



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

## NORTHERN ARGENTINA: A BIRDING BONAZA FROM THE CHACO AND THE ANDES TO IBERÁ AND IGUAZÚ

JANUARY 3–22, 2025

*Huge, friendly, and fascinating, Argentina offers the naturalist a wealth of exceptional birding and wildlife spectacles. This exciting new tour focuses on the special birds of the country's scenic northern region. Our carefully planned itinerary takes us to the top birding locations in all four major biomes of this most bird-diverse part of Argentina. Along with many widespread species, we'll also have opportunities to observe many endemics and near-endemics. The recent publication of a superb field guide makes a birding visit to this magical country even more appealing.*



Iguazú Falls © Andrew Whittaker

*The exciting habitats of northern Argentina include both dry Chaco woodland and the Sierran Chaco, a desert-like region stretching from southeastern Bolivia across western Paraguay and into the heart of northwest Argentina. The Chaco avifauna is particularly rich, and the vast majority of Chaco birds are not especially well known to naturalists. Among the highly sought-after species*

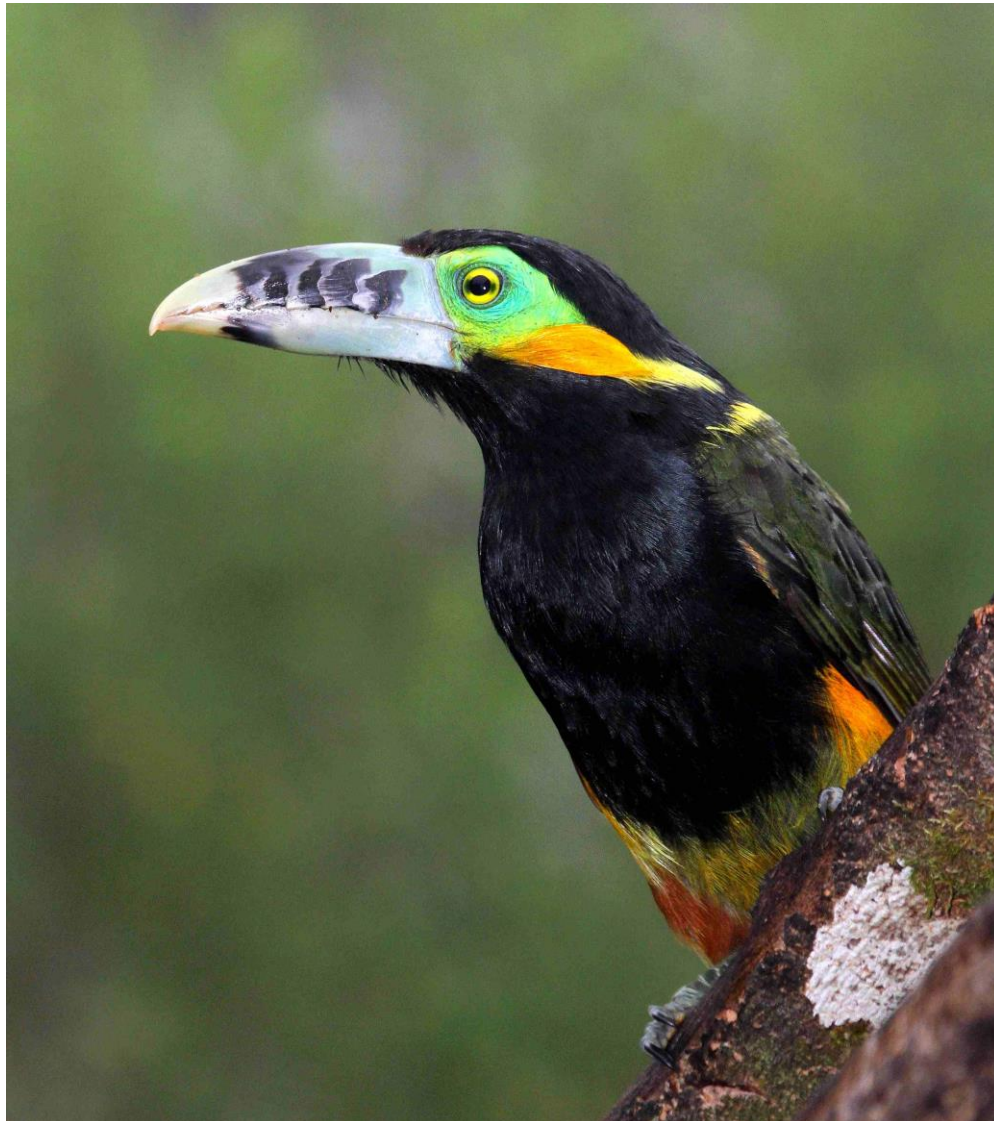
*here are the Black-legged Seriema, Spot-winged Falconet, Black-bodied Woodpecker, Chaco Owl, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, and two distinct forms of the Olive-crowned Crescentchest. To those familiar with the Sonoran Desert of the American Southwest, much of the Chaco will have a familiar feel. Many of the tree genera are shared, and the sheer abundance of birdlife also recalls the Sonoran Desert: the birds' morning exuberance is such that you literally don't know where to look next! Birding here is very easy, similar to birding the savannas of East Africa. Nearby salt flats are home to the endemic Salinas Monjita, a large and striking flycatcher.*

*Most of our trip will be devoted to exploring northwest Argentina's Andean habitats. Visitors are often surprised at the richness of the avifauna here, and no one can fail to be astonished at the region's scenic beauty. A splendid palette of birds and other wildlife awaits us in the lush Yungas forests of the foothills, in craggy canyons, and on the broad sweep of the altiplano. Deep valley forests are home to the endemic Bare-eyed Ground Dove, Yellow-striped Brushfinch, Tucuman Mountain Finch, and White-browed Tapaculo. The wonderful Torrent Duck—one of the world's greatest waterfowl—and the endemic Rufous-throated Dipper will keep us scanning every stream. This area is also the home of the Tucuman Parrot, Red-faced Guan, Lyre-tailed Nightjar, Fulvous-headed Brushfinch, Rusty-browed Warbling Finch, Rust-and-yellow Tanager, and the endemic Sierran Meadowlark. This region is well supplied with furnariids—spinetails, thornbirds, canasteros, earthcreepers, miners, cinclodes, and foliage-gleaners—and what is perhaps the most dazzling hummingbird on earth is also found here, the mind-blowing Red-tailed Comet. High-elevation lagoons offer a spectacular assortment of flamingos and waterfowl, while flocks of yellow-finches, shy mountain parakeets, and bold siskins add a swirl of color to the landscape of golden grass and blue skies. Even the rare Vicuña still roams the wilder part of the area.*

*The incredibly rich Iberá wetlands are inhabited by yet another completely different avifauna, which we will discover both on foot and on relaxed boat trips. At the top of the list of prized species here is the impressive Strange-tailed Tyrant; the black-and-white males of this endemic breeding species sport unbelievably long black tail flags. Other highlights here may include the massive Greater Rhea, Pinnated and Stripe-backed bitterns, Jabiru, Plumbeous Ibis, Cream-backed Woodpecker, and the striking White Monjita. Native grasslands are home to a stellar line-up of rare and colorful seedeaters, all in breeding plumage, including the Iberá, Marsh, Dark-throated, Chestnut, Chestnut-rumped, and Pearly-bellied.*

*We'll finish off on a high note, exploring the lush Parana rainforests. The thunderous cataracts of Iguazú, the world's largest waterfall system, are the breathtaking backdrop for yet more great birding. Here we'll be looking for the rare Helmeted Woodpecker, Solitary Tinamou, Black-fronted Piping-Guan, Surucua Trogon, Spot-billed Toucanet, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, and a variety of antshrikes, manakins, and tanagers. Our visit to a set of very active hummingbird feeders will dazzle us with a kaleidoscopic feast of colors.*

*Argentina's immense size and extremely varied habitats and avifauna—the country list tallies more than 1,000 bird species—make it impractical to explore the entire country in a single natural history outing. With that in mind, we are also offering a new adventure in southern Argentina (December 2-16, 2024) and Patagonia in December (the austral spring), which takes us into a number of totally different biomes that are home to a large number of different birds and unique mammals. In combination, these two exciting trips offer a full cross-section of this extraordinary country's varied habitats, incredible scenery, and spectacular wildlife.*



A male spot-billed Toucanet © Andrew Whittaker

*Our trip across this vast and beautiful part of South America is sure to grip the imagination. From the bird-rich Chaco and the lush forest-clad slopes of the towering Andes to immense wetlands and enchanting rainforests surrounding the world's greatest waterfalls, this will be an unforgettable adventure.*

**January 3, Days 1: Flight from USA to Buenos Aires.** Participants should plan to arrive at Buenos Aires's Aeropuerto Internacional Ministro Pistarini (more commonly known as Ezeiza, pronounced *eh-ZAY-za*; airport code EZE) on January 4. Most flights depart in the afternoon and will arrive the next morning. After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by our ground operator, then transferred to your hotel.

NIGHT: Aboard aircraft

**January 4, Day 2: Arrival in Buenos Aires.** This evening, we will meet up in the hotel lobby for introductions. Your tour leader will introduce himself and your excellent local birding guide, Julian, one of the country's top birders.

*Participants planning to arrive earlier may take an airport taxi to the hotel or arrange a private transfer through the VENT office for an additional charge. VENT will be happy to help with these arrangements on request.*

NIGHT: Hotel Madero, Buenos Aires

**January 5, Day 3: Flight to Córdoba; Birding the East Slope of the Andes.** After breakfast, we will make a short drive to the domestic airport for the one-hour flight to Córdoba, where our Argentinian adventure begins. In search of mid-elevation endemics, we will drive up to about 7,000 feet on the Pampa de Achala, a picturesque area with easy birding close to the road and an excellent introduction to the habitats of the eastern slope of the Andes. Among the exciting endemics here are the stunning Sierran Meadowlark and both Córdoba and Olrog's cinclodes. Other noteworthy species should include the mighty Andean Condor (often in close views), Variable Hawk, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, the dazzling Red-tailed Comet, Puna Canastero, Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Grass Wren, and the eastern form of Rufous-banded (Buzzing) Miner, which is to be split.



Andean Condor © Andrew Whittaker

The late afternoon will find us descending into the more diverse Chaco habitat, where bird density is higher. Here we will check in to our hotel for two nights, wonderfully situated in pristine Chaco habitat, with all of our wanted birds just outside the door. We may even have time for a cooling dip in the hotel's lovely pool.

**January 6, Day 4: The Chaco.** We will spend all day today—with a mid-day break—exploring the Chaco, the Guaraní Indian name for the semi-desert region stretching from southern Bolivia and western Paraguay to central Argentina. The Chaco has no mountains and few major rivers, making running water scarce; it is not as dry here, though, as to the west, and the slightly wetter climate attracts different bird species. Today will provide a fantastic introduction to the commoner Chaco birds, along with some species typical of higher, more forested habitats. The Chaco's dawn chorus of bird song is one of the best anywhere. The first sounds we hear may be the loud duets of the much sought-after Black-legged Seriema, Brown Cachalotes, or a lone Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper. We will concentrate our efforts on low-density near-endemics such as the Spot-winged Falconet and the cool-looking Black-bodied Woodpecker, but whatever the results, you can be sure that today's list will be a long one.

The Chaco draws its birdlife from a wide variety of adjacent scrub, steppe, and woodland regions. Given the general absence of water here, visitors are always surprised by the abundance of birds. Though most of these birds are relatively widespread in the Chaco vegetation communities, they are species that are not well known to birders. Among those we could find here are the Tataupa and Andean tinamous, the huge Cream-backed and the



Spot-winged Falconet © Hernan Goni

small Checkered woodpeckers, Blue-crowned and Monk parakeets, Turquoise-fronted Amazon, Ash-colored Cuckoo, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Blue-tufted Starthroat, Spot-winged Pigeon, Lark-like Brushrunner, Crested Gallito, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, and White-tipped Plantcutter. Flycatchers are an important component of the Chaco avifauna, with such interesting species as the Cinereous Tyrant, Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Suiriri Flycatcher, and Southern Scrub-Flycatcher. Among the many other passerines here are the Golden-billed Saltator, Many-colored Chaco Finch, Ultramarine Grosbeak, Red-crested and Black-crested finches, Black-and-chestnut and Chaco warbling finches, and Chaco Sparrow.

**January 7, Day 5: The Chaco and Salinas Grandes.** Little is known about the geological history of the Chaco, but biogeographers are fairly certain that dry conditions have prevailed here from the Pleistocene to the present. Most of the vegetation we'll see is low thorn-scrub. The dominant trees are two mesquite species (*Prosopis alba* and *P. nigra*), though many other species are present. Selective cutting for charcoal, firewood gathering, and cattle grazing have altered the Chaco in many places, resulting in an increased abundance of cacti and ground bromeliads. Where the soil is slightly less salty, mesquites give way to handsome and slightly taller quebracho woodland composed of *Aspidosperma quebracho-blanco* and *Schinopsis quebracho-colorado*. These trees are economically important for their beautiful wood, light- and dark-colored, respectively, as their species names suggest. We also find a paloverde tree (*Cercidium*) here very similar to the well-known species of the American Southwest. This morning we will concentrate on finding any Chaco birds that we may have missed the day before and on getting better views of skulking species such as the endemic Crested Gallito.

After a delicious early lunch, we will drive on to Salinas, where we will check in to our comfortable hotel in time for a few hours of well-earned rest.

NIGHT: Hotel Salinas Gran, Salinas Grandes

**January 8, Day 6: Salinas Grandes Saltflats and Tafi del Valle.** Our main objective this morning, as we enjoy another birding visit to the salt flats and open Chaco, will be to see the stunning and endemic Salinas Monjita. We will also pay attention to such less common and sometimes elusive species as the Black-legged Seriema, Chaco Chachalaca, Spot-winged Falconet, Crested Gallito, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Lesser Shrike-Tyrant, Chaco and possibly the rare Cinnamon warbling finches, *pallida* Olive-backed Crescentchest (a probable future split), Cinerous Tyrant, and the range-restricted Black-crested Finch.

As the day begins to warm up, we will begin the fairly long drive to Tafi del Valle, with a couple of birding stops along the way before we arrive at our hotel in the late afternoon.

NIGHT: Hotel Waynay Killa, Tafi del Valle

**January 9, Day 7: Mountains, Valleys, and Streams Around Tafi del Valle; Los Sosa Provincial Natural Reserve.** This morning, we will visit crystal-clear, boulder-strewn streams in the picturesque foothills of the Andes, the habitat of the charming and uncommon Rufous-throated Dipper, a bird that occurs only on a few streams in northwestern Argentina and adjacent Bolivia. We can hope to observe its fascinating feeding behavior as it moves between boulders, bobbing and flicking its wings to expose the large, usually concealed white wing flashes to startle potential prey.

We will also bird an incredible cloud forest dominated by alder (*Alnus jorullensis*) and pino del cerro (*Podocarpus parlatorei*) and visit the laurel (*Cinnamomum porphyrium*) forest of Los Sosa Provincial Natural Reserve, where we have good chances of seeing several species found only in Argentina and Bolivia, among them the Dot-fronted Woodpecker, Tucuman Parrot, Buff-banded Tyrannulet, Plumbeous Black-Tyrant, Brown-capped Redstart, the endemic Yellow-striped Brushfinch, and Rusty-browed Warbling Finch—though the real star, of course, will be the dipper.

After a good rest, we will search grassy or rocky open areas between 6,500 and 9,800 feet above sea level for Ornate and Andean tinamous, Andean Flicker, Gray-hooded Parakeet, Black-winged Ground Dove, Buff-breasted Earthcreeper; Hellmayr's and Correndera pipits, and Stripe-fronted Thornbird. Endemic species here include the Tucuman Mountain Finch, Moreno's Ground Dove, and one of the most beautiful of *Scytalopus* tapaculos, the White-browed Tapaculo.

NIGHT: Hotel Waynay Killa, Tafi del Valle

**January 10, Day 8: Cuesta del los Cardones; Drive to Cafayate, Afternoon Desert Birding.** Today we will make an early start for the spectacular El Infiernillo pass, at an elevation of 9,980 feet, then descend into an area of rain shadow characterized by cardon cactus (*Trichocereus pasacana*) up to 30 feet tall. Among the hummingbirds we will be looking for here are the cripplingly beautiful Red-tailed Comet, Giant Hummingbird, Sparkling Violetear, and Andean Hillstar. Passerines may include the Creamy-breasted Canastero, Straight-billed Earthcreeper, Rufous-banded (Buzzing) Miner, White-winged Black-Tyrant, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, and d'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant. Other birds we should be able to enjoy are Rufous-sided Warbling Finch and Greenish Yellow-Finch. Of course, we will also search for such endemics as the often vociferous White-throated Cacholote, Berlepsch's Canastero, and Monte Yellow-Finch, that last species first described as recently as 2012 by one of our friends.

We will check in to our well-situated hotel, then bird its forested grounds. We will offer an owling excursion tonight, with our prime target the rare and near-endemic Chaco Owl.

NIGHT: Grace Cafayate Hotel, Cafayate

**January 11, Day 9: Monte Desert Birding; Drive to Salta.** We will spend the best hours of the morning birding around our hotel, where we may encounter such nice surprises as the endemic Sandy Gallito, Chaco Puffbird, Black-crowned Monjita, White-banded Mockingbird, or the rare Cinnamon Warbling Finch. After an early lunch, we will begin our approximately four-hour drive to Salta, where we should have time for some late afternoon birding near the hotel.

NIGHT: Posada Don Numas, Salta

**January 12-13, Days 10-11: Yungas Forest, Montane Forest, and Scrubland.** This delightful location will serve as our base for two days of birding and exploration. Found only in central and southern Bolivia and Argentina, at an elevation between 1,300 and 6,500 feet, the Yungas is a seasonal cloud forest, receiving heavy rainfall for only part of the year. The trees in Yungas forest are usually festooned with epiphytes, but the forest does not attain the mossy lushness of its wetter equatorial counterparts. Common epiphytes here include *Tillandsia*, *Bromelia*, *Ichomes*, and *Rhipsalis*, a lovely dangling epiphytic cactus.

These distinctive forests are drier than "true" cloud forest, and several birds are found here that occur almost nowhere else. Other species, typical of forests to the north, reach their southern limits in the Yungas forests of northern Argentina. A long road winds through this spectacular habitat, providing access to splendid birding.

Among the many possible sightings here are the Rufous-thighed Kite (scarce), Solitary Eagle (quite uncommon), the near-endemic Red-faced and Yungas guans, Green-cheeked Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Large-tailed (or Yungas) Dove, Dot-fronted Woodpecker, Ochre-cheeked Spinetail, Slaty Elaenia (abundant!), Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher, Mottle-cheeked and Buff-banded tyrannulets, Plush-crested Jay, Eastern Slaty Thrush, Pale-legged Warbler, Brown-capped Redstart, Sayaca and Orange-headed tanagers, Moss-backed and Yungas sparrows, Rusty-browed and Rufous-sided warbling finches, Fulvous-headed and Stripe-crowned brushfinches, Golden-winged Cacique, and Purple-throated Euphonia.

The vegetation becomes noticeably scrubby above 5,000 feet, and a thousand feet above that, we enter a portion of the valley that lies in the rain shadow of the Andes, a very dry and rocky landscape classified as High Monte Desert. The high canyon walls, scattered with large columnar cactus, are a mosaic of ochres, reds, and greens. The whole scene invites comparison to the American Southwest.

Roadside tree tobacco plants are visited here by the incomparable Red-tailed Comet. Other neat hummers we hope to see include the Giant Hummingbird, Sparkling Violetear, Blue-capped Puffleg, and Slender-tailed Woodstar. In the thickets, one can find Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail, Plumbeous and White-winged black-tyrants, White-browed Chat-Tyrant, and Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant. Other birds here and at higher elevations include both Andean and Huayco tinamous, the endemic Bare-eyed Ground Dove, the Andean form of the Rufous-capped Antshrike, and Andean Flicker. A plethora of interesting ovenbirds includes the Bar-winged

Cinclodes, Cordilleran and perhaps Puna canasteros, Slender-billed Miner, and Rock and perhaps Straight-billed earthcreepers. We are sure to encounter the distinctive stick nest of the Streak-fronted Thornbird.

Between 6,500 and 9,500 feet, open fields and grasslands alternate with patches of shrubs. These areas often teem with birds, among them: several ground-tyrants, Slaty Flowerpiercer, Plain-colored and Band-tailed seedeaters, Greenish Yellow-Finch, Black and Hooded siskins, Long-tailed Meadowlark, and Ash-breasted, Gray-hooded, and Plumbeous sierra finches. Other exciting species may include the Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager and the near-endemic Tucuman Mountain Finch, both of which are quite local in distribution. Another species we will specifically search for is the Zimmer's Tapaculo, formerly considered conspecific with the White-throated Tapaculo. Andean Condors and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles are regularly seen in the upper reaches of this area, and we will be watching the skies for both of these species as well as for Rothschild's and Andean swifts. On one evening, we will take a dusk or nighttime trip for such cool nocturnal species as the amazing Lyre-tailed Nightjar; the male's incredibly long white tail feathers have to be seen to be believed! We also have a chance at two rarely seen owls, the Montane Forest Screech-Owl and—one of my favorites—the very locally distributed Buff-fronted Owl, a member of the same genus as the charming Northern Saw-whet Owl.

Our stay here will also provide a chance to enjoy the highly prized Rufous-throated Dipper if we have not already encountered it, or want to have better views of this enigmatic species.



**Buff-fronted Owl © Andrew Whittaker**



NIGHTS: Posada Don Numas, Salta

**January 14, Day 12: Flight to Posadas, and on to the Iberá Wetlands.** After breakfast, we will transfer to the airport for our flight to Posadas. As soon as we arrive, we will drive on to our lodge, situated right in the famous wetlands. Iberá is one of the most important bodies of fresh water in South America, and the second-largest wetland in the world, exceeded in size only by the Brazilian Pantanal. Fed by rainfall, it covers an area of between 5,800 and 7,700 square miles.

Since 1982, part of this wetland has been protected as the Iberá Provincial Reserve, one of the largest such reserves in Argentina, extending over 5,000 square miles; there are plans to transform the reserve into a national park, enhancing its protected status. This rich and complex wetland comprises swamps, marshes, and lagoons brimming with wildlife; its bird list is at 300 species and still growing. We will bird our way into these fabulous wetlands with frequent stops to admire the concentrations of large waterbirds, often an exciting mix of herons and egrets, ibis, ducks, and storks including the huge Jabiru, Maguari, and Wood storks.

Raptors abound here: Snail Kites will be a common sight along the roadside, while lovely Long-winged Harriers gracefully quarter the marshes. Soon we will spot family groups of huge Greater Rheas or stately Red-legged Seriemas patrolling the fields. Roadside wires are favorite perches for Streamer-tailed Tyrants, White Monjitas, and Campo Flickers.



**Jabirus at rest © Andrew Whittaker**

Late afternoon will find us checking in to our delightful lodge, nestled in the heart of these magnificent marshlands; all rooms have views out over the shimmering lake and river. Some of us may want to take advantage of a refreshing dip in the lodge's pool.

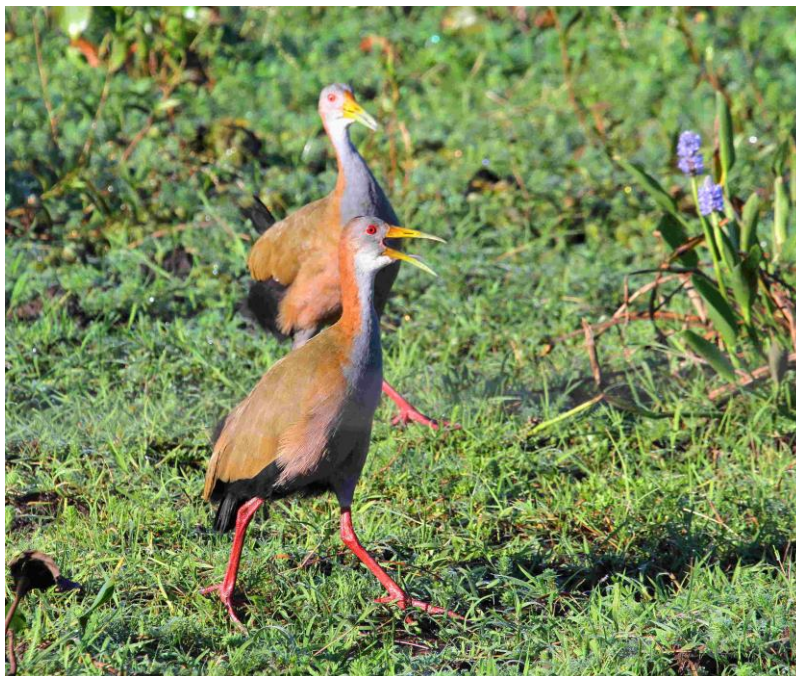
NIGHT: Aguape Lodge, Iberá Marshes

**January 15-16, Days 13-14: The Iberá Marshes, by Boat and on Foot.** We will awake to a tremendous dawn chorus, a cacophony of Limpkins, Chaco Chachalacas, Plumbeous Ibis, Turquoise-fronted Parrots, and Purplish Jays. The Rufous Hornero, Argentina's national bird, is omnipresent. Hornero is Spanish for "baker," an allusion to this bird's amazing mud nest; the name has been generalized to apply to all the members of the family Furnariidae, the ovenbirds.

We have two marvelous days to devote to exploring this truly amazing natural paradise. The river is lined with rich gallery forest, simply alive with birds; on our first full day here, we should easily chalk up over 100 different species. As the temperature starts to drop in the afternoon, we can take a relaxing but action-packed boat trip. Ringed, Amazon and Green kingfishers are all common. We will be keeping our eyes open for the rarely seen Yellow-breasted Crake and the commoner Rufous-sided Crake; we can even hope for the skulky Spotted Rail. Scanning the dense reeds could turn up a Pinnated Bittern or the even more retiring Stripe-backed Bittern.

The area's flagship bird is a unique songbird of climax grasslands, the well-named Strange-tailed Tyrant. Males in breeding plumage are truly striking, black and white with bare rufous throat skin and huge vertical black tail flags. This will be one of our main targets here in the species' stronghold, and hopefully we can enjoy the males' comical flight displays above the grass, their strange tails used as rudders. They remind your leader of east African grassland species such as the whydahs and widowbirds, which also have wild-looking tails deployed in the male's display.

Another endangered species we will hope to find here is the Sharp-tailed Tyrant. Other notable species could include the Red-winged Tinamou, Southern Screamer, Whistling Heron, Plumbeous and Buff-necked ibis, Giant Wood-Rail, White and Little woodpeckers, White-barred Piculet, Red-billed Scythebill, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Greater Thornbird, Rufous Cachalote, Black-and-white Monjita, Crested Doradito, Black-capped Donacobius, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, Purple-throated Euphonia, and Green-winged Saltator. Savanna, Great Black, White-tailed, and Black-collared hawks are all present, and with luck, we might even see a Chaco Eagle, a very large raptor that preys on armadillos.



**Giant Wood-Rails © Andrew Whittaker**

The reserve is certainly an epicenter of seedeater diversity, and we hope to encounter several colorful species of these grassland gems in their attractive breeding plumages: Dark-throated, Rufous-rumped, Tawny-bellied, Chestnut, Marsh, Pearly-bellied, Rusty-collared, and the Iberá Seedeater, described as a species as recently as 2016. We should also have more chances to enjoy the cool-looking and endangered Yellow Cardinal.



Yellow Cardinal © Hernan Goni

These rich wetlands also hold several interesting mammals, among them the Marsh Deer and herds of Capybara, the world's largest rodent, while the forest is home to families of Black-and-gold Howler Monkeys. Reptiles abound in these rich wetlands, which are a haven for the endangered Broad-nosed and the commoner Yacare caimans, often encountered in good numbers as they sun on the banks.

NIGHTS: Aguapé Lodge, Iberá Marshes

**January 17, Day 15: Wetland Birds; Drive to Posadas.** We will devote another morning to catching up with any birds that might have eluded us. Then, after a delightful lunch, we'll retrace our way back to Posadas and check in to our hotel. Posadas is the capital city of the northwest Argentinian province of Misiones, situated on the mighty Paraná River, which marks the border with Paraguay.

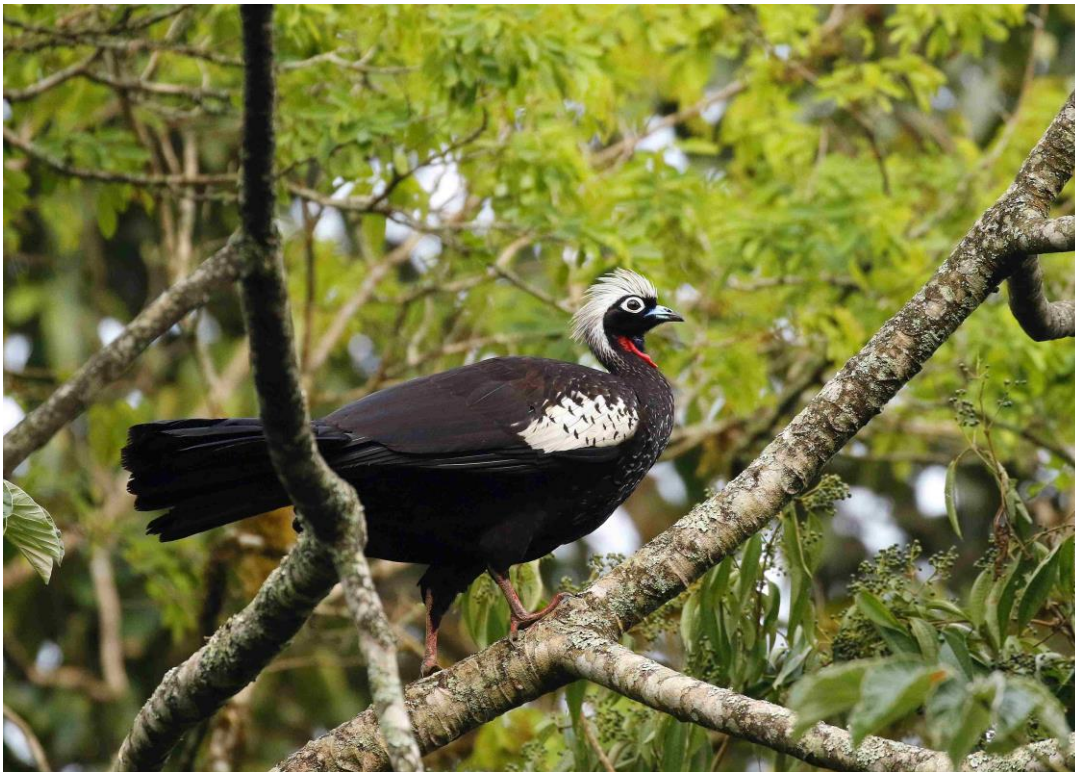
NIGHT: Hotel Julio Cesar, Posadas

**January 18, Day 16: Iguazú.** This morning we will concentrate on finding any birds we may have missed so far, while also enjoying such local specialties as the Streamer-Tailed and Sharp-tailed tyrants and Pearly-bellied Seedeater. After lunch, we will leave on the four-hour drive to our last destination, stupendous Iguazú Falls.

NIGHT: Falls Iguazú Hotel and Spa, Iguazu

**January 19, Day 17: Iguazú National Park, and Hummingbirds.** The thunderous cataracts of Iguazú will provide the backdrop to some phenomenal birding. The Iguazú River falls almost 250 feet, creating a fan of cascades with more than 250 individual falls. We will marvel at this miracle of nature as we walk along the park's trails, pausing at the many lookouts for spectacular views; the different levels of trails even let us see the falls from above and from below. The Devil's Throat, the epicenter of the falls, is truly amazing!

The scenic photo opportunities here are incredible, and the sight of these impressive falls will simply take your breath away. But we are in search of more than just incredible waterfalls. We will explore the lush Paraná Forest reserve for several spectacular birds, including the endangered Black-fronted Piping-Guan, Pavonine Cuckoo,



**Black-fronted Piping-Guan © Andrew Whittaker**

Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Spot-billed Toucanet, Toco and Red-breasted toucans, Surucua and Atlantic Black-throated trogons, Rufous-capped Motmot, gorgeous Band-tailed and Blue manakins, and Robust, Blond-crested, and Helmeted woodpeckers. Flocks of spectacular Green-headed Tanagers and pairs of Blue-naped Chlorophonias or Chestnut-bellied Euphonias add even more color to the scene. The attractive Streamside Warbler and White-winged Swallows forage for insects, while swirling flocks of Great Dusky Swifts swoop through the curtain of water to their nests on the sheer rock. Other species we should enjoy are the Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Cobalt-rumped Parrotlet, Crested Oropendola, and Red-rumped Cacique. We will certainly be on the lookout for the rare Buff-bellied Puffbird, which perches quietly in the forest's mid-story or canopy.

We can expect to encounter some interesting mammals, here, too, such as the South American Coati, Black-capped Capuchin, Red Brocket Deer, or Azara's Agouti. Among the reptiles are Tegui Lizards.

After a break and lunch at our hotel, our action-packed day continues, this time with a visit to a private hummingbird garden where feeders attract up to a hundred individuals at a time of as many as ten species. We should see the spectacular Swallow-tailed and White-throated hummingbirds, Scale-throated and Planalto hermits, Black Jacobin, Black-throated Mango, Violet-capped Woodnymph, Gilded Sapphire, and Versicolored and Glittering-throated emeralds. Variable Orioles and Bananaquits also take advantage of the feeders here.

NIGHT: Falls Iguazú Hotel and Spa, Iguazú

**January 20, Day 18: Urugua-í Provincial Park.** Today we will be visiting some stunning untouched patches of Atlantic Forest, an endangered collection of habitats just reaching into Argentina's Misiones Province. Many of these remnants are now provincial reserves, linked to Iguazú National Park to form what is known as the Green Corridor. This forest corridor still has good populations of large mammals, including the Jaguar, Puma, South American Tapir, and Giant Anteater—encountering any one of these creatures would be a magnificent stroke of luck, but there is always a chance.

The park is about 35 miles to our south, but the early rising will be worth it. Birding will be terrific, and we will make a particular effort to find rarities like the piping-guan and the rare and poorly-known Helmeted Woodpecker—I will never forget seeing my lifer here almost 25 years ago!

Beyond those specialties, some of the huge list of stand-out species we should encounter are the Solitary Tinamou, Rusty-margined Guan, Slaty-breasted Wood-Rail, Short-tailed Anthrush, Tufted and Spot-backed antshrikes, Rufous-winged Antwren, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Gray-hooded and Three-striped flycatchers, Sibilant Sirystes, Eared Pygmy-Tyrant, Southern Antpitta, Guira and Magpie tanagers, and Saffron-billed Sparrow.

If we find stands of healthy bamboo, we have a chance at the Speckle-breasted Antpitta, Bertoni's or Dusky-tailed antbirds, Spotted Bamboo Wren, Rusty-breasted Nunlet, Large-headed Flatbill, Planalto Tapaculo, and Chestnut-headed Tanager. After dinner, we will have an optional excursion into the forest around our lodge to look and listen for Common and the rare Long-tailed potoo, Tropical Screech-Owl, Mottled and Tawny-browed owls, and Short-tailed Nighthawk.

NIGHT: Falls Iguazú Hotel and Spa, Iguazú

**January 21, Day 19: Flight to Buenos Aires.** Depending on schedules, we may have some time to bird the forest reserve close to the hotel before we fly back to Buenos Aires and transfer to the international airport for connecting flights home.

If you would prefer to spend this night in Buenos Aires rather than immediately connecting to your homebound flight, our office will be happy to help organize a hotel transfer or book you a hotel.

NIGHT: Aboard aircraft

**January 22, Day 20: Arrival Home.** International flights departing Buenos Aires the evening or night of January 21 will arrive in the USA this morning.

**EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS:** Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 10 participants.

**TOUR LEADER:** Andrew Whittaker with the assistance of a local leader



**Andrew Whittaker**, a senior member of the VENT staff, has led VENT tours since 1993 throughout South and Central America, Antarctica, Europe, Israel, and, more recently, Africa and Asia. His birding passion began at the early age of seven (thanks to his parents). Andy is also a true all-around naturalist and loves sharing his intimate bird knowledge and fascination for all aspects of the natural world in a fun and enthusiastic way. 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. Andy is a qualified ringer/bander trained by the late Dr. Clive Minton (fondly known as the father of shorebird/wader studies). A 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 in Sabah. Andy is well recognized for his passionate and intimate knowledge of bird vocalizations and taxonomy, which has enabled him to discover several new species (such as the Cryptic Forest Falcon in 2002) and rediscover others thought to be extinct. He is an excellent communicator and tour organizer and loves nothing better than finding and sharing a rare skulker, or telling one of his many fascinating and fun bird and travel stories. Andy had the honor of working with Sir David Attenborough in Brazil as a consultant for the prestigious BBC Life of Birds series. He is widely considered an authority on Amazonian birds, having authored numerous technical publications on the region's avifauna. 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 and an active conservationist. He loves photography (with many of his images being used in books) and is an avid football fan of Birmingham City FC and an orchid lover. Andy lives with his partner in life, Jaqueline, and their dog, Mozart, in Porto Alegre, southern Brazil.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the tour is **\$10,995** per person in double occupancy from Buenos Aires. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to lunch on Day 19, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, internal flights, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Buenos Aires 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 tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$1,454**. 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.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. A second deposit of **\$3,000** is due 210 days prior to departure (June 7, 2024). 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 (August 6, 2024) prior to the tour departure date.

**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.

**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 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 from the date of participant tour cancellation, 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.**

<u>If participant cancels:</u>	<u>Participant's refund will be:</u>
210 days or more before departure date	Participant's deposit minus \$500*
209 to 151 days before departure date	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded
150 days or less before departure date	No refund available

\*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, 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 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 its **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 from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, 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 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/](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:** We ask that you limit your luggage to one large suitcase and one carry-on bag. As a precaution, we recommend that you pack a change of clothes, your binoculars, a pair of walking shoes or boots, medications, and toiletry items in your airline carry-on bag in case your luggage is delayed or lost.

As to internal flights, Aerolineas Argentinas is strict about luggage limits and imposes a stricter weight limit on our domestic flights than on their international flights. The domestic limit is currently 15 kilograms/person (35 lbs.); hand-carried luggage is limited to 5 kilograms/person (about 11lbs), but it is seldom weighed, and this limit can be exceeded a bit. The overweight charge for checked luggage amounts to a little more than a dollar a kilo. Nevertheless, we ask that travelers limit their luggage as much as possible to the 15-kilo (35-pound) limit. Please do not bring large carry-on bags. Large 20” and 21” roll-ons will have to be checked. At present, small



roll-ons (up to about 18" in height) are permitted, but these older jets have limited overhead space, and travelers with large carry-on luggage may encounter problems. In general, packing lighter is better. Extra baggage can be securely stored in Buenos Aires for those participants combining tours. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant.

**CLIMATE AND CLOTHING:** January's weather in Argentina varies from sunny and mild to very cold and rainy. In general, the Chaco desert region at the time of our tour is hot and dry, with temperatures in the 80s and low 90s F at mid-day, but pleasantly cooler at night. In the Yungas cloud forest, morning temperatures are cool to chilly (high 40s to low 60s), but it is much warmer during the day. The greatest temperature variability is at higher elevations in the Andes. Temperatures here vary from warm or hot and humid at Iguazú, to very cold at night in the Andes; rain, wind, and brilliant sunshine are all possible in a single day. You must bring layers of warm clothing, including a jacket or parka, gloves, and a hat to protect against sun. Good raingear and walking or hiking shoes (GoreTex or waterproof) are essential. **Please bring dull-colored, subdued color shirts, pants, and headgear for birding the Yungas cloud forest; we especially discourage white or brightly colored shirts, white T-shirts, and white or very light-colored hats here.** Elsewhere on this trip, we are in open terrain, where the color of one's clothing is less important.

A hat, sunglasses, and good sunscreen (minimum SPF factor of 30 or higher, or a zinc oxide sunblock) is recommended for protection from the sun, which is very intense at high elevations. Even on warm days, at very high elevations you may want to wear light gloves for sun protection. Dress is casual throughout, including at our meals in Buenos Aires, but if you plan other activities in Buenos Aires, a dress or jacket for evenings may be appropriate.

**FOOTWEAR:** We recommend a good trail-walking shoe or sturdy hiking boot (waterproof or GoreTex) for wearing in the field. Athletic shoes are acceptable, but they will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled in muddy conditions. A good walking shoe (such as an athletic shoe) may be preferred for down times or when we are traveling between destinations. Rubber boots are not necessary.

**DOCUMENTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Argentina is required. Visas are not required for entry by United States citizens. Citizens of countries other than the United States should check with their Argentinian consulate or embassy for instructions, as the rules and regulations pertaining to non-US citizens may be different.

**CONDITIONS:** While birding will be heavily emphasized, this program encompasses other aspects of natural history including scenery, mammal viewing, stargazing, and doses of botany: it is spring, and the flowering plants are incredible. We will travel in a small bus or coaster.

Walking conditions are generally easy to moderate. In many of the areas we visit, we will be birding along flat roads and trails, though our birding in the Andes does have some hills and gradients with some gradual climbs. No activities will take place above 10,800 feet in elevation; we have never had any problems with altitude sickness.

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Excellent to very good throughout. Good wine is available for purchase at all of our lodgings.

**LAUNDRY & WIFI:** Laundry services and Wi-Fi are available at all hotels and lodges.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition, along with a belt pack or daypack for books, sunscreen, extra batteries, 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. Please note that much of this tour is conducted where long-distance viewing is the norm. Your leaders will have a spotting scope, but if you have a scope and would like to bring it, we encourage you to do so, as it will allow you more time and opportunities to view birds and wildlife. **If you plan on digiscoping, please bring and use your own scope.**

Other items include

- A small flashlight
- **Water bottle (please bring a wide-mouth water bottle, such as the type offered by Nalgene).** In order to reduce plastic waste, drinking water will be supplied aboard the buses in 2- or 3-gallon containers. The small personal water bottles sold in airports, etc., have small openings and are difficult to refill from large containers.
- A good alarm clock (essential)
- A daypack

**FOOD:** Meals and wine in Argentina are very good, especially steak, pasta, and seafood. Finding healthy snack foods in Argentina is difficult, though. The snacks available in convenience stores are invariably high in carbohydrates and sugar (cookies, crackers, cereal bars, etc.) or high in salt and fat (potato chips, etc.). For a healthier selection, we recommend that you bring a good supply of your own, including dried fruits, trail mix, nuts, trail bars, etc.

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

The highest elevation on this tour's birding will be about 9,000 feet, for part of one day.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can visit their website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on Travel Health).

At this time, no vaccinations are required for entry into Argentina. However, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta advises us that there is a risk of malaria, though that risk is low on this trip. The CDC also suggests that tetanus and polio immunizations be current and that travelers strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

**INSECT PROTECTION:** Insects in general are not much of a problem on this trip, though we may encounter a few mosquitoes or other winged insects in the Chaco and perhaps in the Yungas cloud forest. Chiggers may be present locally in the Chaco, but we generally stay out of the grass, and they have not been a problem on previous trips. We recommend the use of Cutters roll-on, OFF, or DEET roll-on.

**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!<sup>®</sup>, Cutter<sup>™</sup>, Ultrathon<sup>™</sup>, 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 defense 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.

### **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

- Electricity: 220 volts; European-type two-pin round plug, or three-pin flat plug with two of the blades angled. The two-pin round connector is more widespread, but both are in operation in most of the hotels we will stay in. A few hotels may provide plug-ins that can accommodate standard American-type plugs with two flat pins of similar size (but not plugs with one flat blade larger than the other).

- Language: Spanish
- Currency: Argentine Peso
- Time: 3 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

## **SUGGESTED READING**

### **Essential Bird Guides**

Pearman, M., and J. I. Areta. 2020. *Birds of Argentina and the South-west Atlantic*. Princeton: Princeton UP. Excellent plates and text in this first-rate reference to Argentina birds. Without doubt the best for Argentina. This guide is essential for all visiting birders.

Merlin Bird ID. Online app for your phone with photos, maps, and voices all at hand in the Argentina species pack. Download from App store. Excellent to take into the field.

### **General References**

Hilty, S. L. 1994. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters. Useful background for Argentina, even though the focus is primarily tropical.

Kricher, J. C. 2017. *The New Neotropical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton UP. The focus is primarily tropical, but travelers may find it of use even on this trip.

Leitner, G. 2001. *Travel Companion Argentina*. London: Hunter. This and the next guide (and there are others) may be of interest to travelers seeking additional information on Argentina.

McCloskey, E. Most recent addition. *Argentina*. Chesham, UK: Bradt Travel Guides.

**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 April 30, 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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