



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

SOUTHERN ECUADOR HUMMINGBIRD & TANAGER EXTRAVAGANZA

AUGUST 18-29, 2024

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Amethyst-throated Sunangel © John Sevenair

Ecuador has long been regarded as the planet's hummingbird and tanager epicenter, and on this exciting sequel to our Northern Ecuador Extravaganza, we'll experience many of southern Ecuador's prime habitats and ecosystems while in pursuit of these spectacular living gems that exemplify the glory of the Neotropics. This trip has been designed specifically for birding enthusiasts and photographers, along with anyone sporting a whim for the joys of Neotropical birding and a special focus on color and glitter! Of the nearly 200 species of hummingbirds and tanagers (including their allies) found in this region, we hope to enjoy well over half of them, including many of the same actors present on our "Northern" tour, along with a whole new cast of superstars!

In the high temperate and páramo-zone elevations of El Cajas National Park, we'll search for mixed foraging flocks and their attendant tanagers and scan flowering trees and shrubs for an array of hummingbirds with names as angelic as their appearances, including Green-tailed Trainbearer, Shining Sunbeam, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Mountain Velvetbreast, Great Sapphirewing, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Purple-throated Sunangel, and Viridian Metaltail. We will focus especially on locating the Violet-throated Metaltail, one of South America's most range-restricted hummers. Tanagers could include Hooded and Scarlet-bellied mountain-tanagers, Grass-green and Blue-and-black tanagers, Tit-like Dacnis, and Giant Conebill. A number of other specialties might show up as well, among them, Bearded Guan, Andean Condor, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, and Giant Conebill to name just a few.



Violet-throated Metaltail at El Cajas National Park © Pam Higginbotham

In the Amazonian foothills – a region of exceptional diversity – at the lovely Copalinga Lodge, the many possibilities can be overwhelming. With a list far too extensive to present here, consider this tiny sample: Orange-eared, Green-and-gold, Yellow-bellied, Turquoise, Blue-necked, Paradise, Golden-eared, Golden, Spotted, and Saffron-crowned tanagers; Golden-collared Honeycreeper along with Green and Gray-chinned hermits; Buff-tailed and White-tipped sicklebills; Violet-headed

Hummingbird; Wire-crested Thorntail; Spangled Coquette; Peruvian Racket-tail; Black-eared Fairy; Violet-fronted and Black-throated brilliants; Glittering-throated Emerald; and Golden-tailed Sapphire. We could even be distracted by a parade of parakeets, jacamars, umbrellabirds, cocks-of-the-rock, manakins, and more.

At the Jocotoco Foundation's Tapichalaca Reserve, the nectar feeders and temperate-zone vegetation should be alive with birds. Some of the new hummingbirds we'll seek include Andean Emerald, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Collared Inca, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Amethyst-throated and Flame-throated sunangels, Glowing Puffleg, Tyrian Metaltail, and Rainbow-bearded and Rufous-capped thornbills. Tanagers could include Red-hooded and Grass-green, along with Hooded & Lacrimose mountain-tanager. This area is also home to many other specialties—including the recently discovered Jocotoco Antpitta—and we will offer an optional walk in hopes of locating some key species. We will also venture to lower elevations not far from the reserve where we may run into some upper Amazonian and Marañón valley species; Silver-backed, Straw-backed, and Buff-bellied tanagers are possibilities.

At the Jocotoco Foundation-owned Buenaventura Reserve, the nectar feeders and flowers at Umbrellabird Lodge teem with a diversity of hummingbird species that include such beauties as Band-tailed Barbthroat, Stripe-throated and White-whiskered hermits, Green Thorntail, Emerald-bellied Woodnymph, Violet-bellied Hummingbird, White-vented Plumeleteer, Velvet-purple Coronet, Gorgeted Sunangel, Violet-tailed Sylph, and Purple-crowned Fairy. We will also keep our "eyes peeled" for Gray-backed Hawk; El Oro and Red-masked parakeets; Bronze-winged Parrot; Crimson-rumped Toucanet; Pale-mandibled Araçari; Long-wattled Umbrellabird; Club-winged Manakin; Fawn-breasted, Rufous-throated, Silver-throated, Bay-headed & Blue-necked tanagers; and Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager.

This tour has been designed to show you a wide array of birds, with a particular focus on hummingbirds and tanagers, but a few words of caution are prudent. In our many years of birding the neotropics, we have found that it is extremely important to get out early while the birds are singing and more active. Most days we will be up early and some days we will be afield all day; especially due to some fairly long road-trips between sites. Overall, our travel and birding will be varied, including some walking and optional hiking on forest trails and along roadside habitats, from the tropical lowlands and foothills to higher elevations in temperate elfin forests and tundra-like páramo. We can expect heat and humidity at lower elevations, while some rain and fog are also possible, especially along the Andean slopes (which, of course, is why these forests are so incomparably lush) and cold weather is the norm in the thin air of the highlands. Accommodations are generally comfortable and more than adequate (the best in the region), but are of necessity often relatively simple. This trip has been planned to show you some of the best of Ecuador, but may be too strenuous for those not in good health or not wishing to spend a good portion of their time in the field.

Our 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 non-hummingbirds 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 creatures. Thank you for your understanding!*

August 18, Day 1: Arrival to the Coastal City of Guayaquil. Participants should plan on arriving at Guayaquil's Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport (airport code GYE) today. Most flights are scheduled to arrive in the

evening. Upon arriving Guayaquil you will be met and transferred to our hotel. Due to the late hour of some arriving flights, dinner is not included tonight. Please note that we will depart from the hotel fairly early on Day 2. You may wish to arrive a day early to avoid complications in the event of flight delays. Upon request the VENT office will be happy to assist with early arrival hotel and airport transfer arrangements.

NIGHT: Hotel Wyndham, Puerto Santa Ana, Guayaquil

August 19, Day 2: Morning Departure from Guayaquil; Drive Towards the Andean City of Cuenca; Remainder of the Day Birding at El Cajas National Park. Today, after an early breakfast, we initiate our journey with a drive towards the charming Andean city and Ecuador's cultural capital, Cuenca; its colonial center was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. We will first head south through coastal wetlands and semi-humid and humid zones before heading east as we climb the southwestern slope of the Andes to our first day's destination. We reach upper temperate and páramo zone habitats in the highlands as we approach El Cajas National Park, where we will stop to work shrubby second growth, scrub and humid temperate woodland and forest edge from just about timberline to *Polylepis* woodland and páramo shrub and grassland in search of our first Andean hummingbird/tanager species. There are no nectar or fruit feeding stations in this area—but fear-not, we will be duly spoiled by them a bit later on—and we will check out flowering shrubs and trees here in hopes of spotting several specialties. Surprisingly, or not so, there are quite a few pretty fantastic species to be found here, and we will work at finding several of them: Sparkling Violetear; Mountain Velvetbreast; Black-tailed & Green-tailed trainbearers; Tyrian Metaltail; the range-restricted and endemic Violet-throated Metaltail; Collared Inca;



Hooded Mountain-Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield

Buff-winged Starfrontlet; Shining Sunbeam; the relatively huge (for a hummingbird!) Great Sapphirewing; Scarlet-bellied, Hooded and Buff-breasted mountain-tanagers; and Blue-and-black Tanager among them. As we climb a bit more in elevation into the páramo zone, we will look for the enigmatic Ecuadorian Hillstar at its favored food-source—the *Chuquiragua* shrub—and the tiny-billed Blue-mantled Thornbill (which often feeds on the ground!) along with the rare and local tanager-ally—Tit-like Dacnis. This should turn out to be a really fun-packed

day, and happily, we will spend the night in this same area, with plans to settle in and do some leisure birding around the grounds of our lodge.

NIGHT: Dos Chorreras, El Cajas National Park

August 20, Day 3: Morning at El Cajas’s Llaviucu Lagoon Area; Afternoon Drive South and Then Eastward to the Andean Foothills at Zamora. After a hearty breakfast, we will pack up and first head a bit downslope to the Llaviucu sector of El Cajas National Park. Depending on how Day 2 went, we may still want to try for Violet-throated Metaltail along with some other species *en route*. Llaviucu is a lovely area that holds many exciting treasures and, of course, we will be humming-hunting as one of our main goals, with the chance of finding species like Purple-throated Sunangel, Rainbow Starfrontlet, Sapphire-vented Puffleg, White-bellied Woodstar, Collared Inca, Shining Sunbeam and with some luck, the stunning Purple-backed Thornbill (the shortest-billed hummingbird of all!). Among possible high-Andean tanagers, we’ll look for the beautiful Grass-green. Please be warned that several other species may turn up as we walk through shrubby areas, woodland, lake-side marshland and the lake itself: Andean Guan, Masked Trogon, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan and a whole selection of smaller highland species are plentiful here, not to mention some high-elevation water fowl.



Andean Guan © Paul J. Greenfield

By late morning we will depart southward through the highlands towards the city of Loja and then due east as we descend the eastern Andean slope to the quaint town of Zamora, nestled in the humid foothills of the western Amazon Basin. We will make a few key stops along the way in a variety of habitats—we will look for Giant Hummingbird, for example, as we travel through the arid Oña Valley—enjoying a field-lunch and more exciting birding before we reach our lodge by mid-to-late afternoon. We will then settle into our rooms with time to check out this site’s impressive nectar and fruit feeders along with some productive *Verbena* shrubs.

NIGHT: Copalinga Lodge, Zamora

August 21-22, Days 4-5: Two Days at Copalinga Lodge and the Bombuscaro Entrance Area of Podocarpus National Park. This pleasant lodge is set within the mega-rich Amazonian foothills and is home to a spectacular variety of birds, including, of course, a nice selection of hummingbirds and tanagers! We will spend much of our days enjoying the feeding station set up just outside the open-air dining area, which will surely be entertaining; we will visit the Bombuscaro entrance area of Podocarpus National Park, located just a short distance up the road; and check out flowering trees and shrubs in the area, including *Heliconia*, for the chance of finding White-tipped and maybe even Buff-tailed sicklebills. Other hummingbird species we will be aiming for include Pale-tailed Barbthroat; Green, Great-billed & Gray-chinned hermits; Green-fronted Lancebill; Wire-crested Thorntail; Spangled Coquette; Brown & Lesser violetears; Fawn-breasted, Violet-fronted & Black-throated brilliants; Golden-tailed Sapphire; Many-spotted Hummingbird; Glittering-throated Emerald; Fork-tailed Woodnymph; Black-eared Fairy; Blue-tailed Emerald; Violet-headed Hummingbird; and, with luck, Peruvian (Booted) Racket-tail, Equatorial Piedtail, and Napo Sabrewing. This is a particularly rich tanager region and we'll watch plantain feeders and forest edge for Magpie, Silver-beaked, White-shouldered, Guira, Paradise, Golden-eared, Orange-eared, Bay-headed, Green-and-gold, Spotted & Blue-necked tanagers among the many possibilities. Alas, our eyes may get diverted to many other amazing birds—think White-breasted Parakeet, Amazonian Umbrellabird, and Andean Cock-of-the-rock—along with several manakins (i.e., White-crowned, Blue-rumped & Striped), just to mention a very few.

NIGHTS: Copalinga Lodge, Zamora



Golden-eared Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield

August 23, Day 6: Morning at Copalinga; Then Drive Back to the Andean Highlands and South to Tapichalaca Reserve. After some morning hummingbirds, tanagers and whatever else shows up, we will pack up and head off to retrace our steps back upslope to the highland city of Loja and then due south (yes, farther south!) to the Jocotoco Foundation's Tapichalaca Reserve, with a few stops *en route* to take in the ever-changing scenery, allow us to stretch our legs, and maybe spot more hummers and tanagers. We will be looking out for Andean Emerald, Glowing & Greenish pufflegs, Purple-collared Woodstar, Viridian & Tyrian metaltails, perhaps Neblina Metaltail, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, and Long-tailed Sylph as we pass through a variety of distinctive habitats. We'll also keep our "eyes peeled," as we advance along this ever changing transect, for mixed foraging

flocks and their attendant tanagers. We will reach our lodge, Casa Simpson, in the afternoon, in time to enjoy some hummingbird feeder action.

NIGHT: Casa Simpson, Tapichalaca Reserve



Black-throated Brilliant © Paul J. Greenfield

August 24, Day 7: All-day at Tapichalaca Reserve. Today, we will enjoy the active nectar feeders set up around our lodge, and additionally, we will offer an optional hike along a mountain trail to the famous Jocotoco Antpitta feeding station; this special antpitta (aren't they all?) was discovered not too many years ago, generating much excitement in ornithological circles and in the birding world in general. This walk will provide the opportunity to see a variety of high-Andean bird species as we come across a mixed foraging flock and listen for a number of understory skulkers. Back at the feeders, we will look forward to several high-elevation hummingbirds—including Tawny-bellied Hermit, Speckled Hummingbird, Mountain Velvetbreast, Great Sapphirewing, Collared Inca, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Amethyst-throated & Flame-throated sunangels, Rufous-capped Thornbill, and Long-tailed Sylph—and around the lodge, we will watch for mixed foraging flocks and a variety of temperate-zone tanagers—Blue-and black; Red-hooded & Golden-crowned tanagers; Scarlet-bellied, Lacrimose & Hooded mountain-tanagers. In the afternoon, we will head to lower elevations around the villages of Valladolid and Palanda, an area that harbors *many* upper Amazonian and Marañón valley species of interest, which could include Silver-backed, Straw-backed & Buff-bellied tanagers.

NIGHT: Casa Simpson, Tapichalaca Reserve



Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield

August 25, Day 8: Drive Northward to Buenaventura Lodge. This morning we will depart from Tapichalaca Reserve after breakfast and drive northwestward to the Buenaventura Reserve, which is set in a remnant stretch of rich humid foothill cloud-forest not far from the quaint town of Piñas in the El Oro Province. This is an area of high endemism with an impressive number of unique species, many tied to the world’s richest Chocó endemic bioregion. *En route* we may make a few roadside stops before reaching the upper section of the reserve, where we will check out some active nectar feeders before working our way to Umbrellabird Lodge in time to do some exciting birding and check out the incredibly active nectar feeders—there is a whole lot to see here!

NIGHT: Umbrellabird Lodge, Buenaventura Reserve



Female Emerald-bellied Woodnymph © Rob Gill



Male Emerald-bellied Woodnymph © Rob Gill

August 26-27, Days 9-10: Two Days at Buenaventura Lodge. We will enjoy two full days at this incredibly birdy reserve. Among the possible hummingbirds are White-whiskered, Baron’s & Stripe-throated hermits; White-tipped Sicklebill; White-necked Jacobin; Brown Violetear; Green Thorntail; Emerald-bellied Woodnymph; Violet-bellied Hummingbird; Rufous-tailed Hummingbird; Amazilia Hummingbird; Andean Emerald; Ecuadorian (White-vented) Plumeleeter; Purple-bibbed Whitetip; Green-crowned Brilliant; Fawn-breasted Brilliant; Brown Inca; Velvet-purple Coronet; Violet-tailed Sylph; Wedge-billed Hummingbird; Purple-crowned Fairy; and Long-billed Starthroat. Tanagers can also be numerous here and we will watch for Blue & Yellow-tufted dacnises; Fawn-breasted, Guira, Rufous-throated, Golden, Silver-throated, Flame-faced, Golden-naped, Beryl-spangled, Blue-necked, Speckled, Bay-headed, & Swallow tanagers; Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager; and so on! We will also offer optional walks in hopes of locating an impressive number of specialties including Gray-backed Hawk, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, the endemic El Oro Parakeet, Bronze-winged Parrot, Red-masked & Gray-cheeked parakeets, Chocó & Chestnut-mandibled toucans, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Club-winged Manakin and a plethora of flycatchers, antbirds and furnariids.



Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield

NIGHT: Umbrellabird Lodge, Buenaventura Reserve



Female Long-wattled Umbrellabird © Paul J. Greenfield

August 28, Day 11: Morning at Buenaventura Lodge; Drive to Guayaquil. We will have a final morning to enjoy the hummingbirds, tanagers and other forest denizens in this wonderful reserve. After lunch we will pack up and drive back to Guayaquil—backtracking part of the way we traveled on Day 2—arriving in the afternoon at our hotel in time for some R&R, before our final checklist session and farewell dinner. Some participants may choose to depart late tonight.

NIGHT: Hotel Wyndham, Puerto Santa Ana, Guayaquil

August 29, Day 12: Departure Day; Optional Morning of Birding at Cerro Blanco Reserve. Transfers will be provided to Guayaquil's *Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport* in time for all morning departures. For those participants scheduled for an evening flight, an optional morning birding trip will be offered to the nearby Cerro Blanco Reserve.

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 8 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: Paul Greenfield & Remigio 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 an art major at the Tyler School of Art. Since 1972, he has lived in Ecuador where his fascination for birds and art has culminated with the completion of 20 years of work illustrating *The Birds of Ecuador*, which he co-authored with Robert Ridgely. He is also co-author of *Birds of Western Ecuador, a Photographic Guide* (Princeton University Press) and is presently working with Bob Ridgely on an App for *The Birds of Ecuador*, which hopefully will be available in 2018. Paul is very involved in saving Ecuador's avian diversity and important habitats through his involvement with various foundations, as well as working with local government and communities to encourage their involvement in the protection of "their" biodiversity and the promotion of birding tourism in Ecuador. He has been showing visitors the birds of this fascinating country for over four decades and has led many Ecuador bird tours. He and his wife, Martha, live in Quito.



Remigio (Remy) 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 Remy 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. Remy 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").

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$4,995** per person in double occupancy from Guayaquil. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 12, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leader. It does not include airfare from your home to Guayaquil 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 **\$600**.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your deposit by check, money order, or

bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at <https://ventbird.com>) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days (March 21, 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 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, 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.**

If participant cancels:

180 days or more before departure date

179 to 151 days before departure date

150 days or less before departure date

Participant’s refund will be:

Participant’s deposit minus \$500*

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

No refund available

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

Cancellation by VENT:

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

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s

control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

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

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

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is 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.

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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, primary 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/.

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: Soft-sided luggage is recommended. As a precaution, please pack your travel documents, binoculars, medications, basic toiletries, and a change of clothes in your carry-on bag. 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/>.

CLIMATE: During the tour we will experience the dry or 'local summer' season in the southwestern lowlands with, at most, some mist in certain areas; on the more humid western Andean slope, especially at Buenaventura, we may experience some fog and perhaps a little rain. The east slope will present wetter conditions, with rain being present mostly in short intervals and often mostly at night. Highland regions throughout more humid areas in the Andes (e.g., Tapichalaca Reserve) may present rain. The coastal lowlands will be cooler in the mornings (low 70s) and will warm up quickly by mid-morning, possibly reaching the 90s by midday. In the foothills, temperatures will range mostly in the upper 70s by day and upper 50s at night. However, at higher elevations (especially at El Cajas National Park) the temperatures can fall to as low as the 40s on occasion, and you should be prepared to layer for warmth. There is a possibility that we shall be out in at least some mist or light rain; therefore, a good umbrella or rain jacket is essential.

CLOTHING: Dress is casual or informal throughout. Lightweight field clothing is the norm for most areas visited, with a sweater or jacket for extra warmth at higher elevations. We suggest dark field pants and shirts for forest birding, and lightweight long-sleeved shirts that dry quickly (long sleeves are not essential, but offer additional protection from sun and biting insects). Please wear darker colors, not whites, and avoid striking patterns that frighten the birds. Also important are a hat and sunscreen for sun protection, rain jacket, poncho or umbrella. Good footwear is essential, and for this we strongly suggest sturdy waterproof hiking boots. In any case, your footwear for the field should at the very least be rated "water resistant," as in areas with damp climate, even the dew on the roadside grass will get your feet wet!

At higher elevations the temperatures can be as low as the 40s on occasion (especially in the morning) and you should be prepared to layer for warmth. 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 on both slopes; so, a sturdy umbrella or rain jacket is essential.

We strongly recommend the use of Insect Shield® clothing. Insect Shield is a process by which clothing is treated with an EPA-approved formula of the insect repellent permethrin. Such clothing is highly repellent to insects and provides durable and long-lasting protection, even after dozens of washings. Outdoor wear with Insect Shield protection includes name brands such as Ex Officio and Tilley, and can be purchased at outdoor recreation stores such as REI and from a variety of online retailers. In lieu of Insect Shield clothing, you should consider treating your clothes with permethrin, which has the same effect, and that can be purchased at outdoor recreation stores and from a variety of online retailers.

ADDITIONAL DRESS CONSIDERATIONS: Bring a warm jacket or sweater, layers, and thermal underwear for the cool high-mountain locations; clothing that you can wash yourself and which dries quickly is preferred. Layering is a good idea; you can begin the morning with a thermal shirt, outer shirt, sweater and jacket if need be, and then shed layers as the day warms up. We will be spending much time leisurely studying hummingbirds at nectar feeders and nearby flowering shrubs and trees, but optional walks will be offered on most days, mostly along forest trails and along gravel roads, and for this we strongly suggest sturdy waterproof hiking boots. You may find lightweight sneakers, loafers or sandals useful for wear around our different lodges.

CURRENCY: The U.S. dollar is the currency in Ecuador. Cash is needed only for your personal expenses, such as bar bills, laundry, and souvenirs. It is strongly advised that most of your money be in U.S. Dollars. ATMs are available in many locations. MasterCard and Visa are generally accepted at larger businesses.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Ecuador is required. Visas are not required for United States citizens. You will be issued a tourist card to be completed on board your flight to Guayaquil. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

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

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. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our

website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19> for our official statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of our tours. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

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).

MISC: Electricity - 110 volts AC, the same as the U.S.

Language - Spanish, with Quechua or Indian dialects; some English

Time - Eastern Standard Time

Internet Service - Available in the public areas of the lodges

Laundry Service - Available throughout the tour

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.

Birds, Basic Reference:

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

Nick Athanas and Paul J. Greenfield. *Birds of Western Ecuador; a Photographic Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. An excellent photo guide of most of the bird species found in western Ecuador, complete with accompanying text and distribution maps.

Fjeldsa, Jon and Niels Krabbe. *Birds of the High Andes*. Copenhagen: Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen; Svendborg, Denmark: Apollo Books, 1990. A good reference book for the birds of the mountains above 7,500 ft, with adequate illustrations, but too large to carry and expensive.

Birds, 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.

Restall, Robin; Rodner, Clemencia and Miguel Lentino. *Birds of Northern South America*. Volume 2: Plates and Maps. Helms Field Guides, 2006. An identification guide.

Other:

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

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

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

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

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

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

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on October 30, 2021, 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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