



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

INDONESIA: WEST PAPUA

JUNE 21–JULY 7, 2025

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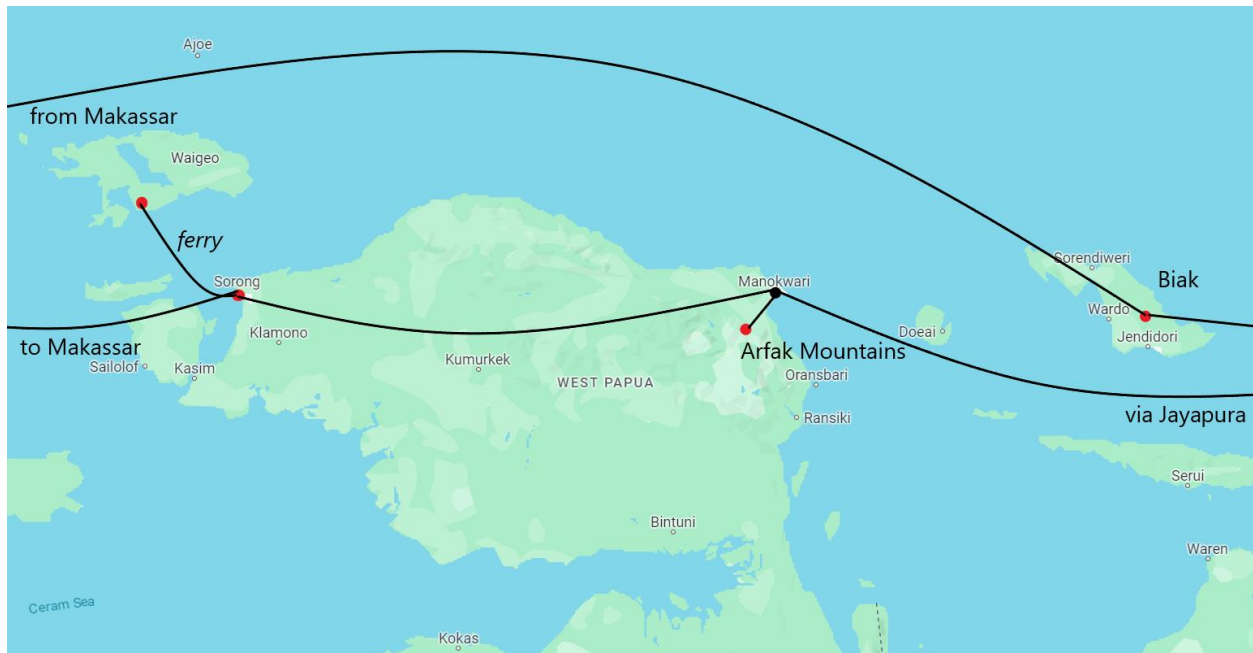


Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise © Scott Baker

Exceptional tropical forest birding with large numbers of endemics in one of the world's least known and exotic birding destinations. We will explore areas of lowland, hill, and montane forest teeming with birdlife. We expect to see a large variety of birds-of-paradise, fabulous kingfishers, pigeons, parrots, bowerbirds, and many handsome forest skulkers. West Papua is the jewel in the crown of Indonesia's eastern archipelago. Here, large tracts of lowland rainforest still remain, and the isolated highlands of the Arfak Mountains are home to a bounty of wonderful birds-of-paradise. Close to the mainland, the well-serviced islands of Waigeo and Biak are teeming with tantalizing endemics set against a backdrop of coastal forests and tropical seas home to some of the world's best coral reefs. This tour complements our already popular offering to Papua New Guinea by focusing on the specialties of the Vogelkop "Bird's Head" Peninsula, where we'll access a number of fantastic birding locales in a concise time frame, with minimal travel days.

Our exploration will begin on the small but endemic-rich island of Biak before we cross to the mainland and venture up to a homestay in the famous Arfak Mountains for several nights. Here there are multiple established hides and stakeouts for an array of mind-blowing species. We have the chance to watch male Western Parotia, Vogelkop Lophorina, and even Black Sicklebill perform displays that epitomize the extremes of sexual selection in birds. Here also, the Vogelkop Bowerbird constructs his bower, or "maypole," and displays his assorted collections of items taken from the forest; it is truly a bucket list experience. After our time in the highlands, we will return to the birdy lowlands near Sorong before a ferry trip out to wonderful Waigeo, where the mesmerizing display of Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise will be front of mind. In addition to the fantastic birds-of-paradise on offer, West Papua is home to a huge variety of specialties and families unique to the Papuan landmass. Owlet-nightjars, imperial pigeons, tiger-parrots, melampitta, jewel-babblers, paradise-kingfishers, monarchs, peltops, boatbills, and many more exotic species are all possible.

For this journey to the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago, we will be joined by an experienced and capable local guide and crew who will ensure our trip is as comfortable and smooth as possible. We will stay in good hotels and one excellent resort for most of this tour, however our time in the Arfaks will be spent at a very basic homestay with shared facilities. Travel will be via minibus and four-wheel drives, with mostly short drives, and a return ferry trip on a "fast boat" which adds the bonus of some pelagic birding. This is sure to be a great adventure to one of the last remaining areas of wilderness in South-East Asia.



June 21-23, Days 1-3: Travel to Jakarta; Flight to Makassar. Participants should arrange to depart the USA on or before June 21, cross the International Date Line and arrive in Jakarta no later than the early morning of June 23. Upon arrival at Jakarta’s Soekarno-Hatta International Airport (JKT) and clearing customs, please make your way through the airport to terminal 1A for Sriwijaya Air flight **SJ-580**, currently scheduled to depart at 2:00 pm, arriving at Makassar’s Sultan Hasanuddin International Airport at 5:25 pm – a total of 2 hrs and 25 mins actual flying time.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider arriving in Jakarta on or before June 21 and spend the night. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements.

Upon arrival in Makassar we will be transferred to our comfortable and conveniently located lodging at the HARPER Perintis Makassar Hotel, just a short drive from the airport. Makassar is largest city of Eastern Indonesia located on the south-east coast of Sulawesi. Unfortunately, there won’t be much time to explore Makassar. There will be dinner and the opportunity to meet your guides and some (brief) introductions before retiring in preparation for an early start the following day.

NIGHTS (June 21 & 22): In transit to Jakarta
 NIGHT (June 23): HARPER Perintis Makassar Hotel, Makassar

June 24, Day 4: Fly to Biak. We have a very early flight to Biak this morning. There are limited alternative options in this regard and our departure from Makassar at 3:15 am will be challenging! The three-hour flight, thankfully, will be an opportunity to catch up on some rest. Assuming there are no delays, we should arrive at Biak Island just after 7:00 am. First up checking in to our accommodation at the Swiss-Belhotel, a relatively modern and stylish facility – certainly the best that Biak has to offer! There will be time to freshen up, enjoy some breakfast and prepare for our first day of birding.

Biak is a low-lying, coral fringed island located within Cavendish Bay around 60 miles off the north-west coast of West Papua. It is in fact a wonderful place to begin our West Papuan journey given this is the most populous and developed of the Geelvink archipelago allowing us to explore the island in some comfort. It also (importantly) hosts an impressive array of endemics and a bunch of quality extras. This will be our first encounter with some of the distinctive Australasian bird families. Megapodes, pigeons, old-world parrots, trillers, whistlers and Australasian warblers are well represented with several stand-out endemics. The stunning Biak Paradise-Kingfisher, Geelvink Fruit-Dove, and the recently split Biak Hooded Pitta are high on the target list of any visiting birder.

We will focus our efforts on the more easily accessed forest sites today including some roadside birding and forest trails. Despite extensive and ongoing clearing of forest for agriculture most of the local specialist birds are reasonably widespread. Others, such as the Biak Monarch, Biak Coucal and the Biak Scops Owl will require some luck and special effort.

NIGHT: Swiss-Belhotel Cendrawasih, Biak



Biak Scops Owl © Scott Baker

June 25, Day 5: Biak. Some of the targets (all endemics) will include Biak Megapode, Geelvink Imperial-Pigeon, Black-winged Lory, Biak Whistler, Biak Monarch, Biak Leaf Warbler, Biak Gerygone, Biak White-eye and Long-tailed Starling. All of these are quite plausible. Biak Paradise-Kingfisher are reasonably common and the Geelvink Fruit-Dove also likely but getting decent views of Biak Hooded Pitta can be a challenge. With a supporting cast on Biak that includes Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove, Moustached Treewswift, Emperor Fairywren and Golden Monarch, it is certain to be an exciting day of island birding.

NIGHT: Swiss-Belhotel Cendrawasih, Biak

June 26, Day 6: Fly Biak to Maokwari; Drive to Arfak Mountains. After breakfast we will fly from Biak to the regional capital of Manokwari (via Jayapura). Upon arrival in Manokwari we will have lunch and purchase supplies in preparation for our stay in the Arfak Mountains.

The Arfak Mountain Range situated on the Birds Head or (the Dutch) ‘Vogelkop’ Peninsula is a distinctive geographical formation in the far north-west of West Papua that somewhat resembles a bird head. The range itself rises steeply and dramatically from the north coast to its highest point – Mount Arfak at a regionally impressive 9,700 feet. Being densely forested and effectively isolated from the central range of the New Guinea Highlands to the east, this montane system supports an exceptional array of endemics and forms part of the Vogelkop montane rainforests ecoregion.

It is a two to three-hour drive from Manokwari to the Minggre Birdwatching Homestay – our base for the next three nights. To be clear, the facilities here (and throughout the Arfaks) are basic, being simple but comfortable homestay-style accommodation. We will compromise on some of the mod-cons (no WiFi or air-conditioning, and unreliable hot water) for this three-night/four-day period, for the opportunity to observe some of the most extraordinary birds on the planet in a wild and largely undeveloped and unspoiled landscape. The Arfak Mountains are arguably West Papua’s premier birdwatching destination.

NIGHT: Minggre Birdwatching Homestay, Arfaks

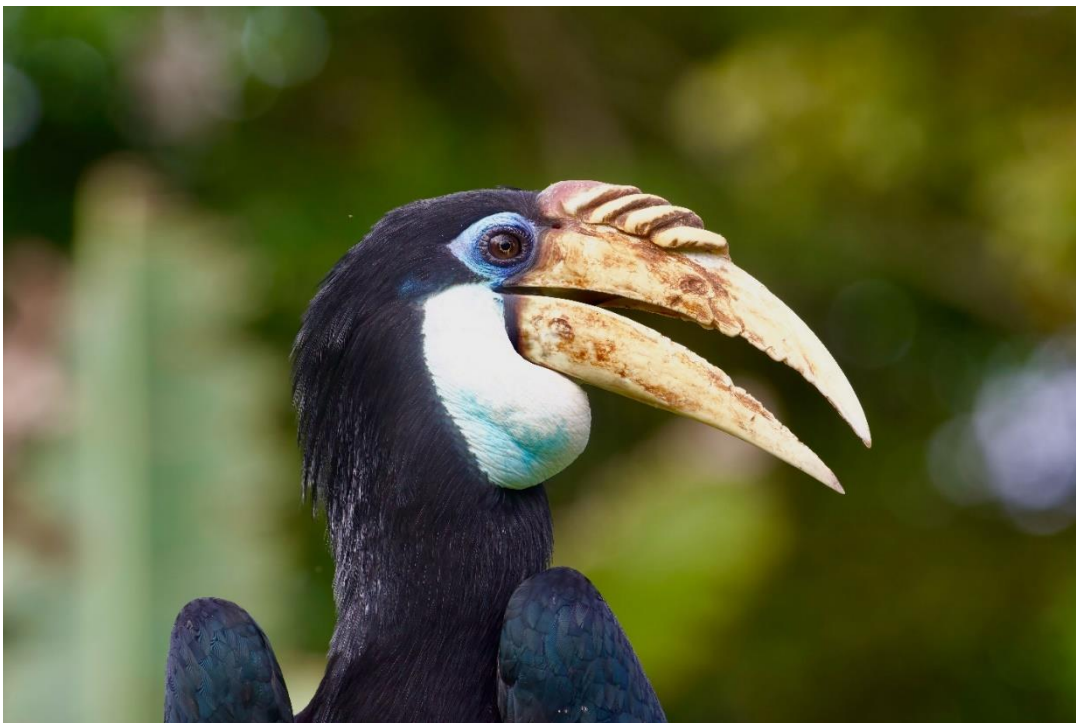
June 27-28, Days 7-8: Arfak Mountains. Minggre Village is a mid-elevation site ideally situated to explore the various highland forest communities which include tropical mountain rainforest, lower mountain forest and foothill forest. A superbly diverse ecosystem that harbors some of the world’s great avian treasures. Much of the birding will be along fairly level dirt roads and tracks, however there may be some trickier tracks involving steep and slippery sections in order to reach some of the less-obtrusive species – of course these particular forays are always optional.

This is bucket-list territory. We will dedicate time to target several Bird-of-Paradise species here, four of which are considered ‘Vogelkop endemics’. Each species has its own distinctive display, and having the chance to witness their intricate and diverse courtship rituals will be an unforgettable experience. From the surreal electro-ballet of the Western Parotia to the dramatic kabuki-like performance of the Vogelkop Lophorina – both famously captured on David Attenborough’s series ‘Our Planet’, this is nature at its absolute finest. There is also the possibility of Arfak Astrapia and the rare and poorly known Long-tailed Paradigalla, both unique to the Arfaks. In addition, Magnificent and Lesser birds-of-paradise, the incredible Black Sicklebill, Magnificent Riflebird, and Glossy-mantled Manucode feature amongst the other ‘Paradiseaids’ in range. Another fascinating resident is the Vogelkop Bowerbird, regarded as the world’s greatest avian architect. The male of this species

constructs an incredible roofed ‘maypole’ bower decorated with beautifully organized collections of colorful berries, beetle-wings, and flowers to impress the females – each bower is different.

The list of forest gems we may record is extensive. Some of a dizzying array of regulars to the Minggre region include the following; Sultan’s and Black-billed cuckoo-doves, Cinnamon Ground-Dove, Ornate, Superb, and White-breasted fruit-doves, Papuan Mountain-Pigeon, Rufous-throated and White-eared bronze-cuckoos, several of the remarkable owlet-nightjars like Feline, Mountain, and Vogelkop; Mountain Swiftlet, White-striped Forest Rail, Long-tailed Honey-buzzard, Pygmy Eagle, Black-mantled Goshawk, Papuan Boobook, Blyth’s Hornbill, Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, Blue-collared Parrot, Fairy and West Papuan lorikeets, Arfak Catbird, Masked Bowerbird, Papuan Treecreeper, Wallace’s and White-shouldered fairwrens, Ornate and Vogelkop melidectes, Mountain, Arfak, and Long-billed honeyeaters, Red, Papuan Black, Elfin, and Red-collared myzomelas, Goldenface, Mountain and Rusty mouse-warblers, Large, Vogelkop, and Grey-green scrubwrens, Gray Thornbill, Brown-breasted Gerygone, Spotted and Chestnut-backed jewel-babblers, Black-bellied Cicadabird, Rufous-naped Bellbird, Black Pitohui, Vogelkop and Sclater’s whistlers, Hooded Pitohui, Black-breasted Boatbill, the curious monotypic Mottled Berryhunter, Drongo, Black, Friendly, and Chestnut-bellied fantails, Fan-tailed Monarch, Lesser Melampitta, Gray Crow, Mid-mountain Berrypecker, Spectacled Longbill, an amazing array of Australasian robins like Green-backed, Garnet, Arfak, Black-throated, Blue-gray, White-faced, and Lesser Ground-Robin; Island Leaf Warbler, Black-fronted and Capped white-eyes, and the tiny Olive-crowned Flowerpecker. Keeping in mind that rainforest birding is difficult and most of these are elusive and skulking varieties that reveal themselves infrequently.

During our stay we will be relying on local guides with their exceptional bush skills and knowledge of the area and behavior of these birds (in particular the birds-of-paradise) to maximize our chance of



Blyth’s Hornbill © Scott Baker

an encounter. Visiting known lekking sites, hides and feed tables will enhance opportunities for observation, and often at very close range.

NIGHTS: Minggre Birdwatching Homestay, Arfaks

June 29, Day 9: Arfak Mountains; Drive to Manokwari. We will have a final morning of birding in the Arfaks before descending to the humid lowlands and relative civilization of Manokwari. We can look forward to an evening at a quality establishment with all the modern amenities (including of course hot showers!) and some fine dining – a well-deserved reward after some surely memorable birding in the highlands of West Papua.

NIGHT: Aston Niu Manokwari Hotel and Conference Center, Manokwari

June 30, Day 10: Fly to Sorong. Today we have a morning flight to the city of Sorong on the far western tip of the Vogelkop Peninsula – the largest and most developed city in West Papua, and capital of the Southwest Papuan Province. After lunch we will check in to our hotel and have the afternoon to bird an area of mangrove and swamp forest south of the city. A colorful boardwalk and a viewing tower will enable some access. Importantly this is a hotspot for the rare Blue-black Kingfisher, a beautiful and range restricted species.

Other species we may encounter here include Spotted Whistling-Duck, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Collared Imperial-Pigeon, Lesser Black Coucal, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Glossy and Uniform swiftlets, Moustached Treeswift, Barred Rail, Nankeen Night-Heron, Striated Heron, Little Kingfisher, Blue-fronted Fig-Parrot, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Emperor Fairywren, Helmeted Friarbird, Large-billed Gerygone, Black Butcherbird, the reclusive Black Thicket-Fantail, and Shining Flycatcher.

NIGHT: Swiss-Belhotel, Sorong

July 1, Day 11: Malasigi. Today we have an early morning drive to Malasigi, a traditional Papuan village and pristine tract of lowland rainforest around 30 miles east of Sorong. It is home to the Moi people and serves as an eco-tourist venture that offers traditional cultural experiences and access to the surrounding forests, rivers, and cave systems. We have a full day to explore this relatively newly opened and under-birded region, targeting some of the specialized lowland forest species including the exquisite King Bird-of-Paradise and Lesser Bird-of-Paradise. Several others such as Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise are also known from this location but it will depend on the time of day, location and knowledge of active lekking sites. A few of the other possibilities include the endemic Red-billed Brushturkey, lovely Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, sneaky Hook-billed Kingfisher, Mimic Honeyeater, Tawny Straightbill, Papuan Babbler, Rusty Pitohui, Hooded Monarch, Spot-winged Monarch, Gray Crow, Yellow-faced Myna, and likely many others.

NIGHT: Swiss-Belhotel, Sorong

July 2, Day 12: Ferry to Waigeo. After breakfast this morning we will transfer to Sorong Harbor for the 9:00 am ferry which traverses the Dampier Strait and arrives in Waisai on the island of Waigeo around midday. The boat trip itself can be productive and we will keep an eye out for any seabirds such as tropical terns, shearwaters, frigatebirds, and boobies. Matsudaira's Storm-Petrel and Bulwer's Petrel are also possibilities at this time of year as well as several species of cetaceans.

Waigeo is the largest island within the Raja Ampat archipelago – a popular tourist destination (especially for diving enthusiasts) featuring some of the most biologically diverse marine ecosystems on the planet. The densely forested mountainous interior also hosts some spectacular wildlife including two endemic birds-of-paradise. The astonishing Wilson’s Bird-of-Paradise, rated by many as one of the world’s best birds, is definitely a key target, as is the Red Bird-of-Paradise (another stunning endemic). A series of accessible hides provide excellent opportunities to observe both these species.

We shall check in to our lovely accommodation at the Korpak Resort before a casual afternoon with the options to relax or bird around the villa itself. Spice, Pinon’s and Pied imperial-pigeons are regular, Lesser Frigatebird, Blyth’s Hornbill, Beach Kingfisher are also on the list, and Papuan Eclectus is refreshingly common. Mimic Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, and Brown-headed Crow are others worth looking out for around our lodgings.

NIGHT: Korpak Villa and Resort, Waigeo

July 3-4, Days 13-14: Waigeo. Whilst most visitors to Raja Ampat head to the beaches and diving sites, we should have the forest to ourselves and over the next two days will have several opportunities to search for the island’s star attractions. Wilsons Bird-of-Paradise will be a priority. Variously described as the best or most beautiful bird in the world, it is certainly one of the strangest – the adult male presenting a combination of electric blue cap, deep red and black mantle, and curiously curled, antennae-like tail plumes. We have a very good chance to observe the bizarre courtship ritual at eye-level, from the comfort of a specially constructed hide. We will also try our luck at the ‘dancing tree’ of the Red Bird-of-Paradise and visit some different forest areas that should



Yellow-billed Kingfisher © Scott Baker

produce a nice variety of other birds. Two other endemics we hope to encounter are the recently split Waigeo Shrikethrush and Waigeo Pitohui. Another endemic we are less likely to record is the near mythical Waigeo Brushturkey, a species thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered in 2002 after disappearing for 120 years. There is now a small population confined to remote montane forest on Mount Danai in east Waigeo.

Some of the more realistic possibilities include Dusky Megapode, Beautiful and Claret-breasted fruit-doves, Pinon's Imperial Pigeon, Blyth's Hornbill, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Hook-billed, Yellow-billed, and Common Paradise kingfishers, Papuan Eclectus, Red-cheeked Parrot, South Papuan Pitta, Puff-backed, Mimic, Tawny-breasted, and Spotted honeyeaters, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Green-backed Gerygone, Brown Oriole, Glossy-mantled Manucode, the gorgeous Golden and Frilled monarch, Black-sided Robin, Yellow-faced Myna, and Olive-crowned Flowerpecker.

A nocturnal spotlighting search is recommended for both Papuan Frogmouth and Papuan Boobook. There is also a chance to observe the Waigeo Cuscus, a beautifully patterned endemic marsupial still reasonably common in the village and surrounds.

This promises to be a relaxing and hopefully very productive conclusion to the tour. A wealth of fascinating birds and wildlife on the most idyllic island paradise imaginable. Enjoying, along with the birds, some fabulous dining and great sunsets from the comfort of this very well-appointed luxury beachside resort.

NIGHTS: Korpak Villa and Resort, Waigeo



Papuan Boobook © Scott Baker



Waigeo Cuscus © Scott Baker

July 5, Day 15: Ferry to Sorong. This morning, we can have one final birding session on Waigeo before returning to Sorong at midday by ferry. There may also be an optional afternoon bird walk at the nearby mangrove forest in Sorong (if time allows). Tonight, we will have a final farewell dinner and relive a very memorable two weeks in this beautiful and remote part of Indonesia.

NIGHT: Swiss-Belhotel, Sorong

July 6, Day 16: International departures. Tour ends this morning with departures from Sorong.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 8 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Scott Baker & Max Breckenridge with the assistance of a local guide.



Scott Baker's interest in wildlife began early on while growing up in the leafy, outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne which, although a highly urbanized environment, retained significant tracts of remnant natural woodland. It was here at the age of 11 that he got his first pair of binoculars and began what was to become a lifetime quest to identify all the birds in an ever-expanding neighborhood. By the age of 15 he was running weekly bird walks and talks and became a founding member of the very successful Yarran Dheran Junior Field Naturalists Club. In 1988 he was named the Nunawading Young Citizen of the Year in recognition of his contribution to natural history and conservation. Pursuing mutual interests in life science and fine art, Scott went on to hold various roles

in business, education, and environmental consultancy. This has facilitated opportunities to explore the wild places and wildlife of Australia and beyond. In 30 plus years he has traveled extensively throughout the continent with a major focus on birds. He loves the rare and sometimes challenging, cryptic varieties but also shorebirds and seabirds, having spent many days at sea. To date he has recorded (and photographed) almost all of the regular and resident land birds and pelagic species likely in the country. Scott has a passion for wildlife, not just birds, and conducts studies and regular surveys for mammals, reptiles, and frogs. His fieldwork will often involve additional nocturnal spotlighting sessions, requiring late nights and early mornings to maximize the “tetrapod” options, when possible. Scott is a well-regarded member of the Australian birding community, a moderator on several birdwatching forums and rare bird committees, and, since 2017, has run birdwatching and nature tours within Australia and parts of southeast Asia. He currently resides in Victoria but frequently interstate or abroad.



Max Breckenridge was born in the UK, but has lived virtually his entire life in Sydney, Australia. At age 12, his passion for birds was fostered when his parents took him and his brother out of school for 10 weeks to travel across Australia. After completing high school in Sydney, Max drove solo from Darwin to Broome, birding all the way, and spent the next month volunteering at the world-renowned Broome Bird Observatory. Max completed a Bachelor of Biodiversity & Conservation at Macquarie University in 2018. He has birded across every state and almost every corner of the Australian landmass. He has an excellent eye, and especially ear, for Australian birds. Some of his birding exploits in Australia include

two separate trips to the remote rainforests of Iron Range National Park on Queensland's Cape York (including a fly-in-fly-out trip during the middle of the wet season, when he spent two weeks under a tarp in order to see some of the key migrants from Papua New Guinea). Max is at home birding in the Old World and has spent the last decade covering as much of it as possible. He is incredibly passionate about wildlife conservation. In addition to guiding, he has spent much of his spare time working for BirdLife Australia, monitoring and researching the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater, including working on several captive-releases of zoo-bred individuals. Max receives immense pleasure from birding and showing birds to others, and takes pride in writing detailed trip reports. He is currently living on Lake Macquarie, north of Sydney, with his partner, Fernanda.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: When comparing trip costs with other tour companies, please consider that our tour fees include the *flights between Jakarta and West Papua*, and **all** internal air within West Papua. This represents a considerable savings as it includes several flights and a good deal of additional expense if you were to pay it separately.

The fee for Indonesia: West Papua is **\$12,795** per person based on double occupancy and will include all meals from dinner on Day 3 through dinner on Day 15, lodging as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation, *the flights from Jakarta into West Papua, the flight from Sorong to Jakarta*, all internal commercial flights, and guide services provided by the tour leader. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Jakarta and return from Jakarta, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, telephone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for Indonesia: West Papua is **\$1,500**.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for these tours is **\$1,000** per person per tour segment. For the main tour, a second deposit of **\$3,000** is due 210 days prior to departure (November 23, 2024). If you prefer to pay your deposits using a credit card, the deposits must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your initial 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 prior to the tour departure date. (January 22, 2025).

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: These tours visit 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 these tours.** 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.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Cancellation by Participant on Indonesia: West Papua: Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 210 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person 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 209 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is 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. **For participants’ protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

If participant cancels:

210 days or more before departure date
209 to 151 days before departure date

150 days or less before departure date

Participant’s refund will be:

Your deposit(s) minus \$500*
No refund of the deposits, but any payments on the balance 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.

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.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not 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: 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 15 days of making your first trip

payment. 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 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip cost in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. 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:

The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Generally average to good, modern hotels for the great majority of the trip, including one resort-style hotel on Waigeo. The homestay accommodation at Minggre in the Arfak

Mountains is basic. Participants will have private rooms, with suitable bedding and lighting, however bathroom facilities will be shared. Hot water and power are intermittent, but certainly available.

CONDITIONS: This is not a particularly strenuous tour however, it should be noted that West Papua, and in particular many of the highland sites in the Arfak Range are characterized by steep and sometimes muddy terrain. A moderate level of fitness and good balance is recommended. For the most part we intend to stick to the established roads and trails and preference the gentler (downhill) options – where possible. Be aware the surface conditions can vary and it is always possible we may encounter mud, slippery surfaces, and stony ground. We will be on our feet for most of the time we are birding in the mornings and afternoons, for this reason it is MOST IMPORTANT that you provide suitable protection and support for your feet and ankles. A collapsible portable seat and a walking stick can be useful in this regard.

CLIMATE: During the tour you will experience a wide range of temperatures and climate, from the 70s and high 80s in the lowlands (where it is also humid), to the 40s and 50s at higher elevations. We will almost certainly encounter some rain, possibly heavy.

CLOTHING: Lightweight field clothing is recommended for the lowlands, preferably in muted, drab colors, **NOT bright white, yellow or red**. Dark, muted colors help prevent startling the birds, especially when we are in the forests. This includes several pairs of pants and cool, comfortable shirts. Long-sleeved shirts, a hat, and sunglasses are recommended for protection from the sun and mosquitoes. Long socks are very useful, so that you can tuck your pants in and further avoid biting insects. A warm sweater, warm hat and thin gloves are essential for the highlands. **Raingear and an umbrella** are also essential, including waterproof pants which are very useful in case we encounter rain while in a boat. Dress will be casual.

Although there will be few, if any, really rigorous walks, we may encounter some mud, slippery surfaces, uphill and uneven terrain and tree roots. Add to that the fact that you are on your feet for much of the day and it is **most important** that you provide suitable protection and support for your feet and ankles. Lightweight (Gore-Tex or some similar material) but strong boots (hiking boots) that come up to the ankle and have a good lug-sole are ideal. Many people are apprehensive that these will be too heavy; this is not true. The protection, grip, and day-long comfort such boots afford is far superior to the seemingly comfortable sneakers/training shoes. If you like using a walking stick you should always bring it along every day.

LAUNDRY: Laundry service available at all of the main hotels on this tour, with the exception of Minggre Birdwatching Homestay in the Arfak Mountains.

CURRENCY: Indonesian Rupiah (IDR); exchange facilities are available through trade banks and at all international airports. It is recommended to change any money at Jakarta or Makassar. Visa/MasterCard are the most widely accepted credit cards. Our leaders typically change their money at the airport in Jakarta as it is time-consuming to do on the ground in West Papua.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Indonesia and a valid return airline ticket are required for United States citizens to enter Indonesia for up to 30 days. Longer stays will require a visa. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate or embassy for instructions.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition, along with a belt or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, camera, etc.). Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have a spotting scope and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. We will be birding from roadsides or open trails for much of the time, and a scope can be very useful for seeing such treetop birds as the birds-of-paradise. Other items to bring include a flashlight or headlamp, camera, extra batteries, water bottle, alarm clock, handy wipes, wash cloth, insect repellent, towel and umbrella (the latter is very useful and should be carried at all times). You should also have a supply of personal medication such as aspirin, a good cortisone cream, etc. As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.

HEALTH: Sanitary conditions in most restaurants and hotels in West Papua are up to Western standards. Virtually all hot, freshly cooked food should be safe; but peel fresh fruit and raw vegetables before eating, make sure meat is cooked thoroughly, and assume the water is unsafe unless informed otherwise by your leader. Hepatitis A and typhoid immunizations are recommended for West Papua. Malaria is present in West Papua but as yet it is not a serious problem. Please consult your physician or local travel clinic for recommendations. Participants need to be in good physical condition.

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.

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.

Chiggers, mosquitoes, and other insects can be a problem. We have found that regular use of “Cutter” or “OFF!” in lotion form, in combination with pump-action “OFF!” are most effective. We recommend that you bring one bottle of each. Please make sure you spray away from the bus and other participants.

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>

A Note About Chiggers: This tour visits areas where chiggers are known to occur. Chiggers are tiny parasitic mites found in most warm weather areas of the southern United States and the world's tropics. They are especially numerous in grassy areas, where, in the immature stage, they attach themselves to other animals or humans who make contact with the grass as they pass by. Chiggers do not suck blood and the majority of species do not carry disease. They do feed on bodily fluids through a process in which a digestive enzyme is produced by the chigger which essentially liquefies the skin around the area where the chigger is attached. The chigger is not usually attached to the skin for more than a few hours before it either falls off or is knocked off. Our bodies respond by producing a hardened area as a defence against the chigger's digestive enzyme. Though the chigger may be long gone, it is the presence of the hardened area, and the body's natural process of reabsorbing it that typically causes intense itching, often lasting for a week or more. Chiggers like to attach themselves to areas of thin skin, like around the ankles, beltline, undergarment lines, knees, and elbows.

Chiggers can be avoided by following these procedures:

- Avoid walking or standing in areas dominated by grass. These areas are where one is most likely to encounter chiggers.

- Tuck your pants into your socks to avoid direct skin-to-grass contact. Chiggers can find their way through clothing, but this is a standard and effective prevention technique.
- Apply insect repellent to your skin and clothing. Please refer to the Insect Repellent section that follows for important information about selecting and applying repellent.
- Powdered sulfur applied to waist, bottoms of pants, sock and boots is also effective at repelling chiggers. However, be warned that clothes will retain the sulfur odor for several washings. If using sulfur, never touch your eyes, nose, or mouth before washing your hands first.
- Shower at the end of each day in the field. Use a washcloth to vigorously rub your legs, feet, and ankles.

By following these methods, you should be able to avoid all chigger bites, as well as tick bites. If, however, you are bitten by chiggers anyway, you can reduce or eliminate the symptoms by applying benzocaine or hydrocortisone creams, calamine lotion, After Bite, or any number of anti-itch products.

MISC: Electricity - 230 volts, 50 cycles, plug types C and F (European)

Language – Bahasa Indonesia, Melanesian Pidgin, English and various local languages

Time - 13 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

INTERNET: Wi-Fi should be available at all hotels, with the exception of the Minggre Homestay in the Arfaks. Local SIM cards are available at major airports, or for those with newer mobile phones, E-SIMs are the best way to access the internet readily overseas.

PHOTOGRAPHY: As with anywhere in the tropics, especially inside the forest, photography, especially of birds, is never easy. However, there will be some very worthwhile opportunities when birding along roadsides or at any of the hides or feeders.

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.

Specifically for the Asia/Pacific region, we recommend this website for books that are difficult to find or out of print, <http://www.andrewisles.com/AndrewIsles/>.

Coates, B.J. & W. Peckover. Alderley, Brisbane: Dove Publications, 2001. *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of New Guinea*.

Cooper, W.T. & J.M. Forshaw. *The Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds*. Boston: Godine, 1972. A marvelous over-sized volume that effectively brings together what is known of each species, accompanied by indescribably beautiful illustrations. Out-of-print.

Eaton, J.A., van Balen, B., Brickle, N.W. & Rheindt, F.E. *Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago. Greater Sundas and Wallacea*. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions, 2016. An excellent field guide (with some quirky taxonomy at times) for the vast majority of Indonesia. Does not specifically cover West Papua however.

Flannery, T. *Mammals of New Guinea*. Rev. ed. Cornell University Press, 1995. Update of the 1990 edition from Robert Brown & Associates; Queensland, Australia.

Frith, C. & B.M. Beehler. *The Birds of Paradise: Paradisaeidae (Bird Families of the World Series, Vol. 6)*. Oxford University Press, 1998. A spectacularly detailed account of everything that is known about the birds-of-paradise; one of the finest bird books of its genre.

Gregory, P. *Birds of New Guinea (including Bismarck Archipelago and Bougainville)*. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions, 2017.

Paijijmans, K. *New Guinea Vegetation*. Australia: C.S.I.R.O. in association with the Australian National University Press, 1976. An excellent introduction to the vegetation communities of Papua New Guinea.

Pratt, T.K. & B.M. Beehler. *Birds of New Guinea-Second Edition. Princeton Field Guides 2014. A completely revised and re-illustrated edition*. The recommended book to get for this tour covering the entire New Guinea landmass. E-book available at Google Play.

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 October 4, 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.

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