



# NORTHERN ARGENTINA: A BIRDING BONAZA

From the Chaco and the Andes to Iberá Marshes and  
Iguazú

*November 29 - December 20, 2026*

Huge, friendly, and fascinating, Argentina offers the naturalist a wealth of exceptional birding and wildlife spectacles. This exciting new tour focuses on the special birds of the country's scenic northern region. Our carefully planned itinerary takes us to all the top birding locations visiting all six major biomes of this most bird-diverse part of Argentina. Along with many widespread southern South American species, we'll also have opportunities to observe and enjoy many exciting endemics, near-endemics and rarities. You can certainly expect a list of over 450 exciting bird species as well as many cool and fascinating mammals! The recent publication of a superb well-illustrated field guide makes a birding visit to this magical country even more appealing.



*Iguazú Falls © Andrew Whittaker*

The fascinating habitats of northern Argentina are dominated by Monte Desert and a vast expansive of dry Chaco and Sierran Chaco woodlands. A desert-like region stretching from southeastern Bolivia across western Paraguay and into the heart of northwest Argentina. The

Chaco avifauna is particularly rich, and the vast majority of which are not especially well known to birders. Among the highly sought-after species here are the Black-legged Seriema, Brushland Tinamou, Spot-winged Falconet, Black-bodied Woodpecker, Chaco Owl, Ash-colored Cuckoo, Rothschild's Swift, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, stunning Blue-tufted Starthroat, a distinct form of the Olive-crowned Crescentchest (an excellent candidate for a future split), Brown Cachalote, Chaco Sparrow, Black-crested Finch, Black-crowned Monjita, Patagonian Mockingbird, White-tipped Plantcutter, Spot-backed (Chaco) Puffbird, Crested Gallito and endemic Sandy Gallito, White-throated Cachalote, Steinbach's Canastero, Lark-like Brushrunner and recently described Monte Yellow Finch . While unique desert salt flats are home to the endemic Salinas Monjita, a large and strikingly beautiful flycatcher. To those familiar with the Sonoran Desert of the American Southwest, much of the Chaco and Monte Desert will have a familiar feel. Many of the tree genera are shared such as huge iconic Saguaros and the sheer abundance of birdlife also recalls the Sonoran Desert: the birds' morning exuberance is such that you literally don't know where to look next! Birding here is very easy and enjoyable, very similar to birding the savannas of East Africa.



*Magical Olive-crowned Crescentchest © Andrew Whittaker*

Most of our trip will be devoted to exploring northwest Argentina's Andean habitats. Visitors are often surprised at the richness of the avifauna here, and no one can fail to be astonished at the region's scenic beauty. A splendid palette of birds and other wildlife awaits us in the lush Yungas

forests of the foothills, in craggy canyons, and on the broad sweep of highland grasslands. Deep valley forests and sweeping uplands are home to endemic Bare-eyed (Moreno's) Ground Dove, Cordoba Cinclodes, Yellow striped Brushfinch, delightful Tucuman Mountain Finch, White-browed Tapaculo, Yungas Sparrow and lovely Long-tailed (Sierran) Meadowlark. While scanning picturesque rushing streams for wonderful Torrent Duck—one of the world's greatest waterfowl—and of course the iconic near endemic Rufous-throated Dipper!



*Stunning Rufous-throated Dipper © Andrew Whittaker*

This area is also home to many near endemics such as the Huayaco Tinamou, Tucuman Parrot, dainty, Gray-hooded Parakeet, Red-faced and Yungas Guans, Zimmer's Tapaculo, Paramo Pipit, Scribble-tailed Canastero, Subtropical Doradito, Fulvous-headed Brushfinch, Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager, Rusty-browed Warbling Finch, Rust-and-yellow Tanager and many more. This region is well supplied with furnariids—spinetails, thornbirds, canasteros, earthcreepers, miners, cinclodes, and foliage-gleaners—and what is perhaps the most dazzling hummingbird on

earth is also found here, the mind-blowing Red-tailed Comet! While flocks of yellow-finches, Burrowing Parakeet and shy mountain parakeets, and bold siskins add a swirl of color to the landscape of golden grass and blue skies. These mountains are home to the mighty Andean Condor our tour offers a great chance of some of the best ever close up views of these most wanted and truly iconic Andean species!

We will also visit the famous lagoons of Laguna Mar Chiquita offering a spectacular day of birding. Here shimmering pink hues of thousands of flamingos, walk amongst impressive numbers of wintering shorebirds, including sometimes countless thousands of Wilson's Phalaropes, spectacular South American Painted Snipe (rare), terns and a nice assortment of waterfowl including Coscoroba Swans and maybe even the odd parasitic Black-headed Duck! While the reed beds and lakeside scrub are home to Plumbeous Rail and poorly known Dinelli's Doradito and the rare Dot-winged Crake both big targets.

We begin our exciting adventure in the incredibly rich Iberá wetlands and grasslands are a joy for birders where daily lists can easily be near to or over 100 species! Here another completely different exciting set of avifauna awaits us. Exploration is by foot along trails, in 4 x 4 and during relaxed afternoon boat trips. At the top of the list of prized species is the mega rare Yellow Cardinal and impressive Strange-tailed Tyrant; the black-and-white and rufous throated males of this endemic breeding species sport unique long black tail flags. Other highlights here include Greater Rhea, Jabiru and Maguari Storks, Whistling Heron, Snail Kite, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, least bitterns, odd Plumbeous Ibis, rare, Yellow-breasted Crake, Giant Wood-Rail striking Red-billed Scythebill, White and Black-and-White Monjitas, Crested Doradito to dazzling Scarlet-headed Blackbirds. Native grasslands are home to a stellar line-up of rare and colorful seedeaters, all in breeding plumage; including the recently described Iberá, plus Marsh, Dark-throated, Chestnut, Rufous-rumped, Tawny-bellied and Pearly-bellied and even the tiny but rare flycatcher the Bearded Tachuri. Additionally, there is a nice mixture of interesting mammals from foxes and deer to some fascinating large rodents.

We also have two exciting night visits to two excellent private reserves for three highly sought after rare and poorly known nocturnal gems! The mega and mythical Buff-fronted Owl and Montane Forest Screech-Owl and natural grasslands home to the unique Sickle-winged Nightjar. Males possess a unique club winged shape due to their highly modified incurved outer wing

feathers (primaries)! This wild-looking and very obliging nightjar simply has to be seen to be believed!



*Sunset over the spectacular Ibera marshes © Andrew Whittaker*

Furthermore, this marvelous northeastern corner holds lush Parana Rainforests which are extremely rich in avian diversity, while home to the thunderous cataracts of Iguazú, the world's largest waterfall system, acting as a simply breathtaking backdrop for yet more superb birding. Here we'll be looking for the rare Helmeted Woodpecker and stunning Blond-crested, Robust and Yellow-fronted woodpeckers, endangered Black-fronted Piping-Guan, Blackish Rail, Surucua and Atlantic Black-throated Trogons, Rufous-capped Motmot, Red-breasted and Toco Toucan, Plush-crested Jay, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow (uncommon), Araucaria Tit-Spinetail, Rufous Gnateater, Bertoni's Antbird and a variety of antshrikes including the large Tufted and Spot-backed, incomparable Swallow-tailed manakin to rare Creamy-bellied Gnatcatcher and several colorful tanagers. Also, visiting a private flower garden with active hummingbird feeders which will

dazzle us with a kaleidoscopic feast of shimmering colors. These should include the large Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Violet-capped Woodnymph, Black-throated Mango, Versicolored Emerald and cool Planalto Hermits to name a few.

Argentina's immense size and extremely varied habitats and avifauna—the country list tallies more than 1,000 bird species—make it impractical to explore the entire country in a single natural history outing. With that in mind, we also offer another exciting Argentinian adventure to fascinating southern Argentina (January 5-20, 2027) birding the rich Pampas and delightful Patagonia during the austral spring. Exploring a number of totally different incredibly scenic biomes that are home to many different exciting birds and very unique mammals. Highlights include the rare Hooded Grebe (one of the world's greatest grebes) highly sought after Snowy Sheathbill and Magellanic Plover (both in their own unique families) plus such greats as Magellanic Woodpecker and several endemics and near endemics as White-headed Steamer Duck, Elegant Crested Tinamou, Olrog's Gull, Chocolate-vented Tyrant, Pampas Pipit and Pampas Meadowlark to rare Austral Rail and much more. In combination, these two exciting trips offer a full cross-section of this extraordinary country's varied habitats, incredible scenery, and spectacular birds and other amazing wildlife.

Our trip across this vast and beautiful part of South America is sure to grip the imagination. From the bird-rich Chaco, striking Monte Desert, lush Yunga's forest-clad slopes of the towering Andes to immense Ibera wetlands and enchanting Parana Rainforests surrounding the world's greatest waterfalls, this will certainly be an unforgettable joyful birding adventure.



*A male Marsh Deer and Jacare Caiman (foreground) © Andrew Whittaker*

## November 29, Days 1: Flight from USA to Buenos Aires

Participants should plan to arrive at Buenos Aires's Aeropuerto Internacional Ministro Pistarini (more commonly known as Ezeiza, pronounced *eh-ZAY-za*; airport code EZE) on January 7. Most flights depart in the afternoon and will arrive the next morning. After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by our ground operator, then transferred to your hotel.

**NIGHT:** Aboard aircraft

## November 30, Day 2: Arrival in colorful Buenos Aires

This evening, we will meet up in the hotel lobby for introductions and a round up about the tour and details concerning our first day's schedules. Your tour leader, Andy Whittaker, will introduce himself and his excellent local birding guide, Julian. Julian is a close friend of Andy's, but more importantly, he is recognized as one of the country's top birders and is enjoyable to travel with. Attendees can be assured they are in excellent hands. Following the meeting, the group will go to dinner.

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

**NIGHT:** Hotel Madero, Buenos Aires

## December 1, Day 3: Flight to Posadas, and on to the rich Iberá Wetlands

We will transfer to the airport for our early morning flight northbound to Posadas, the capital city of this northernmost province of Misiones where our Argentinian adventure begins. Nestled on the banks of the mighty Parana River with a population of nearly half a million. Upon arrival we will be met by our air-conditioned 4x4 vehicles depending on our arrival time we will either drive nearby to enjoy our first of many wonderful Argentine lunches in a nearby restaurant. Or arriving earlier we will continue heading south to the rich Ibera marshes, birding our way into

these fabulous wetlands with some stops to admire the concentrations of large waterbirds. An exciting mix of herons and egrets, ibis, ducks, and storks including the huge Jabiru, Maguari, and Wood storks. We plan to arrive at our delightful, forested lodge in time for a late delicious homemade lunch.

Iberá Marshes are one of the most important bodies of fresh water in South America, and the second-largest wetland in the world, exceeded in size only by the famous Brazilian Pantanal. Fed by rainfall, it covers an impressive area of between 5,800 and 7,700 square miles. Since 1982, part of this wetland has been protected as the Iberá Provincial Reserve, one of the largest such reserves in Argentina, extending over 5,000 square miles; there are plans to transform the reserve into a national park, enhancing its protected status. This rich and complex wetland comprises swamps, marshes, and lagoons brimming with wildlife; its bird list is 300 species and still growing.

Raptors abound here: Snail Kites depending on snails may be a common sight along the roadside, while lovely Long-winged Harriers gracefully quarter the marshes. Soon we will spot family groups of huge Greater Rheas or stately Red-legged Seriemas patrolling the fields. Roadside wires are favorite perches for Fork-tailed Flycatcher (abundant), striking white and rarer Black-and-White Monjitas, and colorful Campo Flickers and keeping our eyes peeled for the first colorful rare seedeaters.



*Jabirus at rest © Andrew Whittaker*

Our delightful lodge is perfectly nestled in the heart of these magnificent marshlands; all rooms have views out over the shimmering reed fringed lake. Some of us may want to take advantage of a refreshing dip in the lodge's pool during afternoon siestas.

**NIGHT:** Aguape Lodge, Iberá Marshes

## December 2-3, Days 4-5: Exploring the vast Iberá Wetlands, by 4 x 4 and on foot with relaxed afternoon boat excursions

We will wake up to a tremendous dawn chorus, a cacophony of Rufous Hornero, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Giant Wood-Rail, Blueish gray Saltator and various thrushes singing. The Rufous Hornero, Argentina's national bird, is omnipresent. Hornero is Spanish for "baker," an allusion to this bird's amazing mud nest; the name has been generalized to apply to all the members of the family Furnariidae, the ovenbirds.

We have two marvelous days to devote to exploring this truly amazing natural paradise. The marshes are lined with rich gallery forest, and natural grasslands simply alive with an incredibly rich variety of species; on our first full day here, we should easily chalk up over 100 different species. As the temperature starts to drop in the afternoons, we plan to take relaxing but action-packed boat trips. Ringed, Amazon kingfishers are common as are Cocoli and Striated Heron all enjoying a good fish meal. Migrant shorebirds can be common (depending on water levels) with a few local Pantanal Snipe, Collared Plover, Black-necked Stilt and Southern Lapwing amongst the boreal migrants. Both Large-billed and delicate, Yellow-billed Terns rest with Black Skimmer on the beaches with huge Southern Screammers. We will also be keeping our eyes open for the rarely seen Yellow-breasted Crake and the commoner Rufous-sided Crake; we can even hope for the skulky Spotted Rail. Scanning the dense reeds could turn up Rufescent Tiger-Heron or a maybe a rare Pinnated Bittern or the retiring Least Bittern (the South American form *erythromelas* is an excellent candidate for a split).

The area's flagship bird is a unique songbird of climax grasslands, the well-named Strange-tailed Tyrant. Males in breeding plumage are truly striking, black and white with bright bare rufous

throat skin and huge vertical black tail flags. This will be one of our main targets in the species' stronghold, and hopefully we can also enjoy the males' comical flight displays above the grass, their strange tails used as rudders. They remind your leader of east African grassland species such as the whydahs and widowbirds, which also have wild-looking tails deployed in the male's aerial display. Another couple of tiny flycatchers we hope to encounter are the tiny Bearded Tachuri, in grasslands and poorly known Crested Doradito in the rich marsh side vegetation.



*Giant Wood-Rails © Andrew Whittaker*

Other notable species could include the Red-winged Tinamou, Roseate Spoonbill, Whistling Heron, Plumbeous and Buff-necked ibis, Maguari Stork, White and Little woodpeckers, White-barred Piculet, Red-billed Scythebill (rare), Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Greater Thornbird, Rufous Cachalote, Black-capped Donacobius, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, Purple-throated Euphonia, and Green-winged Saltator. Savanna, Great Black and White-tailed hawks are all

present, and with luck, we might even see a migrant flock of Mississippi Kites or a rare Chaco Eagle, a very large raptor that preys on armadillos.



*Yellow Cardinal © Hernan Goni*

The reserve is certainly an epicenter of seedeater diversity, and we hope to encounter several colorful species of these grassland gems in attractive breeding plumages: Dark-throated, Rufous-rumped, Tawny-bellied, Chestnut, Marsh, Pearly-bellied, Rusty-collared, and possibly the Iberá Seedeater, described as a species as recently as 2016. For sure one of the trips top birds will be the cool-looking and endangered Yellow Cardinal, the brightly colored males are amazing!

These rich wetlands are also excellent for mammals holding several fascinating species such as Pampas and Crab-eating Foxes, extremely confiding Marsh Deer, rare Pampas Deer, Brown Brocket Deer, herds of Capybara, the world's largest rodent to wild looking Pampas Viscacha. While Gallery Forests are home to families of Black-and-gold Howler Monkeys. Reptiles abound in these rich wetlands, which are a haven for the endangered Broad-nosed and the commoner Yacare caimans, often encountered in good numbers as they sun on the banks.

Walking Gallery Forest and birding the scrub around the lodge trails should reward us with a magnificent variety of species, especially more songbirds. These could include the likes of Spotted Nothura, Spot-winged Pigeon, Picui Ground Dove, Dark-billed and Guira Cuckoo, Glittering -bellied and Golden Hummingbirds, Blue-crowned Parakeet, White, Green-barred and Checkered Woodpecker, Red-billed Scythebill, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Firewood Gatherer, Chotoy Spinetail, Spectacled Tyrant, White Monita, Tawny-headed Swallow, Green-backed and Crested Becard, Red-crested Cardinal, Blue-and Yellow Tanager, Ultramarine Grosbeak, Long-tailed Reed Finch and Lesser Grassfinch.

**NIGHTS:** Aguapé Lodge, Iberá Marshes

## December 4th, Day 6: Birding out of the Ibera marshes; Drive onto Ituzaingo with nightjar excursion at Rincon Santa Maria

We will devote another morning to catching up with any birds that might have eluded us with as we exit this marvelous reserve. lunch on route, we'll head towards Posadas, birding on route for our main target the Iberá Seedeater described in (2016) and then diverting off west to Ituzaingo. Well, known for its natural beauty, situated on the mighty Paraná River, which marks the border

with Paraguay. We should have some siesta time before we head out to arrive in the late afternoon for our main target, the rare and poorly known Sickle-winged Nightjar, to a small nature reserve. This cute small nightjar is a fascinating grassland species confined to southeastern South America and classified as near threatened. The cinnamon plumage makes it very well camouflaged in the grass; however, it is often extremely confiding, perching low down and freezing in the light thus offering great views! The males unique club like wing shape with their outer flight feathers bending inwards has to be seen to be believed!

**NIGHT:** Atlas Grand Hotel, Ituzaingo

## December 5, Day 7: Birding the Reserva Urutau and driving to Iguazú with an afternoon at a hummingbird garden

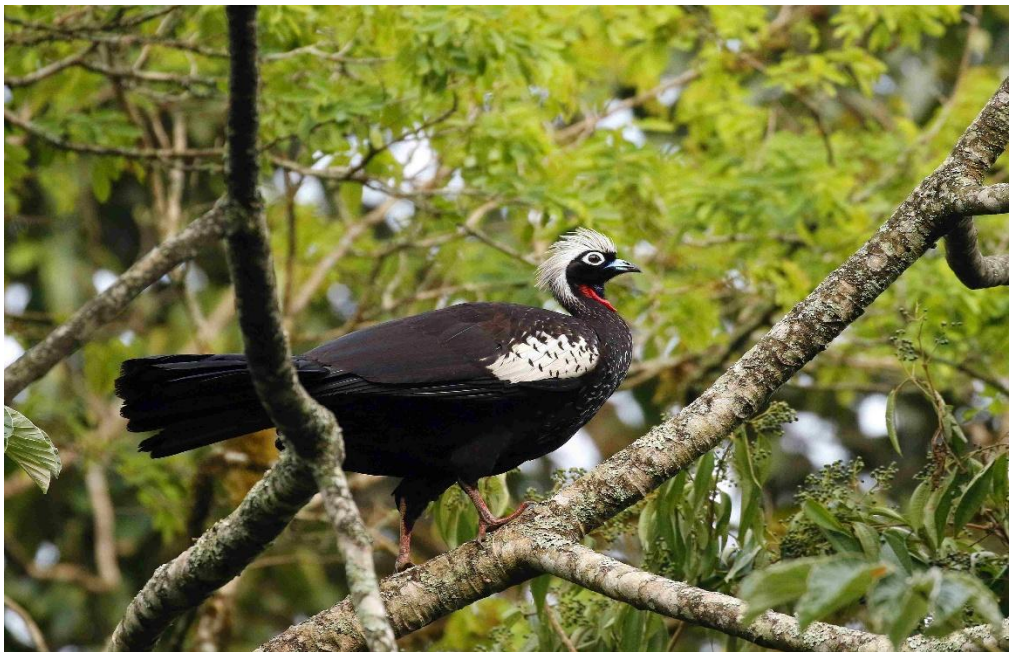
Early this morning, we will concentrate on finding any birds we may have missed so far; while also enjoying such local specialties as the Streamer-Tailed Tyrant whose antiphonal duetting displays are a true delight to observe. The delightful grasslands at the Urutau reserve hold a couple of localized rarities the delicate and well-marked Sharp-tailed tyrants, Pearly-bellied Seedeater and skulky Ocellated Crakes. Following early birding we head north and plan to arrive at our wonderfully located Iguazu hotel late afternoon. Nestled into the rich 600-hectare rainforest reserve, the grounds hold a lot of cool birds too enjoy. However, you may decide to take a dip instead of in the lovely hotel swimming pool. Depending on time this afternoon (or another) as temperatures cools off, we will visit a private hummingbird garden where feeders attract at times as many as ten species. We should enjoy the spectacular Swallow-tailed and White-throated hummingbirds, Scale-throated and Planalto hermits, Black Jacobin, Black-throated Mango, Violet-capped Woodnymph, Gilded Sapphire, and Versicolored and Glittering-throated emeralds. Variable Orioles, Yellow-fronted Woodpecker and Bananaquits also take advantage of the feeders and fruit feeders here.

**NIGHT:** Falls Iguazú Hotel and Spa, Iguazu

## December 6, Day 8: Birding Iguazú National Park and exploring the world-famous falls

The thunderous cataracts of Iguazú will provide the backdrop to some phenomenal birding. The Iguazú River falls almost 250 feet, creating a fan of cascades with more than 250 individual falls. We will marvel at this miracle of nature as we walk along the park's trails, pausing at the many lookouts for spectacular views; the different levels of trails even let us see the falls from above and from below. A short train ride gives us access to a lovely well-constructed boardwalk to the amazing Devil's Throat one kilometer both ways, the epicenter of the falls, which is truly amazing while we can enjoy Snail Kites, Toco Toucan, Great-dusky Swifts, White-winged swallows, Plush-crested Jay and Greater Ani's!

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



*Black-fronted Piping-Guan © Andrew Whittaker*

Early morning birding will provide a flurry of activity with many possibilities from Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Spot-billed Toucanet (both rare), Red-breasted toucans, Blackish Rail, Surucua and Atlantic Black-throated trogons, Rufous-capped Motmot, gorgeous Swallow-tailed Manakins and Yellow-fronted, and Blond-crested, woodpeckers. Other specialties could include poorly known Creamy-bellied Gnatcatcher, Tufted Antshrike, Sibilant Sirystes, Three-striped Flycatcher, tiny

Eared Pygmy-tyrant, Southern Bristle Tyrant, White-shouldered Fire-Eye, White-eyed Foliage-gleaner, Rufous-margined and Streak-capped Antwren. A nice line up of tanagers include spectacular Green-headed, Ruby-crowned, Magpie, Fawn-breasted Tanagers and also Blue-naped Chlorophonias or Chestnut-bellied Euphonias adding even more color! The attractive song of Riverbank Warbler echo around as White-winged Swallows forage for insects over the water, while swirling flocks of Great Dusky Swifts swoop through the curtain of water to their nests on the sheer rock. Other species we could enjoy are the Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Crested Oropendola, and Red-rumped Cacique. We will certainly be on the lookout for the rare Buff-bellied Puffbird, which perches quietly in the forest's mid-story or canopy. We can also expect to encounter clouds of multicolored butterflies plus some interesting mammals, here, too, such as groups of South American Coati, Black-horned Capuchin, Red Brocket Deer, or Azara's Agouti. Among the reptiles are the large and striking Black-and Gold Tegui Lizards.

**NIGHT:** Falls Iguazú Hotel and Spa, Iguazú

## December 7, Day 9: Birding the Urugua-í Provincial Park and Araucaria Forest at Puerto Libertad

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

The park is about 35 miles to our south, but the very early rise will be worth it. Birding will be terrific, and we will make a particular effort to find rarities like the Black-fronted Piping-guan and the rare and poorly-known Helmeted Woodpecker—I will never forget seeing my lifer here almost 25 years ago! Beyond those specialties, some of the huge list of stand-out species we could encounter are the Brown Tinamou, Rusty-margined Guan, Slaty-breasted Wood-Rail, Blond-crested, Robust and White-spotted Woodpeckers, Ochre-collared Piculet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Atlantic Plain-Xenops, Ochre-breasted and White-eyed Foliage-gleaners, Lesser Woodcreeper, Gray-bellied Spinetail, Tufted

and Spot-backed antshrikes, Gray-hooded Flycatchers, Southern Antpipit, Southern Bristle-Tyrant, Rufous-crowned Greenlet, Golden-crowned and White-browed Warbler, Red-crowned Ant Tanager, Guira and Magpie tanagers, and Saffron-billed Sparrow. Healthy bamboo found here on the trails gives us chance at, Bertoni's Antbirds, Rufous Gnateater, rare Spotted Bamboo Wren, Rusty-breasted Nunlet and Blackish-blue Seedeater. On our return for lunch at the hotel, we will visit some charismatic Araucaria Forest looking for its namesake the Araucaria Tit-Spinetail, Green-winged Saltator, Thrush-like Wren, Colbolt-rumped Parrotlet, Purple-throated Euphonia and Streaked and Boat-billed Flycatcher.

Returning to our hotel with an optional late afternoon excursion into the forest around our lodge to enjoy this 600-hectare reserve. Species could include Bat Falcon, Plumbeous Kite, Slaty-breasted Wood-Rail, Rufous-capped Motmot, Buff-bellied Puffbird, Great and Barred Antshrike, Masked Tityra, Saffron-billed Sparrow, Golden-crowned Warbler and Yellow Tyrannulet or Planalto Woodcreeper. Around dusk we will try for Common Paraque, Mottled and Tawny-browed owls, and Short-tailed Nighthawk.

**NIGHT:** Falls Iguazú Hotel and Spa, Iguazú

## December 8, Day 10: Morning direct flight to Córdoba; Birding the East Slope of the Andes

After breakfast, we will make a short drive to the domestic airport for our early morning direct flight to Córdoba, in search of mid-elevation endemics, we will drive up to about 7,000 feet on the Pampa de Achala, a picturesque area with easy birding close to the road and an excellent introduction to the habitats of the eastern slope of the Andes. This area must be the best anywhere in South America for close encounters with the iconic and huge Andean Condors right off the roadside. Amazingly we have had soaring birds within just a few meters of us looking straight into our eyes! Roosting sites are easy to scope too, offering truly incredible studies!

Among the exciting endemics here we will be concentrating on are the two endemics the stunning Sierran Meadowlark (to be split from Long tailed) and Córdoba Cinclodes and near endemic Olrog's Cinclodes. Other noteworthy species could include Darwin's Nothura, Variable Hawk, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Southern Lapwing, the dazzling Red-tailed Comet, Campo Flicker, Streak-backed (Puna) Canastero a future split, Hellmayr's Pipit, Spectacled Tyrant,

Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Grass Wren *tucumanus* (a probable future split), and the eastern form of Rufous-banded (Buzzing) Miner, which is to be split Great Pampa Finch and Band-tailed seedeater.



*Iconic Andean Condor © Andrew Whittaker*

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

**NIGHT:** El 44 Reserva Natural de Tiempo Libre, Capilla Del Monte



*Endemic Sierran Meadowlark (to be split from Long-tailed) adult male © Andrew Whittaker*

## December 9-10, Day 11-12: Two delightful days to explore and enjoy the Chaco birds

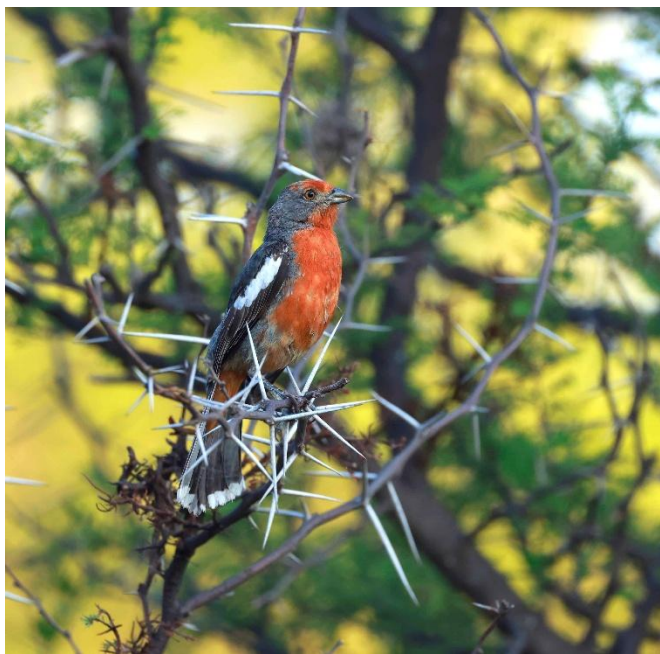
We will spend both days exploring the varied Chaco with a midday siesta break during the hottest part of the day. This is the Guaraní Indian name for the semi-desert region stretching from southern Bolivia and western Paraguay to central Argentina. Chaco has no mountains and few major rivers, making running water scarce; it is not as dry here, though, as to the west, and the slightly wetter climate attracts different bird species. Our stay will provide us with a fantastic introduction to the commoner and rarer Chaco birds, along with some species typical of taller, more forested habitats. Chaco's dawn chorus of bird song is one of the best anywhere. The first sounds we hear may be the loud duets of the much sought-after Brown Cachalote, zipping noise of White-tipped Plantcutters to the amazing raucous calls of pairs of Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper.



*The distinctive Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper © Andrew Whittaker*

Here we will enjoy a wealth of birds but also concentrate also on low-density near-endemics such as the ground dwelling Crested Gallito, uncommon Spot-winged Falconet to the cool-looking, Black-bodied Woodpecker, but whatever the results, you can be sure that each day our bird list will be a long one.

Chaco draws its birdlife from a wide variety of adjacent scrub, steppe, and woodland regions. Given the general absence of water here, visitors are always surprised by the abundance of birds. Though most of these birds are relatively widespread in the Chaco vegetation communities, they are species that are not well known to birders. Among those we could find here are the Andean or Tataupa tinamous, Tropical Screech Owl, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, huge Cream-backed, medium sized Green-barred to the delicate Checkered woodpecker, Blue-crowned and Monk parakeets, Guira Cuckoo, Ash-colored Cuckoo, Glittering-bellied Emerald, incredible male Blue-tufted Starthroat, Southern Martin, Chaco Earthcreeper, Short-billed Canastero, stunning Olive-crowned Crescentchest, odd crested Lark-like Brushrunner, Pale-breasted and Sooty-fronted Spinetail, Chaco Sparrow, Ultramarine Grosbeak, Blue-and Yellow Tanager and the colorful odd looking cotinga, the White-tipped Plantcutter.



*White-tipped Plantcutter © Andrew Whittaker*

Flycatchers are an important component of the Chaco avifauna, with such interesting species as the Fulvous-crowned Scrub-tyrant, fascinating duetting Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Suiriri Flycatcher, and Southern Scrub-Flycatcher. Among the many other passerines here are the Golden-billed Saltator, Many-colored Chaco Finch, Red-crested finches, Black-and-chestnut Warbling Finch. To an awesome orange sunset E we will enjoy our great driver/cook Gabi's famous Argentine meat barbeques, accompanied with fresh salad, an assortment of cheese and

cold beverages. You will without doubt really enjoy this as last year it was voted as one of the best meals! Often with luck while observing the local hunting Scissor-tailed Nightjars!

**NIGHTS:** El 44 Reserva Natural de Tiempo Libre, Capilla Del Monte

## December 11, Day 13: Birding the famous lagoons of Laguna Mar Chiquita

Following an early breakfast, we head eastwards towards the laguna Mar Chiquita (translated as “Little Sea”). The lake is the largest naturally occurring saline lake in the country. Depending on water levels, it covers a vast area of between 770-2,300 square miles and is truly a birders paradise. Holding more than half a million migrant shorebirds annually and large flocks of flamingo mostly Chilean but we have chances of both Andean and James as well as an incredible number and diversity of waterbirds. These should include Coscoroba Swan and all three species of coot, Rosy-billed Billed Pochard, White-cheeked Pintail, Silver Teal and Red Shoveler. Parasitic Black-headed Duck are found; they lay their eggs in the abundant Gray-headed Gull nests! Attractive Silvery and Great Grebe breed along with a few Two-banded Plover and Pantanal Snipe. We will track down the lakeside vegetation for the poorly known Dinnelli’s Doradito and the gorgeous but secretive South American Painted Snipe and with luck stand a good chance for observing the rare Dot-winged Crake.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Ansenuza Casino & Spa, Miramar de Ansenuza



*Chilean Flamingo © Andrew Whittaker*

## December 12, Day 14: The varied Chaco and Salinas Grandes

Little is known about the geological history of Chaco, but biogeographers are fairly certain that dry conditions have prevailed here from the Pleistocene to the present. Most of the vegetation we'll see is low thorn-scrub. The dominant trees are two mesquite species (*Prosopis alba* and *P. nigra*), though many other species are present. Selective cutting for charcoal, firewood gathering, and cattle grazing have altered the Chaco in many places, resulting in an increased abundance of cacti and ground bromeliads. Where the soil is slightly less salty, mesquites give way to handsome and slightly taller quebracho woodland composed of *Aspidosperma quebracho-blanco* and *Schinopsis quebracho-colorado*. These trees are economically important for their beautiful wood, light- and dark-colored, respectively, as their species names suggest. First thing this morning, we will concentrate on finding anything we missed in the lagoon or getting better views of skulking species and enjoy the abundant waterbirds, including the likes of Snowy-crowned and Gull-billed terns, Wilson's Phalarope, Stilt, Baird's, White-rumped and Upland Sandpiper. We will then drive on to Salinas, where we will check in to our comfortable hotel in time for a few hours of well-earned rest. Our well positioned hotel is surrounded by wonderful dry Chaco habitat. Time allowing, late afternoon we should be able to go out and bird the nearby excellent habitat. Last year we even managed to see a new species of mammal for Julian a Chaco Mara. This massive expanse of unique salt desert is amazing, covering a vast area of 85 sq. miles! Home to much unique salt tolerant fauna, here our main objective birding these salt flats and open Chaco, will be to find the stunning and very cool looking endemic Salinas Monjita in this unique habitat.

**NIGHT:** Salinas Gran Hotel, San Jose de Las Salinas

## December 13, Day 15: Salinas Grandes Salt flats and birding the Andean foothills of Reserva Natural Provincial Los Sosa driving onto Tafi del Valle

This morning, we will spend the first hours paying attention to finding less common and sometimes elusive Chaco species we still need such as the Black-legged Seriema, Brushland and Elegant-crested Tinamou, Chaco Chachalaca, Ash-colored and Dark-billed Cuckoo, Crested

Hornero, Lesser Shrike-Tyrant and possibly the rare Cinnamon warbling finches, Cinerous Tyrant, and the range-restricted breeding Black-crested Finch and Ringed Warbling Finch. One of the best areas to find the low density cool looking Spot-winged Falconet is here if we have failed to see it yet.



*The endemic Salinas Monjita © Andrew Whittaker*

As the day begins to warm up, we will begin the fairly long drive to the cooler Andean climate of Tafi del Valle. We begin by driving through the vast salt desert alongside the huge lake before marvelling at the significant changes in landscape from the flat expanses as we moved through rolling and vibrant green countryside as we climbed up into the wooded foothills of the Andes. Here we will enjoy the cooler climate of the foothills and a complete set of new species. Concentrating on the crystal-clear, boulder-strewn streams in the picturesque, forested Yungas foothills. This is the required habitat and home to the charming and uncommon Rufous-throated Dipper, a bird that occurs only on a few streams in northwestern Argentina and adjacent Bolivia. We hope to locate them and observe their fascinating feeding behavior as they move in the bubbling water between boulders, bobbing up and down and flicking its wings to expose the large, usually concealed white wing flashes, probably to startle potential prey. Also, enjoying the iconic Torrent Duck and playful Black Phoebe on these lovely rivers.



*The superb Spot-winged Falconet © Andrew Whittaker*

We plan to arrive at our hotel by late afternoon. On our arrival quaint town of Tafi Del Valle and our delightful hotel a lovely rose garden often the lovely song of either an Andean Slaty Thrush or Chiguanco Thrush could serenaded us.

Views from our rooms over the gardens and surrounding hills is very spectacular and often we see some hummingbirds in the grounds. Previously the hotel flower gardens have been visited by stunning Red-tailed Comets and rare Slender-tailed Woodstars.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Waynay Killa, Tafi del Valle



*Female Torrent Duck © Andrew Whittaker*

## December 14, Day 16: Full days birding lush Yungus forest and, valleys as well as mountain grasslands and rocky valleys of Los Sosa Provincial Natural Reserve

This morning, depending on the weather, we will explore the adjacent cloud forest dominated by alder (*Alnus jorullensis*) and pino del cerro (*Podocarpus parlatorei*) and visit the laurel (*Cinnamomum porphyrium*) forest of Los Sosa Provincial Natural Reserve. Here we have good chances of seeing several species found only in Argentina and Bolivia, among them Yungas Guan, Dot-fronted Woodpecker, Tucuman Parrot, Buff-banded Tyrannulet, Plumbeous Black-Tyrant, Brown-capped Redstart, the endemic Yellow-striped Brushfinch, and Rusty-browed Warbling Finch and another shot at the dipper if we did not yet succeed.



*Male Dot-fronted Woodpecker © Andrew Whittaker*

Later we plan to go up in elevation search the grassy montane expanses and rocky valleys between 6,500 and 9,800 feet elevation Searching for Ornate and Andean tinamous, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Andean Flicker, delicate tiny Gray-hooded Parakeet, Black-winged Ground Dove, Red-tailed Comet can be common here, Buff-breasted Earthcreeper, Cream-winged Cinclodes, Hellmayr's and Correndera pipits, and Stripe-fronted Thornbird, White-browed Chat-Tyrant, Rusty Flowerpiercer and attractive Subtropical Doradito. Endemic species here include the Tucuman Mountain Finch, Bare-faced (Moreno's) Ground Dove, and one of the most beautiful of *Scytalopus tapaculos*, the White-browed Tapaculo.



*Endemic White-browed Tapaculo © Andrew Whittaker*

Returning to our hotel by midafternoon after a full morning birding. Depending on time we may visit a nearby lake which is good for waterbirds and a top migrant trap where we have previously found a flock of migrating Snowy-crowned terns other such as Andean Gull, Yellow-billed Pintail, Slate-colored Coot, Great Grebe and Green-barred Woodpecker. Really anything could turn up here! Following the bird list, we will enjoy a wonderful dinner in an excellent nearby top restaurant.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Waynay Killa, Tafi del Valle

## December 15, Day 17: Cuesta del Los Cardones; Drive to Cafayate, with birding on route. Afternoon Desert Birding

Following an early breakfast, we drive up to the spectacular El Infiernillo pass, at an elevation of 9,980 feet, then descend into an area of rain shadow characterized by cardon cactus, Saguaro (*Trichocereus pasacana*) some hundreds of years old and up to 30-40 feet tall.



*Monte Desert and characteristic Saguaro Cactus © Andrew Whittaker*

Birding this stark Monte Desert, we will be looking for our first Burrowing Parakeet macaw size and maybe Giant Hummingbird or uncommon Andean Hillstar while Andean Swifts hawk insects above. Noteworthy targets include such endemics as Steinbach's Canastero, and Monte Yellow-Finch, first described as recently as 2012 by one of our colleges. Passerines may include the Patagonian Mockingbird, Rusty-vented Canastero, Straight-billed Earthcreeper, Rufous-banded (Buzzing) Miner, White-winged Black-Tyrant, Cliff Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, d'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant and Greenish Yellow-Finch. Next up visiting the sparse sandy inter Andean desert home to two of our main targets the endemic odd Sandy Gallito and near endemic White-throated Cacholote which make tremendous, large nests. By lunchtime we hope to check in to our well-situated plush hotel set in the delightful vineyards of this famous wine region of Cafayate. With a bit of rest time off at the lodge which provides a lovely pool, spa and sauna all for free. As temperatures fall, we will take a short drive to the amazing rock formations known as Las Conchas! A visit here will leave visitors wowed by the uniquely marvelous sandstone scenery. Following a great dinner, we will explore a nearby wetland offering a good variety of waterbirds. Following dinner, we will offer an owling excursion on the hotel grounds, our prime target the rare and near-endemic Chaco Owl.

**NIGHT:** Grace Cafayate Hotel, Cafayate



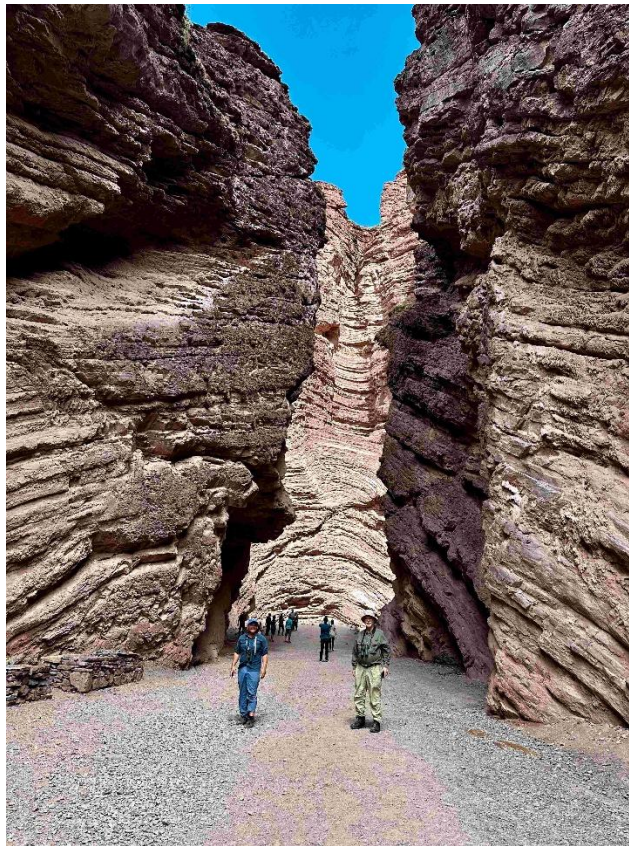
*Amazing sandstone formations of Las Conchas © Andrew Whittaker*



*Sought after rare Chaco Owl © Andrew Whittaker*

## December 16, Day 18: Drive onto Salta via La Garganta del Diablo with afternoon birding the slopes of the Andes at Cuesta Del Obispo

After an early breakfast, we will begin our approximately four-hour drive to Salta. The scenery on route is wild and truly spectacular along the river valley; the red and white sand mountains are mesmerizing forming so many untrue shapes and colors. We certainly will plan to stop and walk into the famous Garganta del Diablo, translated into the Devils Throat.



*Garganta Del Diablo © Andrew Whittaker*

The scenery will change drastically as we are near the provincial capital in this northwestern corner with more annual rainfall, we will encounter lush forests carpeting this mountainous area. Explore these higher habitats is magical where vegetation becomes noticeably scrubby above 5,000 feet, and a thousand feet above that, we enter a portion of the valley that lies in the rain shadow of the Andes, a very dry and rocky landscape classified as High Monte Desert. The high

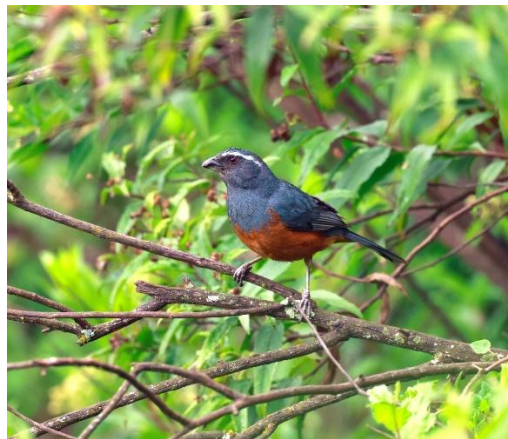
canyon walls, scattered with large columnar cactus, are a mosaic of ochres, reds, and greens. The whole scene invites comparison to the American Southwest.

Birding the cooler grassy slopes of Cuesta Del Obispo will offer several new species. Target species include Paramo Pipit, Zimmer's Tapaculo, Scribble-tailed and Maquis Canastero. Other noteworthy additions such as Rock Earthreeper, Brown-capped Tit -Spinetail, Streak-fronted and Spot-breasted Thornbird, such as White-vented and Sparking Violetear, Mitred Parakeet.

Between 6,500 and 9,500 feet, open fields and grasslands alternate with patches of shrubs. These open areas are favored by both Huyaco, Andean and larger Ornate tinamou. Other species we can hope for include Plain-colored and Band-tailed seedeaters, Greenish Yellow-Finch, Black and Hooded siskins, Long-tailed Meadowlark, and Ash-breasted, Gray-hooded, and Plumbeous sierra finches. Roadside tree tobacco plants are visited here by the incomparable Red-tailed Comet. To allow us to take full advantage of the great birding we will enjoy lunch at a simple restaurant with a magnificent view offering tasty local dishes where we have previously encountered nesting comets! Keeping our eyes open for the scarce Rufous-webbed Bush Tyrant. Andean Condors and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles are regularly seen in the upper reaches of this area, and we will be watching the skies for both species as well as for poorly known Rothschild's Swifts. Other colorful key species are the lovely uncommon Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager and the near-endemic Tucuman Mountain Finch, both of which are quite local in distribution.

On arrival in Salta by mid-to-late afternoon, we have some time to chill out at our hotel before a wonderful dinner.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Las Moras, Salta



*Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager* © Andrew Whittaker

## December 17-18, Days 19-20: Lush Yungas Forest, Montane Forest, and Scrubland

This delightful location will serve as our base for two days of birding and exploration. Found only in central and southern Bolivia and Argentina, at an elevation between 1,300 and 6,500 feet, the Yungas is a seasonal cloud forest, receiving heavy rainfall for part of the year. The trees in Yungas Forest are usually festooned with epiphytes, but the forest does not attain the mossy lushness of its wetter equatorial counterparts. Common epiphytes here include *Tillandsia*, *Bromelia*, *Ichomes*, and *Rhipsalis*, a lovely dangling epiphytic cactus. These distinctive forests are drier than “true” cloud forest, and several birds are found here that occur almost nowhere else. Other species, typical of forests to the north, reach their southern limits in the Yungas forests of northern Argentina. A long road winds through this spectacular habitat, providing access to splendid birding. I’m an antbird fanatic and here we stand a great chance of for me the top and largest antbird of all, the enormous Giant Antshrike along with both Rufous-capped and variable Antshrikes.



*Mega Giant Antshrike male © Andrew Whittaker*

Among the many possible sightings these two full exciting birding days here could include Bicolored Hawk Solitary Eagle (rare), near-endemic Red-faced and Yungas guans, Toco Toucan, Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Buff-necked Ibis, Green-cheeked Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot and Tucuman Amazon, Mitred Parakeet, Large-tailed ( Yungas) Dove, Common Squirrel Cuckoo, Dot-fronted and Golden-olive Woodpecker, White-barred Piculet, Sparkling Violetear, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Ochre-cheeked Spinetail, Spot-breasted Thornbird, Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner, Slaty Elaenia, Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher, Mottle-cheeked, Sclater's, White-throated and Buff-banded tyrannulets, Smoke-colored Pewee, Streak-throated Bush-tyrant, Plush-crested Jay, Andean Slaty Thrush, Mountain Wren, Pale-legged and Two-banded Warbler, Tropical Parula, Brown-capped Redstart, Rust-and-Yellow, Fawn-breasted and Orange-headed tanagers, stunning Moss-backed and Yungas Sparrow, near endemic Rusty-browed and Rufous-sided warbling finches, Common Chlorospingus, Golden-winged Cacique, Chiguanco Thrush, Black-backed Grosbeak, Purple-throated Euphonia and White-browed and gorgeous Fulvous-headed and White-striped brushfinches.



*Fulvous-headed Brushfinch © Andrew Whittaker*

On one evening, following dinner we will take an exciting trip to a local pristine private forested reserve that is excellent for nightbirds! We hope to score such cool nocturnal species as Common Potoo, Little Nightjar or the amazing Scissor-tailed Nightjar; the male's incredibly long white tail

feathers must be seen to be believed! Our primary targets are two rarely seen owls, the Montane Forest Screech-Owl and—one of my favorites, the very locally distributed and rare Buff-fronted Owl, a cool member of the same genus as the charming Northern Saw-whet which we have been successful seeing on our last two tours.

**NIGHTS:** Hotel Las Moras, Salta



*Buff-fronted Owl © Andrew Whittaker*

## December 19, Day 21: Morning birding with early afternoon flight onto Buenos Aires

Following a final morning birding we will transfer to the airport and fly back to Buenos Aires. On arrival we will be picked up and transferred to our hotel. Private transfers tonight or tomorrow morning onto the international airport for your flights homebound. **Important: Please kindly note your homebound international flights should be arranged to be no earlier than 22:00 hours if departing April 19.**

**NIGHT:** Hotel Madero, Buenos Aires

## December 20, Day 22: Arrival Home

International flights departing Buenos Aires the night before December 19th will arrive in the USA this morning.

### **ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION**

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour is limited to 10 tour participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

**TOUR LEADER:** Andrew Whittaker with the assistance of an expert local birding leader



**Andrew Whittaker** was born in the UK and began his birding passion at the early age of seven (thanks to his parents) but resides in Brazil. Andy is also a true all-around naturalist with an innate fascination for all aspects of the natural world and simply loves sharing in the field his intimate bird, wildlife, and orchid knowledge in a fun and enthusiastic manner. A senior member of the VENT staff, Andy has led VENT tours worldwide since 1993 from dense South and Central American rainforests to the great

White Continent of Antarctica, and throughout Europe to the deserts of the Middle East. More recently Andy can be found leading in the bird-rich rainforests of West Africa, the mammal-rich savannas of East Africa, or observing the cute Red Panda or exotic tragopan in the mighty

Himalayas of Nepal. In 2024, 2025 Andy was able to show over 2,000 bird species to VENT clients on his tours! Andy is an excellent communicator and calm tour organizer who loves nothing better than hearing, finding, and sharing a rare poorly known skulker, or telling one of his many fascinating and fun birding and travel stories. His enthusiasm in the field is simply contagious, and a combination of these traits has made him a favored leader amongst participants. Although born in England, Andy considers himself Brazilian, having lived more than 30 years in this mega biodiverse country, first working for the Smithsonian Institution, studying Amazonian rainforest birds in Manaus, as well as leading expeditions to remote corners of the Amazon; he feels privileged to have worked with the incredible Kayapo Indians. Andy is widely considered an authority on Amazonian birds, having authored numerous technical publications on the region's avifauna. He is well recognized for his amazing hearing and intimate knowledge of South American bird vocalizations. This trait has enabled him to discover several exciting new bird species (such as the Cryptic Forest-Falcon in 2002), as well as rediscover others thought to be extinct such as the White-tailed Tityra while on a VENT tour in 2006! He loves recording birds, too, with over 800 hours of recordings housed in the British Library Sound Archive. Andy is a qualified ringer/bander trained by the late Dr. Clive Minton (fondly known as the father of shorebird studies). His lifelong fascination with bird migration has seen Andy working around the globe at several top bird observatories: Eilat, Israel; Long Point, Canada; and in the UK at Sandwich Bay and on Fair Isle, Scotland, as well as researching shorebirds in Borneo on their East Asian flyway. Andy had the honor of working with Sir David Attenborough in Brazil as a consultant for the prestigious BBC *Life of Birds* series. At present, Andy is working with Kevin Zimmer on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil to be published by Princeton University Press. Andy is an associate researcher at the Museum Goeldi, Belem, an active conservationist, and loves bird photography and taxonomy. He is also an avid football/soccer fan of Birmingham City FC and Real Madrid due to its worldwide mega star Jude Bellingham coming from his home team. Andy lives near Porto Alegre, Southern Brazil with his partner, Jaqueline, and their many orchids.

### **TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION**

**TOUR FEE: \$15,595** per person based on double occupancy or \$17,445 for a person requiring single accommodation from Buenos Aires. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to lunch on Day 19, accommodation as stated in the itinerary, internal flights, ground

transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Buenos Aires and return, airport departure taxes, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$1,850**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial 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 (August 1, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

**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.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If rates change drastically, it may be necessary to impose 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 have been passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**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.

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

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

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

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

## **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:**

**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.

**SUGGESTED OPTIONS: 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 Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan**

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:

<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, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

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 Medjet's MedjetAssist Plan**

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

### **GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

**AIR TRAVEL:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international. \* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable

to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

\*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

**BAGGAGE:** We ask that you limit your luggage to one large suitcase and one carry-on bag. As a precaution, we recommend that you pack a change of clothes, your binoculars, a pair of walking shoes or boots, medications, and toiletry items in your airline carry-on bag in case your luggage is delayed or lost.

As to internal flights, Aerolineas Argentinas is strict about luggage limits and imposes a stricter weight limit on our domestic flights than on their international flights. **The domestic limit is currently 15 kilograms/person (35 lbs.); hand-carried luggage is limited to 5 kilograms/person (about 11lbs), but it is seldom weighed, and this limit can be exceeded a bit. The overweight charge for checked luggage amounts to a little more than a dollar a kilo.** Nevertheless, we ask that travelers to try to limit their luggage as much as possible to the 15-kilo (35-pound) limit. Please do not bring large carry-on bags. Large 20" and 21" roll-ons will have to be checked. At present, small roll-ons (up to about 18" in height) are permitted, but these older jets have limited overhead space, and travelers with large carry-on luggage may encounter problems. In general, packing lighter is better. Extra baggage can be securely stored in Buenos Aires for those participants combining tours. Excess baggage charges are the personal responsibility of each participant.

## **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:**

**PASSPORTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Argentina is required.

**VISAs:** Visas are not required for entry by United States citizens. Citizens of countries other than the United States should check with their Argentinian consulate or embassy for instructions, as the rules and regulations pertaining to non-US citizens may be different.

**IMPORTANT:** The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of DATE. Because entry requirements can change without notice, we kindly remind all participants to double-check the latest information before traveling. Travelers using non-U.S. passports are responsible for confirming any entry requirements that apply to their home country.

### **WHAT TO BRING**

**CLOTHING: Please bring dull-colored, subdued color shirts, pants, and headgear for birding the Yungas cloud forest; we especially discourage white or brightly colored shirts, white T-shirts, and white or very light-colored hats here.** Elsewhere on this trip, we are in open terrain, where the color of one's clothing is less important.

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

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

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

Other items include

A small flashlight **IMPORANT FOR OWLING!**

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

A good alarm clock (essential)

A daypack

**Binoculars:** We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. Please 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. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

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

## **DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS**

**CLIMATE & WEATHER:** December weather in Argentina is very pleasant and varies from sunny and hot too mild to very cold and we could possibly experience some rain. In general, the Chaco desert region at the time of our tour is hot and dry, with temperatures in the 80s and low 90s F at mid-day, but pleasantly cooler at night. In the Yungas cloud forest, morning temperatures are cool to chilly (high 40s to low 60s), but it is much warmer during the day. The greatest temperature variability is at higher elevations in the Andes where it can be cold. Temperatures here vary from warm or hot and humid at Iguazú, to very cold at night in the Andes; rain, wind, and brilliant sunshine are all possible in a single day. You must bring layers of warm clothing, including a jacket or parka, gloves, and a hat to protect against sun. Good raingear and walking or hiking shoes (GoreTex or waterproof) are essential.

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

Walking conditions are generally easy to moderate. In many of the areas we visit, we will be birding along flat roads and trails, though our birding in the Andes and at Iguazu does have some hills and gradients and steps with some gradual climbs. No activities will take place above 9,000 feet in elevation; we have never had any problems with altitude sickness.

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

**CURRENCY & SPENDING:** Argentine Peso

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

**INTERNET ACCESS:** Wi-Fi are available at all hotels and lodges.

**LANGUAGE:** Spanish

**TIME:** 3 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** Laundry services are available at all hotels and lodges.

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

### **HEALTH & SAFETY**

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

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.

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

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

**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.

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

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

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

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

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, 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>

## **SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION**

### ***Essential Bird Guides***

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

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

### ***General References***

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

Kricher, J. C. 2017. *The New Neotropical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton UP. The focus is primarily tropical birding and a great insight into biology of the fascinating birds, so travelers will find it very useful on this trip.

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

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

## **TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

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 May 27, 2025, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion.

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

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any

Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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