



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

NORTHERN ECUADOR HUMMINGBIRD & TANAGER EXTRAVAGANZA: A RELAXED & EASY TOUR

MARCH 17-26, 2026

©2025



Shining Sunbeam © Paul J. Greenfield

Ecuador is one of the world's top four bird-rich countries, and this exceptional natural wealth can be experienced perhaps best through its incredible hummingbird diversity. During this trip we will be able to observe some 60 different hummingbirds and perhaps 40 distinct tanager species under the most favorable and relaxed viewing conditions found anywhere. This tour has been specifically designed for hummingbird enthusiasts and photographers along with anyone who would like to experience the Neotropics through these spectacular living gems.

This tour follows an easy transect up and over the western and eastern Andean slopes to revel in a spectacle of unimaginable color, glitter and frenzy unlike anything one could ever imagine. This is a world of hummingbirds—these tiny (or not so!) creatures that can fly backwards, sideways, and even upside down, as they feed, battle, and interact with each other at a truly dizzying pace—and a world of tanagers, characterized by their plethora of vibrant colors. We will concentrate on observing and/or photographing as many species within these intriguing families as possible.



Our journey takes us to a variety of key sites at varied elevations along both slopes of the northern Andes, each maintaining wonderful nectar and fruit feeding stations where we can watch, compare, and enjoy a wide range of species in surprising comfort. We will also take optional walks to explore forest trails and observe flowering plants in search of the few species that don't visit feeders regularly. This is an opportunity to focus on these marvelous creatures in a very relaxed and easy manner. We will stay at comfortable lodges and visit the most renowned hummingbird and tanager localities in northern Ecuador's high tundra-like páramo zone at Antisana and along the Papallacta Pass, temperate- and subtropical-zone forest at Guango Lodge and Cabañas San Isidro, Amazonian foothills at Wildsumaco Lodge, elfin forest at Yanacocha Reserve, the western subtropical and foothill cloud forests of the Mindo-Milpe area, and the Pacific coastal lowlands at Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary among other hot-spots.

The species' names alone are mouth-watering! Just think—hermits, sylphs, trainbearers, pufflegs, incas, starfrontlet, sapphirewing, sword-bill, sunbeam, coronets, racket-tails, whitetips, hillstars, brilliants, thornbills, woodstars, woodnymphs, jewelfront, emeralds, sapphire and fairies! And what about Glistening-green, Orange-eared, Flame-faced, Golden-eared, Paradise, Emerald, Rufous-throated Golden-crowned & Grass-green tanagers, or Hooded, Lacrimose, Blue-winged, Black-chinned or Scarlet-bellied mountain-tanagers!

This is a perfect itinerary for fanatics, photographers, and even beginners who feel the urge to delve into the world of tropical hummingbirds and tanagers in a light-paced but “full-on” fashion. A mini-disclaimer: This trip is slated as a focus on hummingbirds and tanagers, which it is, but because Ecuador is one of the richest ‘bird-countries’ on Earth, it is ultimately inevitable that some other avian creatures will inadvertently slip into view at times. Neither VENT nor your trip leader can be held responsible for these annoying interruptions from a possible raptor, guan, parrot, quetzal, trogon, motmot, puffbird, jacamar, barbet, toucan, woodpecker, furnariid, antbird, cotinga, manakin, jay or other feathered ‘nuisance.’ Thank you for your understanding!

This tour is one in our series of Relaxed & Easy (R&E) tours. These tours are appropriate for participants who want a slower paced tour, with somewhat fewer hours in the field and light physical activity. They are ideal for persons who prefer a somewhat later start in the morning (typically 7:00 a.m.), a break after lunch and a shorter afternoon outing. They involve only short walks, usually not more than a half mile, and avoid difficult terrain.



Golden-eared Tanager (Wildsumaco Lodge) © Paul Greenfield

March 17, Day 1: Arrival in Quito. Arriving participants will be met at the airport and transferred to our comfortable hotel. If you happen to be interested in sightseeing around the beautiful capital city of Quito—the world’s first UNESCO World Heritage Site (9,000 ft. altitude)—or in doing some craft and souvenir shopping, please plan to arrive a day or two in advance. This is also recommended in order to acclimate and to avoid complications in the event of flight delays and lost luggage.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

March 18, Day 2: Drive to the Mindo Valley via Yanacocha Reserve and the Paseo del Quinde EcoRoute to Séptimo Paraíso Lodge. We will head out early this morning, initiating Part I of our adventure, to explore the western slope of the Andes. From Quito, we will drive up and over Pichincha Volcano, accompanied by

photogenic panoramas and pastoral Andean vistas, to Yanacocha Reserve, at over 11,000 ft. The entire region is home to an abundant avifauna, including a number of regional endemics, and we will enjoy a pleasant morning walking through magical high-Andean elfin forest and scrubland at this very special site. This is a tried-and-true hummingbird/tanager heaven—or at least a part of it! Nectar and fruit feeders have been set up at Yanacocha, and we will take time to enjoy the activity which will be eye-catching and even

dizzying at times, to say the least. The unbelievable Sword-billed Hummingbird, Buff-winged Starfrontlet; Sapphire-vented & Golden-breasted pufflegs; Rainbow-bearded Thorntail; Great Sapphirewing; Mountain Velvetbreast; Tyrian Metaltail; and Shining Sunbeam are all possible here as are Andean Guan; and Scarlet-bellied, Hooded and Black-chested mountain-tanagers—all seeable



Sword-billed Hummingbird © Paul J. Greenfield

at point-blank! We may want to enjoy our field-lunch here (depending on the weather and timing); we will then depart and continue on our way downslope along the *Paseo del Quinde* EcoRoute (translated as “Hummingbird Drive”) where we will make a key stop at Bellavista Cloud Forest Lodge, perched on a forested knife-sharp ridge that overlooks the beautiful Tandayapa Valley. Here, a battery of nectar feeders brings us face-to-face with yet another *swarm* of hummers, including Collared Inca, White-booted Racket-tail’ and Gorgeted Sunangel, along with periodic visits by a few Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers. We will have to pry ourselves from this frenzy to continue to our west-slope destination and ‘center of operations’ for the next few days, but we will be on constant watch for the eventual mixed-species foraging flocks that could hold Blue-capped, Grass-green & Blue-and-black tanagers, along with the iconic Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, among other species.

NIGHT: Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo

March 19–20, Days 3–4: Full days in the “Greater” Mindo area. We will wake each morning to the whirr of literally thousands of very special wings as we now find ourselves in the heart of Ecuador’s Chocó bioregional endemism (meaning unique species found nowhere else). The grounds around our lodge are just unbelievable, and we will have ample time to enjoy a parade of spectacular hummingbird and tanager species that reside here. Each day, for those who just cannot pull themselves away from this paradise, we will offer the option to remain at the lodge, enjoying the feeders and surrounding forest and gardens, or join our group for jaunts to a few nearby, key sites. We will want to visit Milpe Bird Sanctuary, ‘San Tadeo Birding,’ Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary, along with the *Paseo del Quinde* Ecoroute among other possibilities, with each site offering additional experiences and an array of different species. Some of the many possibilities we’ll be searching for include the following hummingbirds—Bronzy, White-whiskered, Baron’s, Stripe-throated and Tawny-bellied hermits; Band-tailed Barbthroat; White-tipped Sicklebill;

Wedge-billed Hummingbird; Green-fronted Lancebill; Green Thorntail; Green-crowned, Fawn-breasted & Empress brilliants; Crowned Woodnymph; Purple-chested Hummingbird; Green & Brown violetears; Western Emerald; Andean Emerald; Brown and Collared incas; Buff-tailed and (the glowing) Velvet-purple coronets; Violet-tailed Sylph; Purple-bibbed Whitetip; White-booted Racket-tail; Gorgeted Sunangel; White-bellied, Purple-throated and Little woodstars; and tanagers—White-shouldered, Tawny-crested White-lined, Lemon-rumped, Fawn-breasted, Glistening-green, Blue-gray, Palm, Golden-naped, Black-capped, Gray-and-gold, Golden-hooded, Blue-necked, Rufous-throated, Beryl-spangled, Metallic-green, Rufous-winged, Bay-headed, Flame-faced, Blue-whiskered (rare), Golden, Emerald, Silver-throated, and Swallow; along with Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, among quite a few other members of this diverse family. This area holds one of the richest montane avifaunas found anywhere!

NIGHTS: Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo



Purple-throated Woodstar © Paul Greenfield

March 21, Day 5: Return to Quito via Amagusa-Mashpi Reserve and Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve. We will depart this morning after breakfast and initiate our return to Quito, but first by heading farther west to the Amagusa-Mashpi Reserve, which is owned and managed by a local Ecuadorian couple. This is a special place where nectar and, especially, plantain banana feeders have been set up; targets here include Glistening-green, Rufous-throated and Moss-backed tanagers; along with Golden-collared Honeycreeper. The incredible Chocó regional cloud forest in this area is quite amazing, and we will also take some time to look for special endemics like Pacific Tuftedcheek; Uniform Treehunter; Black Solitaire; Orange-breasted Fruiteater; and Indigo Flowerpiercer; among the many possibilities. After most of the morning here, we will return eastward to visit a local friend at Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve to check out his unbelievably active nectar and fruit feeders. This is an impressive site that offers mind-boggling activity and good photo ops if we haven't had enough already! We will then initiate our final push to the big city and the *finale* to Part I of our Extravaganza.

NIGHT: San José de Puembo, Puembo



Indigo Flowerpiercer (Amagusa-Mashpi Reserve) © Paul Greenfield

March 22, Day 6: Birding the Antisana Area and Papallacta Pass and onward to Wildsumaco Lodge.

This morning, after a sumptuous buffet breakfast, we initiate Part II of our journey as we depart from our hotel (we may come across Blue-and-yellow & Scrub tanagers and a few other species on the hotel grounds before we depart) and head eastward to the temperate zone just below the Antisana National Park area, about an hour or so away. Here we will search out a few key hummers: the amazing Giant Hummingbird (seven inches long!); Black-tailed and (maybe) Green-tailed trainbearers; Sparkling Violetear; Shining Sunbeam; and the high-elevation Ecuadorian Hillstar—alas, there are few tanagers at this elevation, but, with some good fortune... we may well come up with the colossal Andean Condor (well, okay, not a hummer/tanager!). We then continue northward to the eastern ridge of the Andean cordillera over the often cold and ‘tundra-like’ páramo zone of Papallacta Pass, reaching a whopping 13,000 ft. in altitude before dropping continuously downslope. Surprisingly, there are quite a few ‘new’ species of hummingbirds and tanagers to be found throughout this general region. We may be lucky enough to find a few of them, including Blue-mantled Thornbill; Viridian Metaltail; Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager; and perhaps Black-backed Bush-Tanager among the possibilities. Depending on time, we will try to examine shrubby, second growth scrub habitats from the upper slopes of the central valley to just about timberline to look for Tawny Antpitta; Azara’s Spinetail; Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet; Tufted Tit-Tyrant; Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant; Hooded Siskin; Yellow-breasted Brushfinch; Black-crested Warbler; Golden Grosbeak; Blue-and-yellow Tanager; along with Black and Rusty flowerpiercers. Then we’ll pass through *Polylepis* woodland, páramo shrub- and grassland, continuing down into humid temperate forest, as we descend the eastern Andean slope. Along this stretch, we will reach Guango Lodge by around midday for an enjoyable lunch and a brief immersion into the insane frenzy of hummingbird action at the lodge’s fabulous nectar feeders and, with a bit of luck, some flock activity might spring up. We will especially be watching for Tourmaline Sunangel; Speckled Hummingbird; Long-tailed Sylph; Mountain Avocetbill (rare); Glowing Puffleg; Collared Inca; Mountain Velvetbreast; Buff-tailed and Chestnut-breasted coronets; White-bellied Woodstar; and the incredible Sword-billed Hummingbird, along with possibilities of Powerful Woodpecker; Strong-billed Woodcreeper; Streaked Tuftedcheek; Pearled Treerunner; Dusky Piha; White-banded Tyrannulet; Turquoise Jay; Slaty Brushfinch; Mountain Cacique; Spectacled Redstart (Whitestart); Black-capped Hemispingus (actually, a bonafide member of the tanager family); Hooded Mountain-Tanager; Grass-green and Blue-and-black tanagers; Blue-backed and Capped conebills; Masked Flowerpiercer; and Gray-hooded Bush Tanager. We will pull ourselves away from this incredible show to continue our journey onward downslope and over the Guacamayos Ridge and then descending again to reach our destination—

Wildsumaco Lodge—which is nestled along a heavily forested ridge in the Amazonian foothills. As we advance, we will make a couple of stops to break-up the drive a bit and to, of course, see more species. A few more possibilities include: Speckled Chachalaca; Black-throated Brilliant; Violet-headed Hummingbird; Glittering-throated Emerald; Fasciated Tiger-Heron; Swallow-tailed and Plumbeous kites; Yellow-throated (Black-mandibled) Toucan; Yellow-tufted and Crimson-crested woodpeckers; Black-Caracara; Military Macaw; Lined Antshrike; Cliff Flycatcher; Violaceous Jay; Slate-throated Redstart (Whitestart); Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager (among several additional tanagers), along with other specialties. We should arrive with plenty of time to settle in and even get to sample some great birding from the lodge deck—hummingbirds and who knows what else!



Hooded Mountain-Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield

NIGHT: Wildsumaco Lodge, Sumaco

March 23, Day 7: Wildsumaco Lodge and its spectacular birds. This ‘birders’ lodge is set within the fascinating Amazonian foothills and is home to an unbelievable variety of tanagers... and hummingbirds! We will have an entire day-and-a-half to hang out at their awesome nectar feeding station to enjoy, among the 20-25 hummers recorded here: Green Hermit; White-tipped & Buff-tailed sicklebills; Black-throated Mango; Wire-crested Thorntail; Peruvian Racket-tail; Green-backed Hillstar; Fawn-breasted, Violet-fronted & Black-throated brilliants; Gould’s Jewelfront; Gorgeted Woodstar; Rufous-vented Whitetip; Equatorial Piedtail; Napo Sabrewing; Golden-tailed Sapphire; Many-spotted Hummingbird; and Violet-headed Hummingbird. A fantastic pre-breakfast option will be offered to visit the moth-light station that has been set up adjacent to the lodge, where several normally difficult to locate forest understory dwellers show themselves. White-chested & Black-streaked puffbirds; Lined Antshrike; Plain Antvireo; Black-faced Antbird; Western (White-backed) Fire-eye; Yellow-breasted Antwren; Buff-fronted & Montane foliage-gleaners; Black-billed Treehunter; White-breasted Wood-Wren, Wing-banded Wren; warblers, and other species are all possible. We will also offer an optional outing to another ‘feeding station’ where Plain-backed & Ochre-breasted antpittas; White-crowned Tapaculo; and Speckled Nightingale-Thrush, along with other possibilities, are often seen. We will investigate flowering shrubs and trees, and explore roadside habitat and a trail or two in search of hummingbird species that don’t often visit feeders and tanagers that abound in this region. The tanager possibilities seem endless and could include Silver-beaked, Orange-eared, Blue-gray, Palm, Blue-necked, Spotted, Yellow-bellied, Paradise (Wow!), Bay-headed, Golden-eared, Green-and-gold, Golden, Swallow, Summer and Scarlet tanagers along with a ‘pile’ of other members (honeycreepers, etc.) of this extensive family. There is also a whole treasure trove of ‘non-target’ species to be found here—six species of toucans; Chestnut-fronted & Military macaws; Red-headed & Gilded barbets; Coppery-chested Jacamar; Yellow-tufted and Crimson-crested woodpeckers; and Olivaceous and Rufous-naped greenlets; are just a small sample of our possibilities!

NIGHT: Wildsumaco Lodge, Sumaco

March 24, Day 8: Morning at Wildsumaco Lodge; early lunch; retrace our way upslope to Cabañas San Isidro. After some optional early birding from the deck or close to the lodge, breakfast and a bit more birding to seek out species we may have missed previously in this rich area (surely there will be more to see!), we will enjoy an early lunch, pack up and initiate our ascent back over the Guacamayos Ridge to today's planned subtropical-zone destination—Cabañas San Isidro. Aside from its great birding, San Isidro is renowned for its fine cuisine, and, after settling in to our rooms, we may have time to check out super active deck at its restaurant... just to sample some hummers and whatever else shows up before our checklist session and dinner. With some degree of luck, we may get to see the now famous 'San Isidro Mystery Owl', possibly right from the deck or along the entrance driveway before turning in for the night.

NIGHT: Cabañas San Isidro, Cosanga

March 25, Day 9: Morning at Cabañas San Isidro; drive and birding en route back to San José de Puembo. We will have a full morning to enjoy this *hot-spot*. We will gather at the restaurant deck before breakfast where a veritable 'extravaganza' is sure to play out. The nectar feeders should be quite active, and we will surely enjoy some of the same hummingbird species we have seen at Guango Lodge, and a few new possibilities: namely Tawny-bellied Hermit; Lesser Violetear; and Bronzy Inca. The moth light that has been set up here will have begun to do its magic and, as the morning brightens, more-and-more species will appear. Inca Jays; Subtropical Caciques; Russet-backed Oropendolas; Masked Trogons; Olive-backed and Montane woodcreepers; Pearled Treerunner; Azara's Spinetail; Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant; Cinnamon, Golden-crowned & Pale-edged flycatchers; Smoke-colored Pewee; Black-billed Peppershrike; Brown-capped Vireo; Mountain Wren; Pale-eyed and Glossy-black thrushes; Common Chlorospingus; Blackburnian, Black-crested & Canada warblers; Summer Tanager; and Oleaginous Hemispingus; are just some of the candidates that have been recorded from this great vantage point. We will also be led down to a 'feeding station' where we will hopefully be fortunate enough to see one or two White-bellied Antpittas. After breakfast, we'll do a little roadside birding along the Las Caucheras Road that runs past San Isidro's entrance gate. Who knows what we'll find, but it will be promising, and it should be productive. Among our targets, we'll be watching out for Sickie-winged Guan; Southern Lapwing; a hawk or eagle perhaps; Andean (Highland) Motmot; Golden-headed & Crested quetzals; Southern Emerald-Toucanet; Black-billed Mountain-Toucan; Crimson-mantled and Powerful woodpeckers; Red-billed and Speckle-faced (White-capped) Parrots; Scaly-naped Amazon; Green-and-black Fruiteater; Barred Becard; Rufous-breasted Flycatcher; Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher; Plain-tailed Wren; Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, along with a whole new selection of tanagers, which could include Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager; Red-hooded, Saffron-crowned, Flame-faced and Beryl-spangled tanagers and, with some good fortune, we might even come across a 'wild' band of White-capped Tanagers. We will return for an early lunch, pack up our gear and head back up and over the eastern Andean slope, retracing our tracks for a late afternoon arrival at the capital city of Quito. Time permitting, we may make a birding stop or two at varying elevations in hopes of finding species we may have missed on our first day.

We plan to arrive at our hotel with plenty of time to freshen up and meet for our final checklist and farewell dinner.

NOTE: A room will be reserved for participants departing on a late-night flight this evening or a very early morning flight on March 26th. Airport transfers will be provided.

NIGHT: San José de Puembo, Puembo

March 26, Day 10: Departure for Home. A transfer will be provided to the Quito Airport in time for all departures.



Glistening-green Tanager © Paul Greenfield

RELAXED AND EASY (R&E) TOUR INFORMATION: Relaxed & Easy (R&E) tours are similar to “regular” VENT tours, but set to a slower pace, with somewhat fewer hours in the field and lighter physical activity. They are ideal for participants who prefer a somewhat later start in the morning, a little lengthier afternoon break, and a shorter afternoon outing. Walking is limited to short walks of usually not more than a mile, avoiding difficult terrain. A typical day will begin with breakfast around 6:30-7:00 a.m., followed by birding until about noon. We will attempt to have lunch every day between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m., followed by an afternoon break (when possible). We will resume birding for a couple of hours in the mid-afternoon. On most days we will attempt to provide 45 minutes to an hour for personal time before dinner. We will have dinner between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. where possible. Strenuous physical activity will be avoided, and all walking will be limited to well-marked roads and trails, excluding uneven or rough terrain.

Relaxed & Easy (R&E) refers only to the slower pace of a tour, not to a participant’s birding skills or ability. Accordingly, birders of all levels of ability are welcome, as they are on typical VENT tours; R&E tours should not be mistaken as tours for beginning birders.

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. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one in order to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

TOUR LEADERS: This tour will be led by **Paul Greenfield** and **Remigio (Remi) Grefa**.



Paul Greenfield grew up near New York City and became interested in birds as a child. He received his B.F.A. from Temple University, where he was a fine arts major at the Tyler School of Art. Since 1972, he has lived in Ecuador where his fascination for birds and art has culminated in the completion of 20 years of work illustrating *The Birds of Ecuador* (Cornell University Press, 2001), which he co-authored with Robert Ridgely. The Spanish version was published in 2006 and *The Birds of Ecuador App* was launched in 2018. Paul is also co-author of *Birds of Western Ecuador, a Photographic Guide* (Princeton University Press, 2016) with Nick Athanas. He has participated in the discovery of a number a new avian species to science and has painted several frontispiece illustrations of these newly described taxa. Paul is very involved in saving Ecuador's avian diversity and important habitats through his involvement with various foundations, as well as working with and inspiring local governments and communities to get involved in the protection of "their" biodiversity as a pioneer and promoter of birding tourism throughout Ecuador. He was the lead author of Ecuador's *National Strategy of Bird Tourism* (2006), and its Update (2010). He has been showing visitors the birds of this fascinating country for nearly five decades and has led many Ecuador bird tours. Paul and his wife, Martha, live in Quito.



Remigio (Remi) Grefa was born and raised along the shores of the Napo River in the tiny indigenous Kichwa community of Añangu, in the upper Amazon Basin of Ecuador. As a child of the rainforest, he developed a close tie with the rich biodiversity of the Amazonian jungle, but became especially interested in birds as a young boy when he noticed foreign visiting birdwatchers arriving at a nearby nature lodge. It was then that he promised himself that when he grew up he would learn the names of the local birds, in English. . . and he eventually did! Throughout his formative years, his community had embarked on a groundbreaking nature tourism project of their own—the building and co-management (and eventually outright ownership) of the fabulous Napo Wildlife Center—and by the time Remi graduated from high school he was ready to join the ranks of this incredible

endeavor. He began working at the lodge from the ground up (odd jobs, dishwasher, laundry brigade, etc.); after a few months he was promoted to waiting tables, and after six months he became one of the lodge's bartenders for a year-and-a-half. He then graduated to boatman, where he was the second canoe paddler for many, many birding groups, which gave him the perfect opportunity to receive hands-on apprenticeship in birding, as well as English. In 2009, he took a job as a waiter on the *Manatee Amazon Explorer*, a houseboat style vessel that cruises the country's Napo and Aguarico rivers. He was eventually promoted again as an official birding and naturalist guide at Napo Wildlife Center by 2017 and continues to fill that role exceptionally to this day. Remi and his wife, Lola, along with their two daughters, Kayana and Wita, live in the parish of Dayuma, not far from the frontier town of Puerto Francisco de Orellana (more commonly known as "Coca").

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.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$5,445** per person in double occupancy from Quito. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 10, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leader. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Quito 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 **\$580**. 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: You may register for this tour through the [VENT website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. We accept MasterCard and Visa. If you choose not to register online, you may pay your deposit by credit card, check, money order, or bank transfer. If not paying online, or by card, your tour space will be held for 10 days pending receipt of your deposit.

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 (October 18, 2025) prior to the tour departure date.

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

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Cancellation by Participant:

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person 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 179 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. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants' protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

<u>If participant cancels:</u>	<u>Participant's refund will be:</u>
180 days or more before departure date	Participant's deposit minus \$500*
179 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/TRAVEL PROTECTION: 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 comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends Medjet and its MedjetAssist® plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Ripcord

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; 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: 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, second deposit, 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 costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

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.

About MedjetAssist

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company’s primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: Medjet.com/VentBird or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

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/>.

We suggest that luggage be limited to *one* medium-sized duffel or other easy-to-manage piece of luggage weighing no more than **50 pounds (23 kls)** per person, plus *one* piece of hand luggage, limited to **22 pounds (10 kls)**. **Note to photographers:** you may include a separate bag for this purpose, but be aware that space in our vehicle will be limited so please carefully pack only essential equipment.

The Northern Ecuador Hummingbirds & Tanager Extravaganza covers a wide range of elevations, ecosystems, and habitats on both the western and eastern Andean slopes and therefore presents **somewhat varying climatic conditions** as we ascend/descend in elevation and we advise you to be prepared to layer your clothing as temperature and weather conditions change (see CLIMATE and CLOTHING sections below). Please pack your travel documents, necessary medications, and basic toiletries in your handbags. Please note that tripods are not allowed as carry-on and must be packed in your checked baggage.

CLOTHING: The Northern Ecuador Hummingbirds & Tanager Extravaganza covers *two* constantly varying transects that ascend and descend in altitude along both the western and eastern Andean slopes: covering the Pacific coastal lowlands (warm), the west-slope and Amazonian foothills (warm to cool), through the western and eastern subtropical- and temperate-zones (cool to cold) and higher to the tundra-like páramo zone (colder) just below snowline along the eastern cordillera. Dress is casual or informal throughout and we suggest dark or dull-colored field pants and shirts for forest birding (especially) on both legs of the trip.

Think layering as we ascend the Andes, considering warm, or even lightweight long-sleeved button shirts over a short-sleeve or long-sleeve undershirt in most areas visited, along with a sweater or jacket for layering to provide extra warmth at higher elevations. If you chill easily, you may wish to use thermal underwear at higher elevations (i.e., Papallacta and Antisana) on our last field days. Gloves are also recommended at these locations or for our visit to Yanacocha Reserve on our first morning in the field. Good footwear is always essential, and for this, again, we strongly suggest waterproof hiking boots (see FOOTWEAR Section below).

During the tour we will experience the rainy season on the west slope, and dry season on the east slope. We can expect the rain to show up mostly in short intervals and often only at night, and it may even rain in the dry season on the much wetter east slope—so we may possibly be out in at least some mist or light rain; therefore, a good umbrella or rain jacket is essential.

To reiterate: In the Andes, especially on the final three days of the tour, at higher elevations, the temperatures can be in the low- to mid-40s on occasion and you should be prepared to layer for warmth, with thermal

underwear and/or a warm long-sleeved shirt, plus a warm jacket or sweater. You can shed layers as the day warms up (or add them as it cools down). Consider bringing gloves and a warm hat if you know that you chill easily. There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in at least some mist or light rain at some point during our trip, so a sturdy umbrella or a rain jacket is essential. NOTE: Both Séptimo Paraíso and Cabañas San Isidro have swimming pools (Séptimo also has a Jacuzzi) so you might want to pack a bathing suit.

FOOTWEAR: For footwear, we recommend a good trail-walking shoe or a lightweight hiking boot when in the field, and a second, lighter pair to change into during downtime around the various lodges. Athletic shoes are acceptable but will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled from muddy conditions. Sandals or other open-toed shoes are appropriate around hotels and in towns. Mud boots will not be necessary, but at the very least footwear for the field should be rated “water-resistant,” as this is a damp climate and even the dew on the roadside grass will get your feet wet!

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry facilities will be somewhat limited during this trip; we will spend our first three nights at Séptimo Paraíso where laundry service is possible, but because we will not be staying at any of the Eastern Slope lodges for more than one or two nights this service will be less likely.

CLIMATE & WEATHER: In the Andes temperatures are generally pleasant during the day (the 70s F); cool in the early morning (50s), to warm at midday (low 60s, to 80s at lower elevations). However, at higher elevations (especially in the upper temperate and Paramo zones), the temperatures can be as low as the 40s on occasion (on the morning of the first along with the final three days of the tour, especially) and you should be prepared to layer for warmth (see CLOTHING section, above). You can shed layers as the day warms up (or add them as it cools down). Overall, temperatures will be mostly in the upper 70s during the day (perhaps the lower 80s at one lower elevation on the west slope) and in the upper 50s at night. However, at higher elevations the temperatures can drop to as low as the 40s on occasion, and so you should be prepared to layer for warmth.

As mentioned above, during the Northern Ecuador Hummingbird & Tanager Extravaganza we will experience the rainy season on the west slope, and the dry season on the east slope. We can expect the rain to show up mostly in short intervals and often only at night, and it may even rain in the dry season on the much wetter east slope—so we may possibly be out in at least some mist or light rain; cloud cover, and even fog can be the norm in the Andes, and preferred for our birding purposes; birds in this region do not like sunny days!

EQUIPMENT: Note: 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. Your leaders will have spotting scopes, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

One of the most important aspects of having an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with proper equipment. The following items will come in handy during your trip:

- **Daypack** – Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all land excursions
- **Binoculars in good repair** – you may wish to pack a second pair (see BINOCULARS & SPOTTING SCOPE section below)
- **Polarized sunglasses** with good UV protection
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions**
- **An ample supply of all personal medication** – it is a good idea to bring copies of all prescriptions
- **Insect repellent** – see INSECT REPELLENT section below
- **Notebooks and pens**

- **Travel alarm clock**
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Collapsible walking stick** – A highly recommended item for those who have trouble walking
- **Tissue packs**
- **Lens cloth**
- **Flashlight or headlamp**
- **Water bottle**
- **Cameras, lenses, memory cards, and extra batteries**

BINOCULARS & SPOTTING SCOPES:

Binoculars – We strongly recommend good binoculars of at least 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 magnification. We recommend that you do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering capacity. Trying to find a bird in your binocular using minis is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binocular before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 7x35 or 8x42 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting Scopes – Your tour leaders will have their scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

CONDITIONS:

Accommodations:

Séptimo Paraíso will be our somewhat rustic ‘base-of-operations’ on the western slope of the Andes, from which we will make daily excursions to nearby birding *hot-spots*. Rooms vary depending on where they are located (i.e., in the main house, or outlying cabins, all nearby), all are rather ample with private bathrooms and hot water. The large dining room is located on the ground floor (down a flight of stairs) connecting to a spacious, covered outdoor courtyard. There is a sitting room on the second floor. The lodge is surrounded by forest and there is a hummingbird garden just steps from the main entrance and a swimming pool and jacuzzi nearby. Internet is available throughout the but at times it can be somewhat unreliable.

Wildsumaco Lodge was designed specifically for birders, by birders. Rooms are ample with plenty of electrical outlets for charging equipment, a safe deposit box, and modern bathrooms with an excellent supply of hot water. The separate dining hall includes a small bar and sitting area with a large fireplace, a small library, and an ample outdoor deck with very active nectar feeders and an impressive view over a forested valley and nearby forest (great for midday and late afternoon R&R). Internet access is available around the dining area and in the rooms, and is usually adequate.

Cabañas San Isidro offers a variety of cabins in two areas near its separate dining hall, which includes an indoor sitting area and a terrace that becomes a trip highlight at dawn (and even, if we’re lucky, in the evening). Wifi is available at the dining area and in the cabins and is usually fairly reliable. Rooms vary in size and design, but all have a modern bathroom with flush toilets and hot water. The lodge also has a heated outdoor swimming pool that is available on demand.

The cloud forest and mountain forests (and other varied habitats) that cover the Andean slopes make up a fascinating meld of ecosystems that change in composition almost imperceptibly, except perhaps when comparing the bird communities, as one ascends or descends in altitude, or explores the two Andean slopes. Each location we visit will uncover new subsets of familiar and unfamiliar avian families along with

subtle differences (to the untrained eye) in the local vegetation as we progress. At several sites we will enjoy incredible nectar feeders with new (and dizzying) varieties of hummingbird species. Much of our Andean birding will be done along forested roadsides, as access into such dense vegetation is few and far between throughout much of this mountainous terrain, though we will explore forest trails where available to experience the magic! In the lowlands, bird activity is at its height in the early morning and less so later in the afternoon. Along the mountain slopes bird activity is somewhat similar, although it is not uncommon, under the often cloudy (even foggy) conditions that tend to prevail in the Andes, for mixed-species foraging flocks to continue to move about throughout the day. Séptimo Paraíso, Wildsumaco and Cabañas San Isidro offer moth-light set-ups that regularly attract a wide array of bird species, affording exceptional views... these are usually active early in the morning between 6:00–7:30 a.m.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

PASSPORTS - A passport is required for entry into Ecuador and should be valid **for a minimum of six months beyond the intended length of your stay**. If you need a passport, you should get it well in advance of your trip departure date. For additional fees, a passport can be issued on an expedited basis. In the United States this can be done at the nearest passport office, most post offices, or the county clerk's office. You may also visit <https://www.state.gov/travel/> for information on how to get or renew a passport.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport. Keep the photocopies in a safe place, so if your passport is lost you will have proof of identification. Your passport should be signed and easily available at all times. You will need it for check-in at the airport on your first day of departure, so please do not pack it in your checked luggage.

VISAS - Citizens of the United States do not need to obtain a tourist visa to enter Ecuador. Rules and regulations pertaining to non-U.S. and Canadian citizens may vary; please check with the Ecuador consulate or embassy.

CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS: The official currency of Ecuador is the US Dollar. Your Northern Ecuador Hummingbird & Tanager Extravaganza tour includes all necessary expenses. You may want to bring enough cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as bar bills, laundry, souvenirs and gifts, extra gratuities, meals on your own, and other personal items. It is strongly advised that your money be in U.S. Dollars and in smaller denominations of cash, as many places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. Major credit cards (MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Diner's Club) are widely accepted in and around Quito. Séptimo Paraíso accepts all major credit cards. As of this writing (May 2023) credit cards are not accepted at Wildsumaco Lodge or Cabañas San Isidro. Note that traveler's checks are no longer accepted in Ecuador. ATM service is available in the Quito-Puembo area. If your home currency differs from the US Dollar you can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting "XE-The World's Favorite Currency Site" at: <http://www.xe.com/>.

ELECTRICITY: 110 volts is the standard (the same as in the U.S.), as are all electrical outlets throughout Ecuador. If you have equipment that uses 220-240V you will need an adapter to plug in your appliances as well as an all-purpose transformer if your appliances are not suitable for lower voltage or if they use a different style plug. Most computers provide plugs that accept both 110-120V and 220-240V simultaneously, though you may need a plug adapter that fits the US outlet system.

INTERNET ACCESS: Free Internet and Wi-fi access is available as follows: Quito (San José de Puembo); Séptimo Paraíso and Wildsumaco Lodge (generally available, at times sporadically); and Cabañas San Isidro and Termas de Papallacta (generally reliable).

LANGUAGE: Spanish is the primary language spoken in Ecuador. English is spoken at the lodges we will be staying at throughout the Andes.

TIME: Ecuador is on Ecuador Time (ECT) and is 1 hour behind Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

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.

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>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

Sun Exposure – The sun's ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes), especially along the Equator. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

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. We also recommend Andrew Isles books for the Asia-Pacific region at <http://www.andrewisles.com> for difficult to find and out of print books for Australia.

This list includes some basic field guides and reference volumes of use to the visitor. A great deal has been written about all aspects of Australia's natural history. You will find a variety of selections in any library. Browse around a little and you will discover many resources not listed here.

Field guides:

Ridgely, Robert S. and Greenfield, Paul J. ***The Birds of Ecuador***. Cornell University Press, 2001.

This two-volume set is the "Bible" for anyone interested in Ecuador's birds. The **Field Guide**, with 96 color plates, include illustrations of basically all the species found in the country. The informative text, designed to help species identification, includes distribution maps for all 1,600 species of Ecuador's birds. The **Status, Distribution and Taxonomy** treats each of Ecuador's species with detailed information not included in the Field Guide.

Additional Reading:

Hilty, Steven. ***Birds of Tropical America***. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd, 1994. Subtitle: "A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity." Highly recommended as the most readable and informative book on many different aspects of bird ecology (and birding!) in the Neotropics.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. ***The Birds of South America: Volume I, the Oscine Passerines***. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1989. Excellent reference volumes, with text entries for all species and fantastic illustrations of many. This volume and the next together include all of the passerines.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. ***The Birds of South America: Volume II, the Suboscine Passerines***. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1989.

Mammals:

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997. Second edition.

Apps:

Ridgely, Robert S. and Greenfield, Paul J. ***Birds of Ecuador–Field Guide***. Birds in the Hand LLC. This App is the updated version of *The Birds of Ecuador*, including nearly 1,700 species now recorded in this tiny South American country. It can be downloaded through the App Store or Google Play. For more information, connect to the following link: <http://www.birdseyebirding.com/app-pages/birds-of-ecuador-field-guide/>.

Or connect directly to: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/birds-of-ecuador-field-guide/id1194665890> for the App Store;
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.birdseyebirding.birdseye.ecuador&hl=en_US for Google Play.

TIPPING: An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, \$5 to \$10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) \$15 to \$20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

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 July 1, 2025, 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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