have found that a gradual ascent like this helps participants acclimate better to these rarified heights. **For important information about personal health and our time at high elevation, please refer to the PHYSICAL ACTIVITY NOTIFICATION immediately following the day-by-day descriptions, and to the CONDITIONS section.**

Passing through bustling La Paz, we expect to arrive on the shores of Lake Titicaca for a late lunch. Lake Titicaca was considered by the Incas to be the birthplace of the sun, and still holds a sacred status for many locals. The lake is at an elevation of 12,500 feet, making it one of the highest large lakes on Earth. Lake Titicaca is fed by some 25 different rivers and waterways, the largest of which is the Ramis River. With a surface area of 3,200 square miles, Lake Titicaca is the largest lake in South America.

Our delightful accommodations are right on the lakeshore, and after lunch, we will start here with some relaxed birding in the lovely flower gardens. Some of the species commonly found are the White-tufted Grebe, Puna Teal, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, Black Siskin, and Peruvian Sierra Finch. We can also look forward to tremendous views of our main target, the flightless Titicaca Grebe, which is found here and at only a few other sites in Bolivia and southeastern Peru.



The flightless Titicaca Grebe © Andrew Whittaker

We also have the opportunity for an informative visit to the museum of the indigenous Inca Utama people, right on the hotel grounds, with audio guides. On display here are reed boats of the kind used by Thor Heyerdahl on his incredible 1947 *Kon-Tiki* expedition.

NIGHT: Inca Utama Hotel, Lake Titicaca

September 27, Day 7: Lake Titicaca and Sorata. After breakfast this morning, we'll drive past towering Illampu Mountain, at nearly 21,000 feet above sea level the fourth-highest peak in Bolivia. Our destination is way below on the slopes of the tiny town of Sorata, at 9000 ft, where we hope to get good views of the endemic and simply stunning Black-hooded Sunbeam. This is one of the most spectacular members of the entire family of hummingbirds, combining a turquoise back and rump and fiery orange tail with a striking black hood and belly. No painting can do this bird justice—it has to be seen to be believed.



The endemic Black-hooded Sunbeam © Andrew Whittaker

We also hope to see the endemic Berlepsch's Canastero, Spot-winged Pigeon, Brown-capped Titi-spinetail, Slender-billed Miner, Streak-backed Canastero, Cinerous Conebill, Golden-billed Saltator, Andean Lapwing, Mountain Caracara, and perhaps the Huayaco Tinamou or a feeding flock of Andean Ibis. We will also make a visit to a remote lake where Andean Gulls are common, and we should find noisy and well-named Giant Coots, sitting on their huge weed nests. We will also look for the Altiplano form of Common Miner (*titicacae*), a very good candidate for a future split.

In the afternoon, we will concentrate on birding an elevated road that takes us along the reedy edges of Titicaca, home to the Yellow-winged Blackbird and Many-colored Rush Tyrant. Here, we will search through the large flocks of shimmering pink Chilean Flamingos for both Andean and James's Flamingos.



Chilean Flamingo © Andrew Whittaker

We should also enjoy Cinereous Harriers quartering the reed beds. Other attractive altiplano species prefer the damp fields, such as the Mountain Caracara, Puna Pipit, and Peruvian, Plumbeous, Ash-breasted, and Band-tailed Sierra Finches. We will always have one eye open for the localized Puna Snipe.

NIGHT: Inca Utama Hotel, Lake Titicaca

September 28, Day 8: Lake Titicaca to Coroico. We will leave after a very early breakfast, passing La Paz to continue to the breathtaking Cumbre Pass, with spectacular views of mountains and steep-walled canyons along the way. Our elevation this morning will range from 11,000 to slightly more than 15,000 feet, and we will take it slow, with the tour leaders doing all of the walking to locate the many specialties of this area. Starting above the tree line, we will work our way down to the scrubby talus slopes near Pongo. Ovenbirds, ground tyrant flycatchers, and sparrow- and tanager-like passerines make up most of the avifauna at these high elevations. Our main targets here at nearby bogs and lakes are the much sought-after Rufous-bellied and Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, both unpredictable and typically hard to find—but we have been lucky enough to encounter them on all of our tours so far.



Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe © Andrew Whittaker

We will sort through flocks of Glacier Finches, Bright-rumped Yellow Finches, and Plumbeous and Ash-breasted Sierra Finches for an assortment of ground tyrants, hoping for Taczanowski's, Puna, and the larger White-fronted. A spectacular road will take us slowly down through incredible gorges into grassy valleys home to Andean Ibis, Andean Hillstar, and Streak-throated, Line-fronted, and Scribble-tailed Canasteros. Other possibilities at these high elevations include the striking Stripe-headed Antpitta, Puna Tapaculo, and Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant. We will be on the lookout, too, for the charming Mountain Viscacha, a rare rabbit-like rodent often seen sunning on the rocks. We will enjoy a scrumptious lunch of fresh trout at a roadside restaurant.



The charming Mountain Viscacha © Andrew Whittaker

Our route gradually descends toward the lush Amazona foothills. We plan to arrive at our hotel in the quiet mountain town of Coroico in the mid- to late afternoon. We will enjoy a short birding walk through the adjacent forest in search of such colorful residents as Southern Emerald-Toucanet, Swallow Tanager, and Yellow-bellied Siskin, with our top target the magnificent Versicolored Barbet.



The magnificent Versicolored Barbet © Andrew Whittaker

Other species could include Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Upland Antshrike, and Stripe-chested Antwren. At dusk, we have even seen Rufous-breasted Wood-quail well.

NIGHT: Hotel El Viejo Molino, Coroico

September 29– Oct 1, Days 9–11: Yungas Cloud Forest. From our mountainside base in Coroico, we will have three truly spectacular days exploring at very different elevations, each home to different neat birds. The old Yungas Road winds along spectacular cliffs with breathtaking views of orchid- and bromeliad-rich forest as far as the eye can see.

Ranging in elevation from 3,600 to 6,500 feet, sections of this little-traveled road are narrow, with waterfalls splashing onto the roadbed and ferns and mosses draping sheer cliffs. For birders, the Yungas Road, better known as the old Death Road, offers treasures rivaling those of even more famous birding routes such as Peru's Manu Road.



White-collared Jay © Andrew Whittaker

The possibilities here are nearly endless, as our recent tour's discovery of Bolivia's second-ever Rusty-breasted Antpitta and Lanceolated Monklet demonstrates. Though mountain birding is notoriously fickle, we hope to encounter exciting mixed-species flocks at each of our stops. The forest along the upper section of the road is very wet, with abundant mosses and bamboo. Some of the expected species in this zone include Rufous-faced, Undulated, and Bolivian Antpittas and Diademed Tapaculo. Mixed flocks may contain the sought-after Light-crowned Spinetail and Orange-browed Hemispingus.

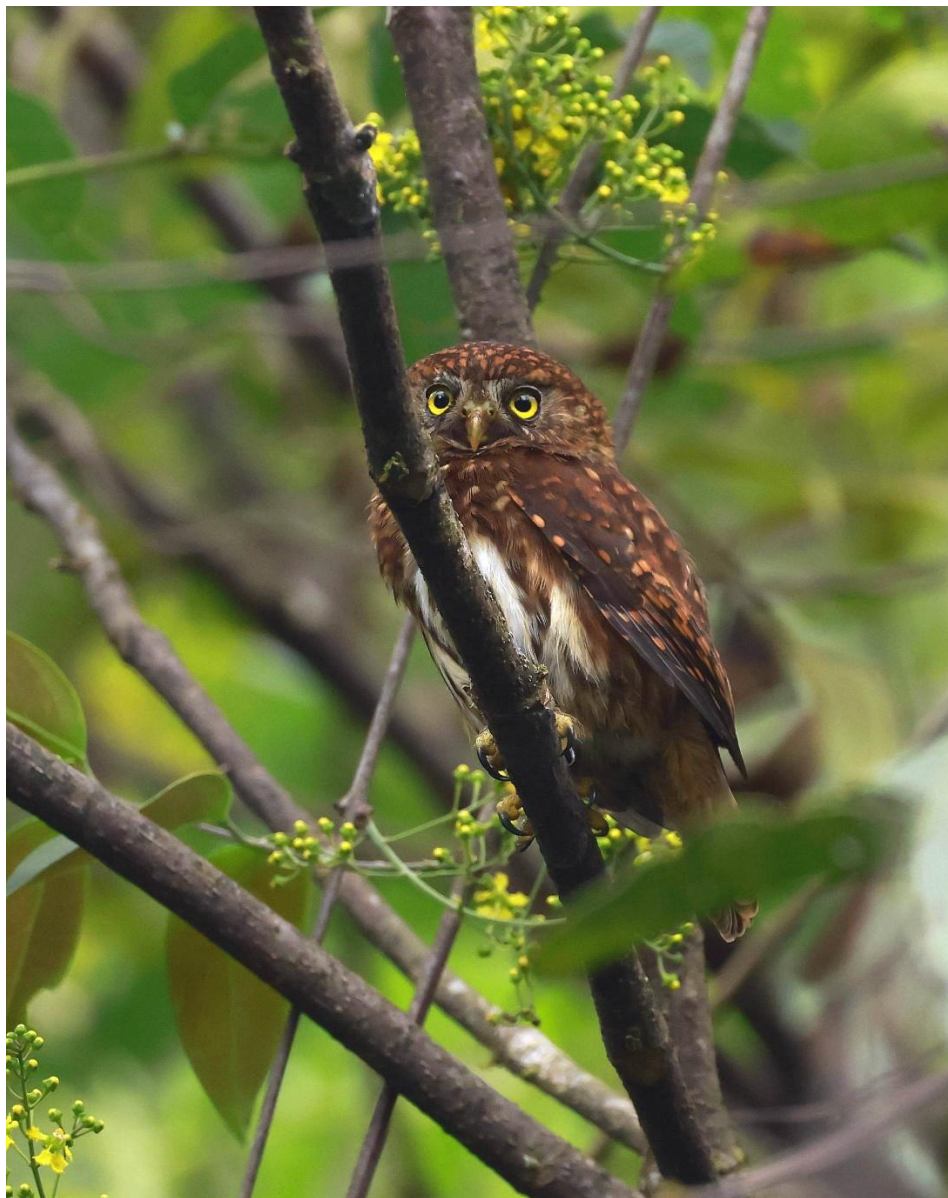


Orange-browed Hemispingus © Andrew Whittaker

Commoner inhabitants here include Pale-eyed and Glossy-black Thrushes, Hooded Mountain-Toucan, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Golden-collared Tanager, Barred Fruiteater, Red-crested Cotinga, Plushcap, and Mountain Cacique. Among the dazzling hummingbirds to be found here are the Great Sapphirewing, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Rufous-capped Thornbill, and Sword-billed Hummingbird.

At lower elevations, we will concentrate on rarer target species, such as the Black-winged Parrot and the enigmatic Scimitar-winged Piha, which all but one of our previous tours have seen. On one tour, we were able to find a rare Andean Potoo at its day roost. This is the realm of Andean Cock-of-the Rock (uncommon here), Golden-headed and Crested Quetzals, Masked Trogon, Blue-capped Puffleg, Gould's Inca, Green-fronted Lancebill, Andean Motmot, White-collared and Green (Inca) Jays, Yungas Pygmy-Owl, Citrine Warbler, Andean and Sickle-winged Guans, Rufous-bellied Bush-tyrant, Andean and White-eared

Solitaires, Slaty Tanager, and the skulky Trilling Tapaculo. We will also be on the lookout for Chestnut-crested Cotingas perched high, showing off their colors to the females.



Yungas Pygmy-Owl © Andrew Whittaker.

Mixed-species tanager flocks here are awesome, with a stellar line up including Hooded, Scarlet-bellied, Blue-winged, and Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanagers. A single fruiting tree can reward us with such snazzy birds as Orange-eared, Golden-naped, Beryl-spangled, Saffron-crowned, Blue-capped, Rust-and-yellow, and White-winged Tanagers, joined perhaps by a Scaled Fruiteater, Chestnut-tipped Aracari, or Southern Emerald Toucanet.



Southern (Black-throated) Emerald Toucanet © Andrew Whittaker

Weather permitting, on one of our afternoons here we plan to venture up into the natural grasslands of the cerrado, the biologically richest savanna in the world. The avifauna is quite different here, and we can hope to find the Yungas Dove, Ocellated Crake, Green-capped Tanager, Subtropical Doradito, and the localized Sharp-tailed Tyrant, a neatly marked flycatcher assigned to its own genus.

NIGHTS: Hotel El Viejo Molino, Coroico

October 2, Day 12: Coroico, and return to La Paz. After an early breakfast, we'll start the gradual ascent to La Paz, birding our way along old Yungas Road. We will concentrate on trying to see anything we have missed. Both Stripe-headed and Undulated Antpittas are found in elfin forest here, and flocks of mountain tanagers are a common sight. Slightly higher, grassy slopes and boulders are home to Andean Ibis and Puna Tapaculo.



The breathtaking Yungas cloud forest, stretching as far as the eye can see © Andrew Whittaker

We plan to arrive at our comfortable hotel in La Paz late this afternoon, with time for a break before enjoying an early farewell dinner together.

NIGHT: Ritz Apart Hotel, La Paz

October 3, Day 13: Departures. The tour ends this morning with the transfer to La Paz's El Alto International Airport (airport code LPB) for your international flights home.

TOUR SIZE: Grand Bolivia Parts I and II are each limited to 9 participants.

TOUR LEADER: Andrew Whittaker



Andrew Whittaker began his birding passion at the early age of seven in the UK (thanks to his parents). Andy is also a true all-around naturalist with an innate fascination for all aspects of the natural world; he loves sharing in the field his intimate bird, wildlife, and orchid knowledge in a fun and enthusiastic manner. Andy is a qualified ringer/bander trained by the late Dr. Clive Minton (fondly known as the father of shorebird studies). His lifelong fascination with bird migration has seen Andy working around the globe at several top bird observatories: Eilat, Israel; Long Point, Canada; and in the UK at Sandwich Bay and on Fair Isle, Scotland, as well as researching shorebirds in Borneo on their East Asian flyway. A senior member of the VENT staff, Andy has led VENT tours

worldwide since 1993, from dense South and Central American rainforests to the great white continent of Antarctica, and throughout Europe to the deserts of the Middle East. More recently, he has led tours in the bird-rich rainforests of West Africa and the mammal-rich savannas of East Africa, and to observe the cute Red Panda or exotic tragopan in the Himalayas of Nepal. Andy was born in England; however, he considers himself Brazilian, having lived more than 30 years in this mega biodiverse country, first working for the Smithsonian Institution, studying Amazonian rainforest birds in Manaus. He is widely considered an authority on Amazonian birds, having authored numerous technical publications on the region's avifauna. Andy is also well recognized for his intimate knowledge of South American avian taxonomy and bird vocalizations, with over 800 hours of bird recordings housed in the British Library Sound Archive. This trait has enabled him to discover several exciting new bird species (such as the Cryptic Forest-Falcon in 2002), as well as rediscover others thought to be extinct. Andy is an excellent communicator and calm tour organizer and loves nothing better than finding and sharing a rare, poorly-known skulker, or telling one of his many fascinating and fun birding and travel stories. His enthusiasm in the field is contagious, and these traits have made him a favored leader amongst participants. Andy had the honor of working with Sir David Attenborough in Brazil as a consultant for the prestigious BBC *Life of Birds* series. At present, Andy is working with Kevin Zimmer on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil to be published by Princeton University Press. Andy is an associate researcher at the Museum Goeldi, Belem; an active conservationist; and loves photography (with many of his bird images being used in books). He is also an avid football fan of Birmingham City FC and Real Madrid due to its worldwide mega star Jude Bellingham coming from his home team. Andy lives in Porto Alegre, Southern Brazil with his partner, Jaqueline, and their many orchids.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: If you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least four months before your departure date. We can easily make hotel arrangements and arrange transfers, often at our group rate, if we receive your request far enough in advance of the tour.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY NOTIFICATION: Grand Bolivia Part I operates entirely at relatively low elevations, below about 4,000 feet. Grand Bolivia Part II reaches significantly higher elevations in the Andes, up to over 15,000 feet on the last few days of the tour. Although our ascent to high elevation occurs fairly gradually, it is a fact that the air is increasingly thinner the higher we go, and that even the best-prepared traveler can potentially develop altitude sickness, a serious condition. At these extreme elevations, we will always make a point of walking slowly, avoiding unnecessary exertion, staying well hydrated, and closely monitoring our responses to the relative lack of oxygen. Supplemental oxygen will be provided by our operator in the event anyone goes into distress. It is essential that anyone considering registering for Grand Bolivia Part II be in good health with no existing cardio-pulmonary conditions that could otherwise cause a medical emergency under the stress of traveling at high elevation. To ensure all participants are fit enough for this tour, VENT maintains a screening

standard that requires all participants complete a short health questionnaire as part of the registration process. VENT reserves the right to decline a registration for this tour. Similarly, VENT reserves the right to require a doctor's approval for travel on this tour. Please refer to the **CONDITIONS** section farther down for more information about the physical requirements of the tour.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may **NOT** be available. **For this reason, travel insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Through Ripcord, "emergency evacuation" can be purchased as a stand-alone benefit or as part of a comprehensive travel insurance policy. If you choose not to purchase insurance through Ripcord, you are required to obtain it through another provider.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for **Part I, Bolivia: Eastern Lowlands, Beni Grasslands & Inter-Andean Valleys** tour is **\$7,995** per person in double occupancy from Santa Cruz, Bolivia and includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 14, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, roundtrip internal flight (economy class) between Santa Cruz and Trinidad (or Cochabamba if continuing on to the next part of the tour), and guide services provided by the tour leaders. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Santa Cruz, and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tours do not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

Please Note: The cost for the internal flights is included in the tour fee. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours reserves the right to assess a surcharge for the price of the air ticket should costs increase significantly.

The fee for **Part II, Bolivia: Foothills, Cloud Forests & the Altiplano** tour is **\$6,425** per person in double occupancy from Cochabamba. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to dinner on Day 11, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Santa Cruz, Bolivia with the connecting flight to Cochabamba, and return from La Paz, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tours do not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for **Part I** is **\$710**; and the single supplement for **Part II** is **\$645**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

Special Note: Participants on both tours will receive a Combination Tour Discount of **\$400** (\$200 off each tour).

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for each tour is **\$1,000** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at <https://ventbird.com>) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second

deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days (April 11, 2024 for Part I; April 23, 2024 on Part II) prior to the tour departure date.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Cancellation by Participant:

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person per tour will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposits are not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants' protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

If participant cancels:

180 days or more before departure date

179 to 151 days before departure date

150 days or less before departure date

Participant's refund will be:

Participant's deposit minus \$500*

No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded

No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

Cancellation by VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A "**Force Majeure**" event means any act beyond VENT's control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is impossible to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend their **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation and rescue services** from your point of injury or illness to your **hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for **trip cancellation/interruption**, primary medical expense coverage, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, **waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion**, and a **“Cancel for Any Reason”** benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: <https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 14 days of making your tour deposit. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 14 days in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. The primary medical expense benefit is available to U.S. residents only. For this reason, non-U.S. residents will pay an adjusted premium when purchasing a comprehensive policy, which includes all of the other benefits available to U.S. residents. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

In line with the decision made by the federal government (including the CDC), Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a Coronavirus FAQ page on its website that addresses questions and concerns

travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ** page at the following link:

https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e., voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE: Please limit your luggage to one full-sized bag and one carry-on or daypack. Duffels stow more easily in buses than do large hard-sided suitcases. Check with your airline carrier for international weight restrictions on luggage. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you visit the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <https://www.tsa.gov/>

CLIMATE AND CLOTHING: This tour is scheduled for the period of transition from the late dry to the early rainy season. We do not expect much rain, and indeed, it would be welcomed in most areas. Two areas of cloud forest, however, may be wet, and they can be foggy or covered in low clouds virtually year-round. Temperatures will range from cool to pleasant or even hot and dry around Santa Cruz; it will be damp and chilly in the cloud forest, and cool, possibly even frosty, in the early morning at some of the higher elevations visited on Part II. Note that occasional cold fronts can occur in the lowlands, bringing wind and chilly temperatures. **Please remember to bring one set of cold-weather clothes.**

Lightweight, loose-fitting field clothing will be useful at low elevations, but **we urge you to please avoid white or unusually bright-colored clothes, especially white hats.** Movement is much more noticeable in bright or white or light-colored clothing and more apt to frighten skulky birds and animals. We suggest long pants and long-sleeved shirts for lowland areas, where biting insects are possible; insects are not a problem elsewhere. T-shirts or short-sleeved shirts can be worn on some days even in the Andes (during mid-day breaks), although temperatures can vary markedly over short periods of time, and there is a greater risk of sunburn at high elevation.

Bring a good hat for sun, as well as protection against the intense ultraviolet radiation at very high elevations. A newly purchased high-SPF, sunscreen is recommended to avoid sunburn at high elevations. Mid-elevation cloud forests are cool and damp, and dressing in layers is necessary to prevent chilling.

Participants should have an umbrella and a rain jacket. Rubber boots are not necessary, but Goretex boots will be useful, as some trails or roads in the cloud forests may be muddy. Most areas, however, will be quite dry. We suggest sturdy walking shoes, a spare pair of sneakers, shower thongs, and three or four changes of field clothing. Regular laundry facilities will be available in Santa Cruz (useful for participants on the Bolivia Part I tour), Trinidad, and Cochabamba. A few roads are very dusty, so bring plastic bags to protect cameras, binoculars, and other personal items.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Bolivia is required for United States citizens to enter the country. Tourist visas are required for U.S. citizens, and can be obtained on arrival for \$160, paid in US dollars or in local currency. Nationals of other countries should check with their consulates for accurate and up-to-date information. Visit the Embassy of Bolivia website for the most current visa information (<https://www.boliviawdc.org/en-us/>).

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair along with a belt pack or daypack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medication, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

You may also want to bring between-meal snacks such as nuts, dried fruits, granola bars, etc., as we may not be able to purchase them in Bolivia. Some walking on hilly terrain on both tours is necessary, so please consider bringing a walking stick: it will help.

Other useful but optional items include a pocket knife (pack it in your checked luggage) and raingear.

Checklist of essential items:

- A small light or headlamp (and extra batteries)
- Insect repellent
- A ½- to 1-quart large-mouthed plastic water bottle (bottled water is available for purchase, but we will try to carry water in large containers, so bottles with large openings are easier to refill)
- Sunscreen lotion and good hat
- Supply of plastic bags
- Walking shoes or boots, a pair of sneakers, and thongs or flip-flops for showers
- All personal medications, including first-aid supplies, and extra eyeglasses
- Checklist, small pocket notebook, and pens
- Binoculars
- Sunglasses
- Daypack
- Passport with Entry Visa (see details above)
- Travel alarm (very important, as not all hotels have wake-up service)

CONDITIONS AND ELEVATION: Grand Bolivia Part I operates at fairly low elevations, below about 4,000 feet. Grand Bolivia Part II reaches significantly higher elevations in the Andes, to over 15,000 feet on the last few days of the tour. Our itinerary is designed so that our ascent to high elevation will occur gradually over a period of several days, which can make acclimatization to higher elevations easier. Even so, the air is very thin at these elevations, and the risk of developing altitude sickness is real. We will always make a point of walking slowly, avoiding unnecessary exertion, staying well hydrated, and closely monitoring our responses to the relative lack of oxygen. Your guides will be outfitted with supplemental oxygen, available to anyone who shows signs of distress. **Please consult your physician about any concerns about travel at high elevation.**

Altitude sickness: Altitude sickness is a condition that can occur when the body doesn't have time to adjust to lower oxygen availability higher up in the atmosphere. The condition, which can occur anywhere above 7000 feet, can range in severity from mild to extremely dangerous. Acute altitude sickness is most often revealed by a headache at high elevation, which may be accompanied by nausea and/or fatigue. These symptoms are a common experience even at ski resorts in the western United States, which are at a significantly lower elevation than the altitudes on the Grand Bolivia Part II tour. For example, these symptoms are not uncommon among people staying near the base of the mountains in Aspen, Colorado, or Mammoth Mountain, California, which are at only approximately 8000 feet altitude. Taking Tylenol or an NSAID and drinking copious amounts of water help with these symptoms, as does supplementary oxygen, but the symptoms may be avoided with a prophylactic medication prescribed by a physician.

There is a tendency to think "it won't happen to me," but it certainly can. To help prevent severe altitude sickness, avoid tobacco and alcohol consumption, increase your intake of fluids, and do not take sleeping pills. Altitude sickness seems to be more frequent in people suffering from diseases such as anemia, COPD, angina, heart failure, and cystic fibrosis, among others; a recent heart attack or stroke may also predispose you to dangerous altitude sickness.

For additional important information about altitude sickness, its causes, symptoms, and preventive measures, visit <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2024/environmental-hazards-risks/high-elevation-travel-and-altitude-illness>.

Though we avoid extreme exertion on our outings, both tours involve some walking on steep terrain, so good mobility, stamina, and balance are required to participate in this tour. Trails can be narrow, uneven, and sometimes wet. Many participants find a walking stick useful. If you are unable to comfortably walk a mile at a slow "birding pace," you should reconsider registering for this tour.

Drink only bottled water and bottled beverages in Bolivia, and be sure to avoid ice, which may be made with tap water. We will always have purified water available in the vehicles, usually in large containers from which you can refill your wide-mouthed drinking bottle.

Please note that Red-fronted Macaw Lodge has shared bathroom facilities.

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations. A yellow fever inoculation **is required** to visit tropical areas of Bolivia, and you may be asked to present your vaccination certificate upon arrival if your travels take you to that area.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying "Up to

Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19.

INSECTS: Biting insects (“no-seeums”), ticks, and mosquitos are sometimes a problem in eastern Bolivia, especially in open areas, and insect protection is important.

Insect Repellents – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Currency – The local currency is the boliviano, equivalent at the time of writing to approximately US \$0.14. ATMs are widely available in cities, and US dollars can be exchanged at banks.

Departure tax – **\$25 USD** (paid in USD currency and subject to change)

Electricity – 110 volts, but 220 volts in some cities; standard flat-pin two-prong electrical outlets are used in almost all hotels. If you are traveling with devices that cannot run on both, you will need a voltage converter.

Language – About 70% of Bolivians speak Spanish, with three dozen indigenous languages also in use. English is very infrequently spoken away from hotels and major tourist destinations.

Time – Standard time is observed all year. Bolivia is one hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time and two hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time, and four hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time and five hours ahead of Pacific Daylight Time.

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

Highly recommended for this trip:

Herzog, S. K., R. S. Terrill, A. E. Jahn, J. V. Remsen, Jr., O. Maillard Z., V. H. Garcia Soliz, R. MacLeod, A. Maccormick, & J. Q. Vidoz Armonia. *Birds of Bolivia Field Guide*. Printed in Bolivia and filled with terrific illustrations and excellent maps, all in a convenient portable format that makes sorting through the tremendous diversity of birds we will observe even more of a pleasure. Please note: This field guide can be extremely difficult to find in the U.S. but can be purchased through Future Generations University: <https://www.future.edu/birds-of-bolivia/>.

Alternative field guide:

Schulenberg, T. S., D. F. Stotz, D. F. Lane, J. P. O'Neill, & T. A. Parker III. *Birds of Peru*. Revised and updated edition. Princeton University Press, 2010. Relatively compact (but remember, there are almost 1800 species in this book) though not as small or lightweight as field guides to North America and Europe.

Butterflies:

D'Abrera, B. *Butterflies of South America*. Australia: Hill House, 1984. Good pocket guide covering many genera in nice pictures. Some newer books on butterflies (including some published privately) are available and may be useful on this trip. Check the internet for resources including K. Garwood and R. Lehman, *Butterflies of Southern Amazonia*.

Mammals:

Emmons, L. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990. Paperback with good pictures and excellent text. Useful only for Bolivia Part I.

General:

Forsyth, A., and K. Miyata. *Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rainforests of Central and South America*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984. Excellent introduction to tropical ecosystems; now in paperback. Does not deal much with birds, but a top-notch text covers just about everything else.

Hilty, S. L. *Birds of Tropical America: A Watcher's Introduction to Behavior, Breeding and Diversity*.

Second edition. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005. An introduction to a wide variety of topics of interest to birders and naturalists. A sampling of topics: why there are so many species in tropical America; why antbirds don't eat ants; why there are so many flycatchers; why tropical birds are so colorful (or not); how hummingbirds survive and prosper in the cold Andes; why manakins and cotingas dance; and many more. A must for visitors to the New World tropics.

Kricher, J. C. *A Neotropical Companion. An Introduction to Birds, Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics*. Second edition. 1997. Another good introduction to tropical ecosystems. Ambitious, wide-ranging, knowledgeable, and an excellent read for anybody wanting a broader look at wildlife in the New World tropics.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, "**VENT**") act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on March 31, 2024, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or

reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

BOLL:20250909/ BOLF:20250921

Rev: 12/10/2024- AW/RW

P: 12/10/2024