



# COLOMBIA

Santa Marta and Northern Colombia Endemics

*January 6 - 15, 2027*



*Santa Marta Mountains. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

For years birders and naturalists have looked longingly at Colombia's enormous list of birds—the longest in the world—and of its enticing endemics—some 80+ species found only within its borders. One of the most endemic-rich sites of all is, ironically, one of the closest for travelers—the Santa Marta Mountains. These lofty, pyramid-shaped mountains spring up from the shores of the Caribbean to nearly twenty thousand feet and they are a birder's dream. More than twenty five species of endemic birds, gorgeous scenery and a new and comfortable mountain lodge are situated in a perfect climate zone. It's an ideal ten-days get-a-way and, to top it off,

a completely different set of birds can be found just a few hours away on the nearby Guajira Peninsula. Many of Santa Marta's endemics are, logically enough, preceded by the name Santa Marta, so there's a Santa Marta Parakeet, a screech-owl, a foliage-gleaner, an antpitta, a bush-tyrant, a wren, a brush-finch, a warbler, and a tapaculo. Even better, some are actually easy to see, although a few require patience (and maybe a bit of luck). If you're curious about Colombia—and who isn't—this is the perfect first trip for those with limited time. We think you will be pleasantly surprised by the birds, the beauty of the country and the friendliness of the people.

This trip takes you away from work for only ten days and will provide you an excellent introduction to birds of northern Colombia and the Santa Marta Mountains and can be reached in a single direct international flight, or in a domestic flight through Bogotá.

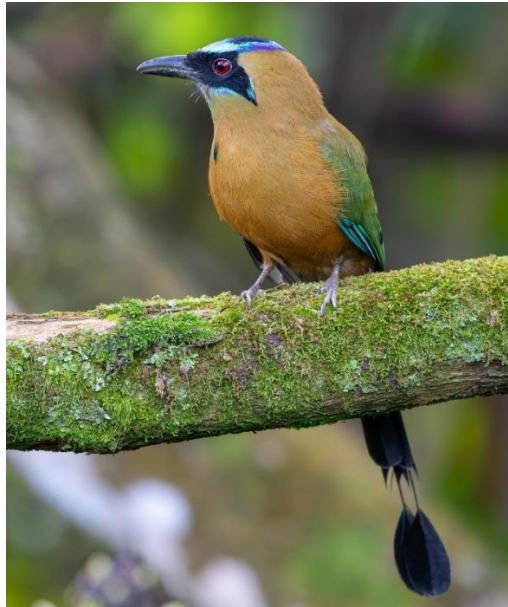
About this tour. Colombia lags behind other countries in tourism infrastructure although this is changing rapidly. Accommodations and services are good on this trip and roads are good in the lowlands, but deteriorate dramatically up in the mountains where lack of road maintenance will reduce our travel speed to a crawl. However, on this tour there are no unusually long or difficult hikes and almost all walking will be on roads with the exception of one short trail. We will be traveling in a comfortable, air-conditioned bus in the lowlands and in 4x4 Toyota Land Cruisers for the drive up into the Santa Marta Mountains. Food is generally good and meals generous. The lowlands are hot and dry, the mountains wonderfully cool and pleasant. Finally, this trip does focus on the numerous endemic species of the Santa Marta Mountains (20+ species). We should be able to find most of them but our time is limited and a few are difficult to find or see, and we expect that we will miss a few. Nevertheless, we should see a wonderful sample of birds of this region, as well as the beauty of these mountains and experience the dramatic contrasts in habitats as we pass quickly from arid deserts to cool humid mountains. We will reach a maximum elevation of about 8,400 feet on this trip, high enough for spectacular views of the snow capped peaks (which reach almost to 20,000 feet) on a clear morning, and you may think that these breath-taking views alone are worth the trip.



*Northern Screamer. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

## January 6<sup>th</sup>, Day 1: Arrival in Colombia (to Barranquilla)

Participants should plan to arrive to Barranquilla today. International flights into Barranquilla (BAQ) typically arrive from mid to late afternoon. Upon arriving into Barranquilla you will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel. The ride takes roughly about an hour. Passengers may find better air fares and/or flight schedules through Bogotá. In the past, some passengers have opted to arrive a day earlier and spend the night in Bogota to later take a mid-day flight the next day to Barranquilla.



*Whooping Motmot. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

Although you are by your own for the remaining of the day, if you have spare time you may want to consider going birding to Ciénaga de Mallorquin (eBird hotspot <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1144854>) which is some 20 minute drive from the hotel. Our local guide will be happy to assist for this extra field trip.

**NIGHT:** Hilton Garden Inn, Barranquilla.

## January 7<sup>th</sup>, Day 2: Birding the flodable plains, also tropical dry forest and mangrove swamp. Drive to Santa Marta

After breakfast, we will leave Barranquilla behind and make our drive towards the Santa Marta mountains. Along the road, we will find opportunities to bird some wetlands as well as some healthy patches of tropical dry forest. Some 45 minutes after leaving the hotel we will make our first stop in the Palermo - Km 4 road. Some of the key birds in this location include Turquoise-winged Parrotlet, Chestnut-winged Chachalaca, Russet-throated Puffbird, Glaucous Tanager, Shinning-green Hummingbird, Pearl Kite and Dwarf Cuckoo. The wetlands contiguous to the road will give an opportunity to meet the impressive Northern Screamer as well as to add some waders to our daily checklist, and that includes Least Sandpiper and Lesser Yellowlegs. We will continue our route with another stop in the lowlands, called Parque Isla de Salamanca. Along the road to this area we will focus our search to look for Golden-green Woodpecker, Bicolored Conebill, Pied

Puffbird and Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird. We will continue our route east and will be able to add Magnificent Frigatebird, Brown Pelican; Reddish Egret; Little Blue Heron; and Common Black-Hawk. along with Large-billed and Royal terns.

**NIGHT:** Santa Marta, Magdalena department.

## January 8<sup>th</sup>, Day 3: Morning in Tropical Dry Forest near Minca followed by afternoon drive up into the mountains

An early breakfast will find us birding the tropical dry forest of the Reserva Gairama where Black-backed Antshrike and the iconic Lance-tailed Manakin occur. The richness of this location will offer an opportunity to enjoy a mosaic of birds, from laughing Falcon to Orange-crowned Oriole. Whooping Motmot is frequently reported as well as Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Keel-billed Toucan and Bicolored Wren. As the day warms up, we will be checking overhead for a moment of luck with either a King Vulture soaring or a Black Hawk-Eagle calling from the air. We are expecting to reach the village of Minca where hummingbirds abound including Rufous-breasted Hermit; Steely-vented and Rufous-tailed hummingbirds; Black-throated Mango; White-necked Jacobin; and White-vented Plumbeater. Also, the assortment of good birds will give excellent opportunities for lifers, from Golden-winged Sparrow, Sooty-capped Tyrannulet, Golden-fronted Greenlets and Chestnut-capped Warbler to amazing Collared Araçaries or Military Macaw.

This afternoon, we'll transfer to sturdy 4-wheel drive Toyotas for the bumpy journey up into the mountains to Mountain House. For much of the route we will be driving over paved road but for the last 20 minutes, and in order to reach the lodge, we will need to rely in 4-wheel drive vehicles. As we ascend this colossal mountain we start noticing a change in rainfall and consequentially in vegetation. Lowland colorful birds give way to Black-headed, Bay-headed and Black-capped tanagers. Likewise, hummingbirds here abound and some of the representative are **Santa Marta Blossomcrown, Santa Marta Woodstar**, Lazuline Sabrewing, Crowned Woodnymph and Coppery Emerald. As we reconvene for the day checklist, we will experience the bright sunset heating up the lowlands while we enjoy from the mountains, with fresh weather from our comfortable lodge located at about 5,800 feet.

**NIGHT:** Mountain House, Santa Marta Mountains



*Yellow-crowned Redstart. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

## January 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>, Days 4-5: The Santa Marta Mountains

The Santa Marta Mountains harbor some 28 species of endemic birds, the highest concentration in such a small area, of any locality in Colombia. Because of the large number of endemic birds this area is of special interest to birders and naturalists. Most of this imposing mountain range is inaccessible but a lovely lodge with amazing vistas and bird plus hummingbird feeders makes this area a must see locality and a birders delight. All but two or three of the endemics can be seen along the road leading up to the lodge and beyond, where the road finally ends at a communication facility at 9600 ft elevation. Situated on the slopes of the lofty Santa Marta Mountains the views from the lodge are simply spectacular.

A few endemics can be seen right around the lodge and the remainder occur in the cool damp forests and roadside vegetation either well above or below the lodge. A few endemics are difficult to find but quite a few of them are relatively common. While the exact number of endemic birds here depends upon the taxonomy being used, suffice to say, this area is endemic-rich and includes: **Santa Marta Parakeet; White-tailed Starfrontlet; Santa Marta Woodstar (split from Gorgeted Woodstar); Rusty-headed Spinetail; Santa Marta Antpitta; Santa Marta Tapaculo; Santa Marta Bush-Tyrant; Santa Marta Wren (split from Mountain Wren); Yellow-crowned Redstart; White-lored Warbler; Santa Marta Warbler; Black-cheeked Mountain-Tanager;**

**and Santa Marta Brushfinch.** Two others, the Santa Marta Sabrewing and Black-backed Thornbill occur in remote areas that are inaccessible to us although both have, on a few occasions, been seen at or near the lodge. Some taxonomists also recognize the endemic forms of Southern Emerald Toucanet (Santa Marta Toucanet). What used to be considered a local subspecies of Ruddy-Foliage-gleaner is now separated as **Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner**, and there is even an endemic screech-owl, the **Santa Marta Screech-Owl**. Two additional species, the Streak-capped Spinetail, and Coppery Emerald, are both essentially endemics although they have been reported very locally in Venezuela and the Santa Marta Mountains remain the only practical place to see either species. Another endemic bird, the **Santa Marta Blossomcrown**, has been reported near the lodge grounds.

In addition to the endemics, many other species occur in these mountains although, as might be expected from an isolated “sky island” environment, overall diversity is lower than in the adjacent Andean cordilleras. Among other species that occur here, many are represented by endemic subspecies. A sampling of species in the vicinity of the lodge (endemic subspecies are marked with an asterisk\*) includes all of the following: White-rumped Hawk; Band-tailed Guan\*; Sickle-winged Guan; Black-fronted Wood-Quail (usually heard, rarely seen); Band-tailed Pigeon; Scarlet-fronted and Barred parakeet; Red-billed Parrot\*; White-tipped Quetzal\*; Masked Trogon\*; Golden-olive Woodpecker\*; Yellow-billed (Groove-billed) Toucanet; Montane Foliage-gleaner\*; Spotted Barbtail\*; Streaked Xenops\*; Gray-throated Leaf-tosser\*; Strong-billed Woodcreeper\*; Rusty-breasted Antpitta; Mountain Elaenia; Black-capped Tyrannulet; Spectacled and White-throated tyrannulet\*; Olive-striped Flycatcher\*; Black-throated Tody-Tyrant; Cinnamon Flycatcher\*; Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant\*; Golden-breasted Fruiteater\*; Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (two endemic subspecies, one at high elevation, another lower)\*; Orange-billed\* and Slaty-backed\* nightingale-thrush; Great Thrush\*; Yellow-legged Thrush; Black-hooded Thrush\*; Slate-throated Redstart\*; White-sided Flowerpiercer; Blue-capped Tanager\*; Blue-naped Chlorophonia; \* and Páramo Seedeater\* (scarce).



*Sierra Nevada Brushfinch. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

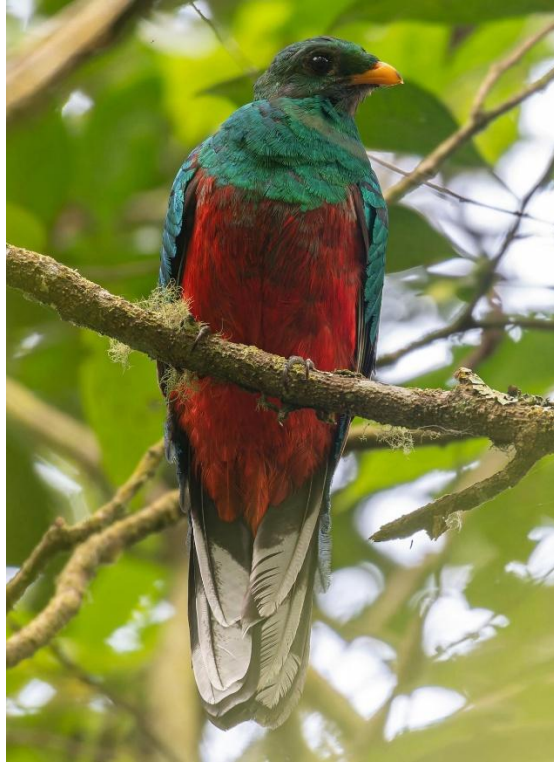


*Sierra Nevada Antpitta. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

The narrow road leading up onto the Cuchillo (knife) de San Lorenzo, and the site of our lodge, is reasonably good at first, but road conditions steadily decline, and eventually you will see why we summoned such rugged vehicles—and why we have to drive at low speed. But, the views from the lodge and the birdlife on this mountaintop ridge more than compensate. This is, in fact, the crown jewel of the trip, the largest mother lode of endemics, and some of the most inspiring scenery of the trip. At dusk, with the calm Caribbean spread out far below, the lights of ships visible at sea, and the long, narrow isthmus of land stretching far westward toward the distant glow of

Barranquilla, peacefulness seems to settle over this site. Maybe a Santa Marta Antpitta calls in the distance, or a hummingbird whirrs close by as it sips a last drop of nectar in the gathering dusk. An owl calls. And then you know why you came.

**NIGHT:** Mountain House, Santa Marta Mountains



*White-tipped Quetzal. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*



*Santa Marta Brushfinch. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

## January 11<sup>th</sup>, Day 6: Departing the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta to Tayrona National Park

This morning we'll begin moving down slope through the coffee zone and back to the little town of Minca, which is located in the foothills to continue our way north towards the Caribbean Sea and eventually east to the famous Tayrona National Park. We may stop along the way to explore coffee plantations and patches of tropical dry forest. This is a particularly diverse area for birds and by descending through several elevational zones beginning with our lodge and eventually ending in arid scrub zone in the foothills we are likely to amass an impressive list. A sample of possible species could include: Black Hawk-Eagle; Crested Bobwhite; Military Macaw (seasonal); Scarlet-fronted and Orange-chinned parakeet; Red-billed Parrot; White-tipped Dove; Lined Quail-Dove (usually heard but difficult to see); White-collared and Chestnut-collared swift; Sparkling, Green, and Brown violetears; **Coppery Emerald** (near-endemic); White-vented Plumeleteer; **Santa Marta Blossomcrown** (endemic but unpredictable in occurrence); Steely-vented Hummingbird; Collared Araçari; Keel-billed Toucan; Golden-olive, Lineated and Crimson-crested woodpeckers; **Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner (endemic)**; Black-backed Antshrike; Long-tailed Antbird; **Santa Marta Tapaculo (endemic)**; Greenish and Forest elaenias; Yellow-olive and Ochre-lore flatbills; Ochre-bellied Flycatcher; Common, and Slate-headed tody-flycatchers; Social and Piratic flycatchers; Cinereous, Cinnamon and White-winged becards; Masked Tityra; Rufous-breasted and Rufous-and-white wren; Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (pre-montane form); Yellow-legged, Black-hooded, Pale-breasted, and Black-billed thrush; Black-chested Jay; Scrub and Golden-fronted greenlets; Brown-capped Vireo; Orange-billed and Slaty-backed nightingale-thrushes (voices); Red-legged and Purple honeycreeper (both seasonal); Blue Dacnis; Rusty Flowerpiercer; Bay-headed, Black-headed, Black-capped, Blue-gray, Palm, White-lined and Crimson-backed tanagers; Streaked and Olive-gray saltators; Golden-winged Sparrow; **Santa Marta Brush-Finch (endemic)**; Yellow-bellied Seedeater; Sooty Grassquit (seasonal); Yellow-backed Oriole; Crested Oropendola and Thick-billed Euphonia. During the northern winter months these mid-elevations harbor a good number North American breeding migrants including Swainson's Thrush; Yellow-throated Vireo; Black-and-white, Tennessee, Golden-winged, Cerulean, Blackburnian, and Black-throated Green warbler; as well as Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Summer Tanager.



*Golden-winged Sparrow. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

We will arrive to Tayrona National Park for lunch followed by a break and an afternoon exploration to the surroundings of the hotel. Some of the species we may find include Russet throated Puffbird, Rufous tailed Jacamar, Scaled Dove , Golden-winged Sparrow, Olive gray Saltator and Orange crowned Oriole.

**NIGHT:** Tayrona National Park, Magdalena department

## January 12<sup>th</sup>, Day 7: Full day in Tayrona National Park

Tayrona is probably the most important protected area in northern Colombia. It extends from Sea Level to about 2,700 feet elevation. The main feature is its diverse set of habitats packed in a relatively small area. Since we have had explored the Tropical Dry Forest in past days, we will focus the tropical humid forest and our main focus will be to sight the difficult-to-see **Blue-billed Curassow**. But, apart from the curassow we will also have a chance to encounter Golden-fronted Greenlet, Lance-tailed and White-bearded manakins, Crested Guan, White-chinned Sapphire and perhaps Long-billed Starthroat. Given the higher precipitation, the forest here becomes denser, greener, and acoustically alive, especially at dawn. For that reason, we plan to leave the hotel before dawn to take advantage of the first light bird orchestra. The structure of this forest is ideal for bird diversity. A multi-layered canopy, thick understory, and abundant epiphytes create countless. For that reason, careful attention to movement and sound will be the key, as many species remain

partially hidden in the foliage. For that reason, the experience is as much auditory as visual. The humid forest dampens harsh sounds while amplifying subtle ones, making bird vocalizations clearer and more directional. For birders attuned to calls, this creates excellent opportunities for detection and identification, even when visibility is limited.

Seeking for the curassow requires patience and a slow pace is essential. We will enter the park prior to the public opening area to increase our chances to seeing this enigmatic bird. Trails winding through the forest will reveal birds gradually, rewarding those who pause, listen, and scan carefully. Light conditions can be challenging under the canopy, but will be balanced by the constant activity and diversity. In Tayrona, the tropical humid forest provides a contrast to the more open dry forest and coastal habitats, offering a deeper, more intimate birding experience—one defined by shade, sound, and the hidden richness of one of Colombia's most unique biomes.

**NIGHT:** Tayrona National Park, Magdalena department



*Buffy Hummingbird Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

## January 13th, Day 8: From the lush Tayrona National Park to the desert scrub in Rioacha

Today promises to be a day of contrasts, exposing us to one of the most diverse routes in Colombia. We are going to start the day in Tayrona to clean up our list of target species or even to continue trying the Blue-billed Curassow (if we haven't seen it by the time). Then, we will take the road leading east-northeast and will notice how gradually the lush forest of Tayrona is left behind and eventually becoming drier, to a point where all we will see around will be desert scrub. Along the road we will encounter coastal wetlands and mudflats which are a shorebird paradise.

These coastal wetlands and shorelines become increasingly important as you travel east toward La Guajira. We are expecting to encounter an impressive variety of shorebirds, including Semipalmated, Wilson's and Black-bellied Plover, s Whimbrel, Willet, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Least Sandpiper. Also, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, and possibly American Oystercatcher. The lagoons and salt flats near Camarones and Riohacha also host large numbers of herons, egrets, flamingos, gulls, and terns, making this route an exceptional opportunity to observe resident waterbirds and migratory shorebirds.

**NIGHT:** Rioacha, dept. La Guajira.



*Vermilion Cardinal. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

## January 14<sup>th</sup>, Day 9: Desert Scrub

We will spend our morning hours in the low, desert scrub vegetation—indeed among the driest anywhere in Colombia—near the town of Riohacha. We will look for some of the true “arid habitat” specialties of the Caribbean coast, among them such striking species as **White-whiskered Spinetail** (one of the prettiest spinetails on the continent) and the lovely **Vermilion Cardinal** with its super-long pointed crest. A sampling of desert scrub species here includes: Harris’s Hawk; Common Black-Hawk; Pearl Kite; Aplomado Falcon; American Kestrel; Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (not as numerous here as it ought to be); Bare-eyed Pigeon (quite numerous); Common and Ruddy ground-dove; Brown-throated and Blue-crowned parakeet; Green-rumped Parrotlet; Burrowing Owl; Red-billed Emerald; Buffy Hummingbird; Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Russet-throated Puffbird; Chestnut Piculet (a bit scarce and always a favorite); Red-crowned Woodpecker; Straight-billed Woodcreeper (pale headed population); Caribbean Hornero; Pale-breasted Spinetail; Black-crested and Black-backed antshrikes; Northern White-fringed Antwren; Northern Scrub-Flycatcher; Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet; Slender-billed Tyrannulet; Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant; Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant;



*Black-chested Jay. Photo: Breiner Tarazona.*

Vermilion Flycatcher; Brown-crested and Venezuelan flycatchers; Streaked and Social flycatchers; Bicolored Wren; Black-chested Jay; Tropical Gnatcatcher; Tropical Mockingbird; Scrub Greenlet; Blue-gray and Glaucous tanagers; Tocuyo sparrow (a prize if we can find it); Black-faced Grassquit;

Pileated Finch; Olive'gray (formerly Grayish), Buff-throated and Orinocan saltators; Saffron Finch; and Yellow Oriole. During northern winter months there are usually a few migrants around such as Northern Yellow Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler and Baltimore Oriole, and sometimes a few surprises as well.

In the afternoon, we will have a cultural exchange with the Wayuu, a native American group that has inhabited in this extremely arid region and whom have their own cosmogony and legends. The Wayuu are known for their strong traditions, vibrant artistry, and deep connection to ancestral land. Organized around a matrilineal clan system, Wayuu society places great importance on family lineage, elders, and community authority. Their culture is rich in symbolism, reflected in colorful woven bags (mochilas) and hammocks, as well as in oral traditions that preserve myths, history, and spiritual beliefs. Despite modern challenges, the Wayuu people continue to uphold their customs, language (Wayuunaiki), and resilient way of life in the desert landscape they call home.

Tour participants leaving early on day 10 may miss the cultural experience and take the 5 hour drive back to Barranquilla to spend the night near the airport.

**NIGHT:** Rioacha, dept. La Guajira or Barranquilla (for tour participants leaving early on day 10).

## January 15<sup>th</sup>, Day 10: Departure

We will depart Rioacha after an early breakfast for a 5-6 hours drive back to the Barranquilla airport. We recommend tour participants to take their international flight home or domestic flight back to Bogota after 05:00PM.

### **ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION**

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

**TOUR LEADERS:** David Ascanio and Breiner Tarazona.



**David Ascanio**, a Venezuelan birder and naturalist, has spent a lifetime (40 years!) guiding birding tours throughout his native country, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Costa Rica, the Orinoco and Amazon River basins, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, the Guianas, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the Lesser Antilles, Cuba, Chile, and Panama. He is especially interested in bird vocalizations and has a private library containing voices of more than 70% of all the birds of Venezuela. David combines superb birding skills with an astonishing

command of bird vocalizations. He has published a book for children about bird songs and coauthored the descriptions of two new species, the Rio Orinoco Spinetail and the Delta Amacuro Softtail. David has also published numerous papers about the birds of the *llanos* (plains), Orinoco River Island species, and the pan-tepui endemic species on which he has become an authority. He is the senior author of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Venezuela* (2017). David is an excellent communicator, has a great sense of humor, and is tireless in helping others find birds and wildlife. These traits have made him one of the most popular naturalists/guides in the Neotropics.



**Breiner Tarazona**, a passionate young birder and nature guide based in Santa Marta. With an extensive understanding of the Northern Colombia Birding Trail, he is well-versed in the diverse species that call this region home. Collaborating closely with local communities and fellow guides, his mission is to showcase the extraordinary natural richness of our area. As we venture through the enchanting landscapes, he will be your trusted companion and knowledgeable guide, leading you to remarkable

habitats in NE Colombia.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for this tour is **\$6,995** per person in double occupancy and includes all meals beginning with dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8, accommodations as stated, ground transportation during the tour and guide services provided by the tour leaders. The tour fee does not include roundtrip airfare from your home to Cali and return, airport departure taxes, special gratuities, telephone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may be charged.

The single price for this tour is **\$7,395**.

**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. At 180 days VENT will collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

**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 120 days (September 8, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:**

**CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:**

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

**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.**

**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](http://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):**

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](http://Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market, 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.

**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.

**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.

**TRIP CLASSIFICATION:** This may be regarded as an active tour but it will not be strenuous. We'll be walking mostly on roads; mostly we will be walking downhill but there may be occasions when there are steep uphill walking conditions. A few relatively short trails, mostly near the mountain lodge, vary from moderate to fairly steep. There will be mid-day breaks when possible. Most of the trip is at pleasant mid-elevations at about 6500 feet; one day we will reach 9000 feet elevation. The days in dry coastal areas will be hot and may also be somewhat humid.

**BAGGAGE LIMITS:** All tour participants are asked to limit their baggage to **a single bag of no more than forty-four pounds (20 kilos) and a single carry on item such as a small back pack. Luggage space on our small buses and 4-wheel drives is limited and excessive luggage may have to be stored in passenger seats, thus limiting seating options in our vehicles. Therefore we ask that you adhere to the luggage limits outlined above both for your comfort and for the comfort of others on the trip. Please pack in duffels with wheels if possible** as these will fit better in our buses and 4x4's and will be more useful in the lodges where we stay which are relatively small. In general, this is a relatively easy trip, and amenities at the lodges where we stay should include the transport and movement of luggage from buses to lodges although on our early morning departures there is unlikely to be hotel porters and it will be helpful if you can manage your own luggage during those times. **When packing, we urge you to give thought to traveling lighter rather than heavier.** We also recommend that you bring a few plastic bags large enough to protect your clothing and/or luggage in case of unlikely rain.

**LAUNDRY:** Laundry service is available on a limited basis in Mountain House and in Tayrona National Park. We recommend that you bring items that can be washed and will dry quickly (i.e. cool-max shirts etc).

**CLIMATE:** Weather conditions will vary from hot in the lowlands to cool and pleasant in the highlands. (temperatures in the high 80s to low 90s in the desert; possibly the low 50s at dawn in

the high mts.). Early morning temperatures can be chilly in the mountains but are likely to be warm mid-days. The mountains also can sometimes be damp and foggy and **require a medium weight jacket and/or sweater**. **Light weight gloves may be useful for an hour or two at the highest elevations in the Santa Marta Mts.** For mountain days participants should dress with layers for changing conditions. Although this is not a peak rainy period (rains are heaviest April and May and Sept to early Nov) we could experience some rain in the mountains. Rain in the lowlands and foothills is unlikely.

**CLOTHING:** Lightweight field clothing is the rule. **Please do not wear white or brightly colored clothes, including hats or raingear**, as it may frighten shy birds and animals and is likely to emphasize any movements that you make. We suggest loose-fitting khaki clothing or other cotton clothing in a dark green, dark blue, tan or brown shade. Military camouflage clothing should not be worn as it conveys an inappropriate image to police and military personnel, whom we are likely to encounter at various highway checkpoints. Also, please avoid nylon or plastic jackets and/or rainwear of similar materials; noisy clothing is annoying to others and may frighten birds and animals. Long pants and long-sleeved shirts are recommended as protection against insects (although we expect few insects anywhere on this trip). Temperature in the lowlands will be hot and participants should have some light weight clothing items for these two days. A rain jacket and umbrella may be useful in the mountains as well as sweater (or light jacket and down vest combination in layers) hat; and possibly gloves may be needed for the highest elevation site. Note, however, that there are no very cold temperatures on this trip and, in generally light weight clothes and a light jacket or sweater and rain jacket should be sufficient. We recommend you to bring a broad-brimmed hat for sun protection and a good sunscreen. Footwear should include gore-tex water-resistant/waterproof hiking boots, and perhaps a second pair of walking shoes and/or sneakers. **Rubber boots will not be necessary**. Shower thongs will be useful.

**HEALTH:** Malaria has been confirmed in Colombia, including the chloroquine-resistant strain in rural areas. However, it is not expected to be a problem on this route. There are two malaria prophylaxis recommended in areas where chloroquine-resistant malaria is present: Mefloquine (Lariam) and Malarone. For travelers who are unable to take either Malarone or Mefloquine, the CDC recommends the drug Doxycycline as an alternative. Please consult with your physician or local travel clinic for recommendations.

Hepatitis A vaccination is strongly recommended as a precaution. While not a requirement for entry into Colombia unless you are arriving from an infected area in another country, a yellow fever vaccination is a good idea for most people traveling to third world, tropical countries, and the vaccination is good for 10 years. People with compromised immune systems should consult with their personal physician before getting any vaccination. Your polio, tetanus, and typhoid protection should be current. Leishmaniasis is a disease transmitted by a small fly that is mainly active at dusk or during the night. It is not a common insect and only a few of the flies are disease carriers; proper clothing and the use of insect repellent are the best protection. Dengue fever also is very infrequent and is transmitted by day-flying *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes. Again, proper clothing and use of some insect repellent, especially in lowland areas, is the best protection. You may check with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta at 877-FYI-TRIP or [www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/) for further health information.

**INSECTS:** Insects should not be a problem over most of our route (the highlands should be particularly free of biting insects), but depending on rain, we could encounter a few biting insects. We are not expecting to expose you to any chigger country. However, it is impossible to determine whether a given area will have chiggers or not. As a precaution, we recommend you wear loose-fitting long pants and long-sleeved shirts, and bring bottles or roll-on sticks of “Cutter” or similar insect repellents. Spraying shoes, socks and the lower portion of pants with insect repellent will help reduce problems with unexpected chiggers. Pants pretreated with permethrin are also helpful. We urge that you not bring very strong-scented “natural” repellents, if possible, because these often have strong unpleasant odors that are inappropriate in group situations.

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

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

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.

- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

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

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

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

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

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

of reabsorbing it that typically causes intense itching, often lasting for a week or more. Chiggers like to attach themselves to areas of thin skin, like around the ankles, beltline, undergarment lines, knees, and elbows.

Chiggers can be avoided by following these procedures:

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

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

**CURRENCY:** Colombian Peso: as of March 26, 2013, 1.00 USD = 3,630.00 COP. You should exchange dollars at the Barranquilla airport upon arrival there, as money exchange elsewhere may not be available.

**DOCUMENTS:** For U.S. citizens, a passport valid for at least three months beyond your planned departure is required. A visa is not required; a tourist card will be issued by the airline. Non-United States citizens should check with their local Colombian consulate or embassy.

**EQUIPMENT:** **We strongly recommend that participants bring a wide-mouth water bottle that can be easily refilled;** also **a day pack; is essential;** other useful items include plastic bags

for water-proofing gear in the field; plenty of snacks such as trail mix or dried fruit; and any personal medications. A small, compact umbrella is highly recommended, and raingear (rain jacket or poncho) may be useful. Earplugs may come in handy.

### **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 power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars 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 binoculars 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 leader will have a scope available for group use throughout the trip; however, if you prefer to bring your own scope, you should feel free to do so.

**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:** There will be opportunities to recharge batteries for electronic equipment at virtually all locations where we stay but participants should bring enough spare batteries to last for a couple days between charges in case of unplanned electrical outages. Electrical plug-ins in Colombia usually are two flat-pin type (same as in USA) and **electrical current is 110 volts**. A surge protector also is strongly recommended. We recommend that everyone, especially those persons with dietary restrictions or other dietary requirements, bring some trail snacks and other emergency food items that are portable.

**INTERNET ACCESS:** Colombia is one of the most “wired” countries in South America and most hotels and lodges have internet access and Wi-Fi (at least in the lobbies if not actually in hotel rooms). Also, for those with the appropriate SIM card chip in your mobile phone (iPhone, Samsung, etc.) or iPad, you should be able to connect via one of Colombia’s main telecommunications services such as CLARO, AVANTEL or MOVISTAR (CLARO and AVANTEL have more coverage in remote rural areas). Sometimes this entails a trip to a local telecommunications service center, something best done before the trip begins. Cell phone access is now virtually country-wide in Colombia, although a few sites located in deep valleys may not be able to receive signals (this is usually a local issue). Before leaving home, we suggest that you check with your personal service provider for roaming rates and coverage use areas pertaining to your personal calling plan.

**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](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

***Field Guides (Birds):***

- Hilty, S. L. 2021. ***Birds of Colombia***. This is the recommended field guide for Colombia. Forward looking taxonomy includes all species and subspecies groups (as in Clements checklist). Illustrations are from 16-vol. *Handbook of Birds of the World* (Lynx) with many updates and additions. All species, as well as subspecies, and subspecies groups are illustrated and mapped. Unique for South America, this book contains a QR code for every species, which allows users to quickly link, via mobile phone, to Cornell's *Birds of the World* website and listen to vocalizations, view photos, and read an expanded text. Almost like having an App embedded in this book (and Colombia has remarkably good cellular coverage so this feature should be usable almost everywhere). Available from Lynx Editions <https://www.lynxeds.com>. Also available from Buteo Books/ABA sales, and elsewhere.
- Ayerbe-Quiñones, Fernando. 2019. ***Birds of Colombia***. Wildlife Conservation Society. Small and compact book with fine, well-organized, computer-generated illustrations; a detailed map (with color-coded subsp. distributions) accompanies each species. No text but has comments pertaining to each genus. Lacks useful index (only Order, Family and genus but not English names). Small size and accurate illustrations make this book very useful in field but paper cover (as well as all inside pages) printed on low-quality paper easily damaged by contact with moisture (always carry it inside a plastic bag for protection and do not let water reach this book). Now shown as available on Amazon. There is also a Spanish-language edition (2018).

***Butterflies:***

- D'Abbrera, Bernard. *Butterflies of South America*. Australia: Hill House, 1984. Good pocket guide, covers many genera with pictures. Taxonomic most likely out of date.

***Natural History:***

- Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America: A Watcher's Introduction to Behavior, Breeding and Diversity*. University of Texas Press, 2005. Highly recommended for background information on how things work in bird communities in tropical latitudes; topics include diversity of birds, hummingbird communities; mixed species flocks; antbirds and army ants; colorfulness, song structure in relation to environments, and much more.
- Kricher, John C. *The New Neotropical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. Excellent broad-based resource on just about everything from plants and birds to insects, herps and mammals in the Neotropics.
- Forsyth, Adrian, and Ken Miyata. *Tropical Nature: Life & Death in the Rain Forests of Central and South America*. New York: Scribners Sons, 1984. Does not deal much with birds but is a fantastic introduction to all kinds of topics relating to tropical wildlife including bugs, frogs, plant strategies, bot flies, and much more. Extraordinarily well written. Excellent introductory reading on tropical natural history.
- Stap, Don. *A Parrot without a Name: The Search for the Last Unknown Birds on Earth*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991. An account of field expeditions with Ted Parker and John O'Neill, among others.

### ***Apps:***

- *Merlin Bird ID*. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The best app to use in the field. Nowadays considered the “future of birding.” Once the app is downloaded, you must download the packs for Colombia. Includes a brief bird description, photos and voices. Also, there is a section for Bird Photo ID which can be useful. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**
- *Ebird*. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. A friendly and essential tool for the modern birdwatcher, this is nowadays your best way to keep your life list, all in a single application. Users can compile personal bird lists by location and by trip. When taxonomic splits are incorporated, your list will be automatically updated. Furthermore, your guide will be able to share the daily list. You can just accept the shared list from your VENT leader and have it uploaded in your

account! An essential tool to promote bird conservation. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**

- iNaturalist. This is arguably the largest citizen science project in the world. Uploading photos of unknown species (birds, plants, amphibians, butterflies, etc) will give you the opportunity for identification and discussion with scientists around the world **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**
- *MAPS.ME*. This app allows you to navigate offline. Detailed maps, all free of cost. Once the application is downloaded, you will have to download the map (s) for Colombia.
- *GPX Tracker* This app allows you to navigate using geographical coordinates. You will need to download the specific map in each area using Wi-Fi, all free of cost. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**
- *Bird Data*. A free app that provides summarized information for each species, including the subspecies and presence in neighboring countries. It has a section of endemic species. Look for the Colombia package. Providing that you have data access in your phone, it will show the eBird hotspots near your location, thus being one of its main advantages.
- *The Birds of Colombia*. IMB publicación. A basic app showing a list of the birds of Colombia based in taxonomic order and arranged by family. Contains an ornithological dictionary.
- *All Birds Colombia*. Sunbird Images. Blue Level Series. Available in Apple Store. This app was made from the information in *Birds of Northern South America* by R. Restall, et al (Helm Field Guide). It contains images, maps and bird voices. The user must be aware that the maps used from the publication were out-of-date at the time of printing. The most powerful aspects are the bird voices and the sonograms accompanying each species as well as the search tools. Good source to study the voice of the birds and get acquainted with the plumage and other aspects of the species natural history.
- *Colombia – guía de viaje y mapa offline*. Tripwolf. The free download provides limited information. A good source for those wanting to learn about culture, important dates and other aspects of the country. To access all the information, an upgrade must be purchased.

### ***Further Reading:***

Porup, J, K. Raub, C. Soriano & R. Reid. *Lonely Planet Guide to Colombia*, latest edition. A good introduction to Colombia life, culture and just getting around the country. A little time with this or a similar travel book in the latest edition should provide a richer travel experience for almost anyone. Also see Colombia Handbook, Rough Guide, Bradt Travel Guide, and the highly rated Michelin Green Guide Colombia.

Abad Gomez, Hector, *Manual de Tolerancia*. 2018. An interesting compilation of documents and notes written by Hector Abad Gomez about the civil conflict that took place in Colombia for many decades, currently available only in Spanish.

### ***Resources to Explore Before the Tour:***

- Erize, Francisco, Jorge Rodriguez Mata, and Maurice Rumboll. ***Birds of South America, Non-Passerines: Rheas to Woodpeckers***. Princeton, New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press, 2007. Generally good illustrations and useful written descriptions of the non-passerine birds of South America. A good complement to the two volumes by Ridgely and Tudor listed below.
- Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. ***The Birds of South America, Volume I: The Oscine Passerines: Jays, Swallows, Wrens, Thrushes and Allies, Vireos, Wood-warblers, Tanagers, Icterids and Finches***. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1989. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides").
- Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. ***The Birds of South America Volume II: The Suboscine Passerines: Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers, Antbirds, Gnateaters, and Tapaculos, Tyrant Flycatchers, Manakins and Cotingas***. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1994. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated by the year of printing. (<http://birds.cornell.edu>; select "Audio Guides")

- Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. *Field Guide to the Songbirds of South America: The Passerines*. University of Texas Press, 2009. This book condenses the text from the two previous references into a single volume with many additional illustrations (400+ species). It has more of a field guide format, and provides consistently excellent illustrations and text for the vast majority of Brazilian passerines. This plus the Erize, Mata & Rumboll guide to the Non-Passerines would give good coverage of the vast majority of Brazilian birds.

### ***Movies and Documentaries:***

Colombia Wild Magic. Netflix. This documentary presents a kaleidoscope of images of one of the most biodiverse countries in the world.

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

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

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

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

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

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on March 17, 2024, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

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

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

5/8/2026 PS/AB