GERMANY IN SPRING

Birds & Art in Berlin & Brandenburg

June 15 - 24, 2027



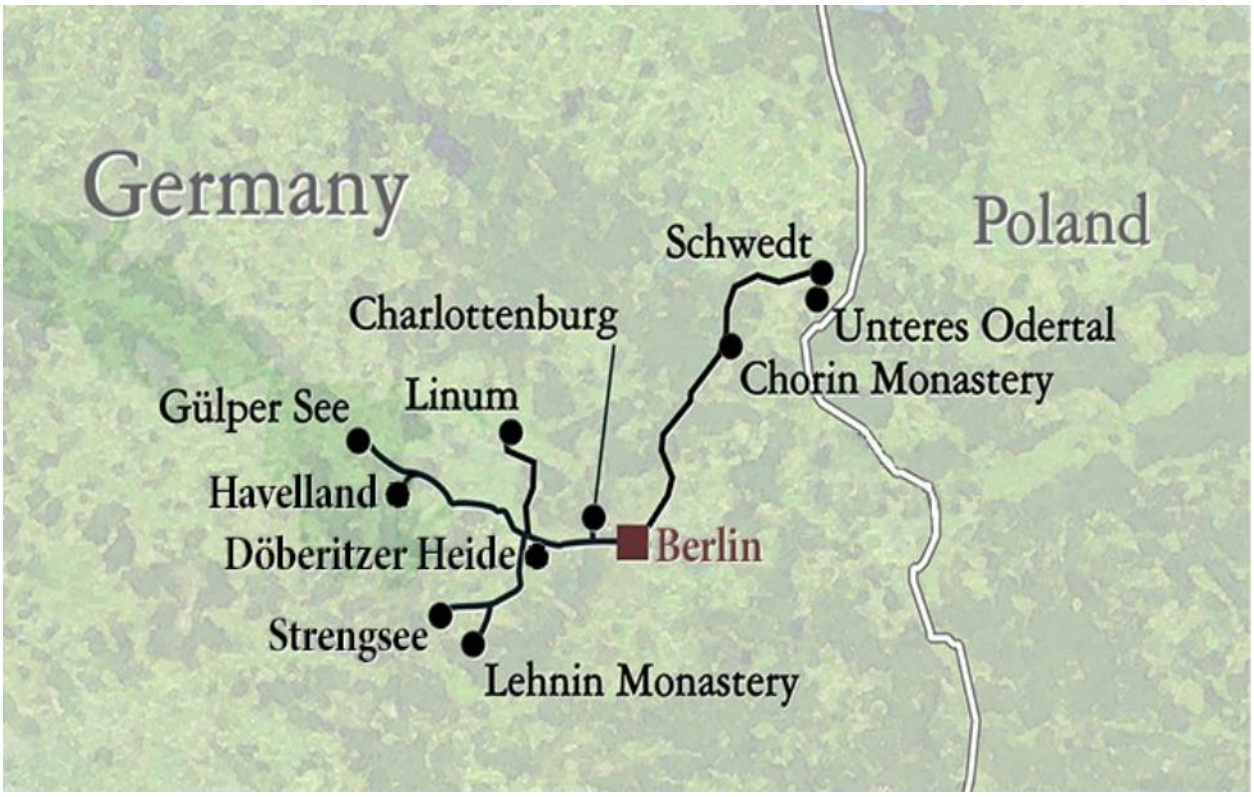
Charlottenburg Palace

The German capital is a bustling world city, full of architectural and artistic treasures—and blessed with an abundance of readily accessible green space and wild habitats, a combination that makes Berlin and its surroundings a first-rate destination for the birding traveler.

Fully a third of Berlin's land area is occupied by forests, parks, lakes, and fields, with more than thirty formal nature reserves within the city limits. Late spring finds a wide assortment of specialty breeding birds in place, even as the last of the northbound migrants are still on the move. All this wildness goes on just a stone's throw from the great museums and architectural landmarks of the old imperial capital, which is now the leading city in Europe's largest and most influential democracy.

Our tour takes full advantage of Berlin's natural and cultural heritage, with visits to sites commemorating both the bright and the dark sides of German history and excursions in search

of the area's wealth of bird species. The city itself will absorb much of our attention, but we will also venture into the nearby countryside of Brandenburg, where we will look for Red Kites, nesting Common Cranes, and even the rare (and often elusive) Great Bustard.



Based at a single hotel, we'll have plenty of opportunities to explore Berlin and its surroundings at our leisure, taking full advantage of all that this once-again world-class city has to offer. Reasonable and humane departure times on most mornings, leisurely meals, and Berlin's friendly and easy-going atmosphere make this an easy and enjoyable tour for anyone.

A note on transportation: Berlin and its surroundings are fortunate to have some of the finest public transit anywhere in the world—safe, immaculately clean, and above all fast. For our city excursions, we will regularly take the elevated train and subway, with stops across the street from our hotel. The unlimited ride tickets provided to all participants are also valid for Berlin's subways and buses. Farther afield, we will be using chartered 15- or 18-passenger buses with professional drivers.

Tuesday, June 15, Day 1: Departure from Home

Most flights from the United States depart in the evening, arriving at Berlin Brandenburg Airport (code BER) the following morning. Participants should plan to arrive in Berlin on or before June 16. Once you have completed customs and immigration formalities, you will be met for the 35-minute private transfer to our hotel.

If you are concerned about the travel time to Berlin and the difference in time zones, you should consider arriving early. Given sufficient notice, the VENT office will be happy to help you make arrangements for additional hotel nights and airport transfers.

NIGHT: In transit (overnight flight)



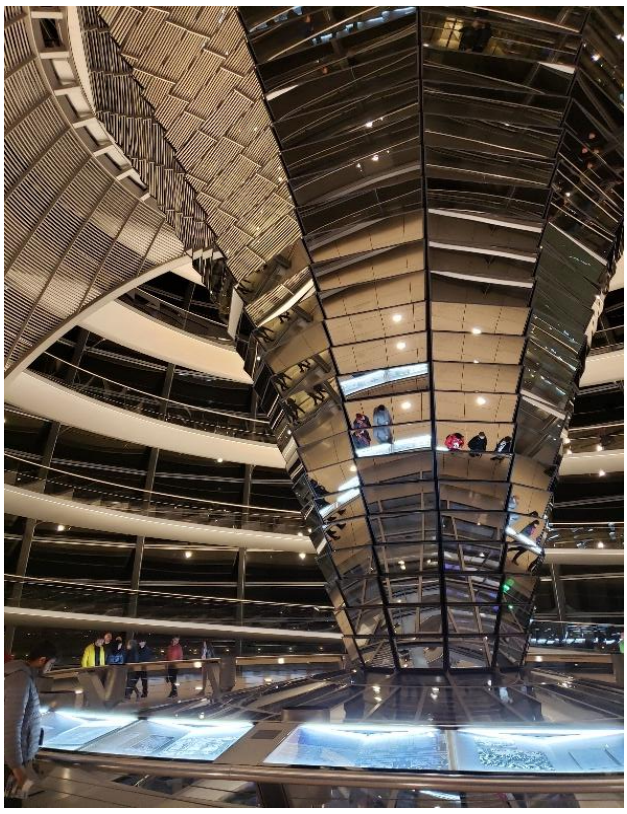
Great Spotted Woodpecker. Photo: Rick Wright

Wednesday, June 16, Day 2: Arrival in Berlin

We will meet at 5:00 p.m. in the lobby of our centrally located hotel for introductions, then, weather and interest allowing, we can make a first short foray into the Tiergarten for an hour's birding. This 520-acre wooded space, a few minutes' walk from our hotel, was established as a royal hunting preserve nearly 500 years ago. Today, the formal beds, brushy edges, and tall trees of this beloved city park boast a surprising variety of breeding birds. We will search for such

common residents as Mandarin and Tufted ducks, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Eurasian Blue and Great tits, Short-toed Treecreeper, European Nuthatch, and Hooded Crow.

From the Tiergarten, we'll walk to Republic Square, where we will have dinner together and, if circumstances permit, ascend to the top of the Reichstag Building, seat of the German government. This neo-Baroque structure was burned in 1933, with fateful political consequences, and reconstructed in the 1990s, with the addition of a spectacular glass dome. If the dome is open—which depends on



Reichstag dome

Parliament sessions, weather, and staffing—we will enjoy a beautiful evening panorama of Berlin and the surrounding countryside before retracing our steps to the hotel.

NIGHT: Westin Grand Berlin, Berlin

Thursday, June 17, Day 3: Birds and Berlin

There are dozens of productive birding areas right in Berlin. Very early risers may want to start with a little Tiergarten birding before breakfast in the hotel, where we will meet up with the rest of our group for the morning's "official" excursion. This morning, barring news of rarities elsewhere, we plan to visit the Karow Ponds, in the northern part of Berlin, where we have a chance at finding Little and Red-necked grebes, Red-backed Shrike, Golden Oriole, and Western Marsh Harrier; rarer breeders here include Great and Little bitterns and Barred Warblers, and we'll keep a sharp ear out for Penduline Tits or Bearded Reedlings.



Red-backed Shrike. Photo: Rick Wright

We are likely to spend the entire morning wandering the trails here or at other nearby hotspots, then have lunch before returning to our hotel for a short break. Afterwards, we'll head back out to visit the St. Nicholas neighborhood, site of Berlin's oldest settlement. The thirteenth-century church, now a museum, towers over a cluster of historic houses. We will have dinner in one of this lively area's many good restaurants.

NIGHT: Westin Grand Berlin, Berlin

Friday, June 18, Day 4: Strengsee and Lehnin Monastery

Fifty miles west of Berlin, a complex of lakes and fishponds provides refuge and food for large numbers of water birds; the fields and marshes are watched over by raptors, sometimes including the impressive White-tailed Eagle. On our short stroll to and from the observation blinds, we will look (and listen) hard for such secretive wetland specialties as the Great Bittern, Penduline Tit, and Bearded Tit. This is our best chance at the dramatic and scarce Great Gray Shrike, a recent re-split from its close relative the Northern Shrike. The best of the lakes in this area, the Strengsee, is famous as a rarity trap, but even if we don't encounter any exotic strays, this site may well produce the longest bird list of the trip.



Approaching the Strengsee. Photo: Rick Wright

We will have lunch nearby, then pay a short afternoon visit to the monastery of Lehnin. Still active today as a hospital administered by Lutheran deaconesses, the original Cistercian foundation here dates from 1180. The monastery church and late medieval hospice here are among the most important and most appealing examples of red-brick Gothic in Germany. On our return, we should have time for a short break before dinner.

NIGHT: Westin Grand Berlin, Berlin

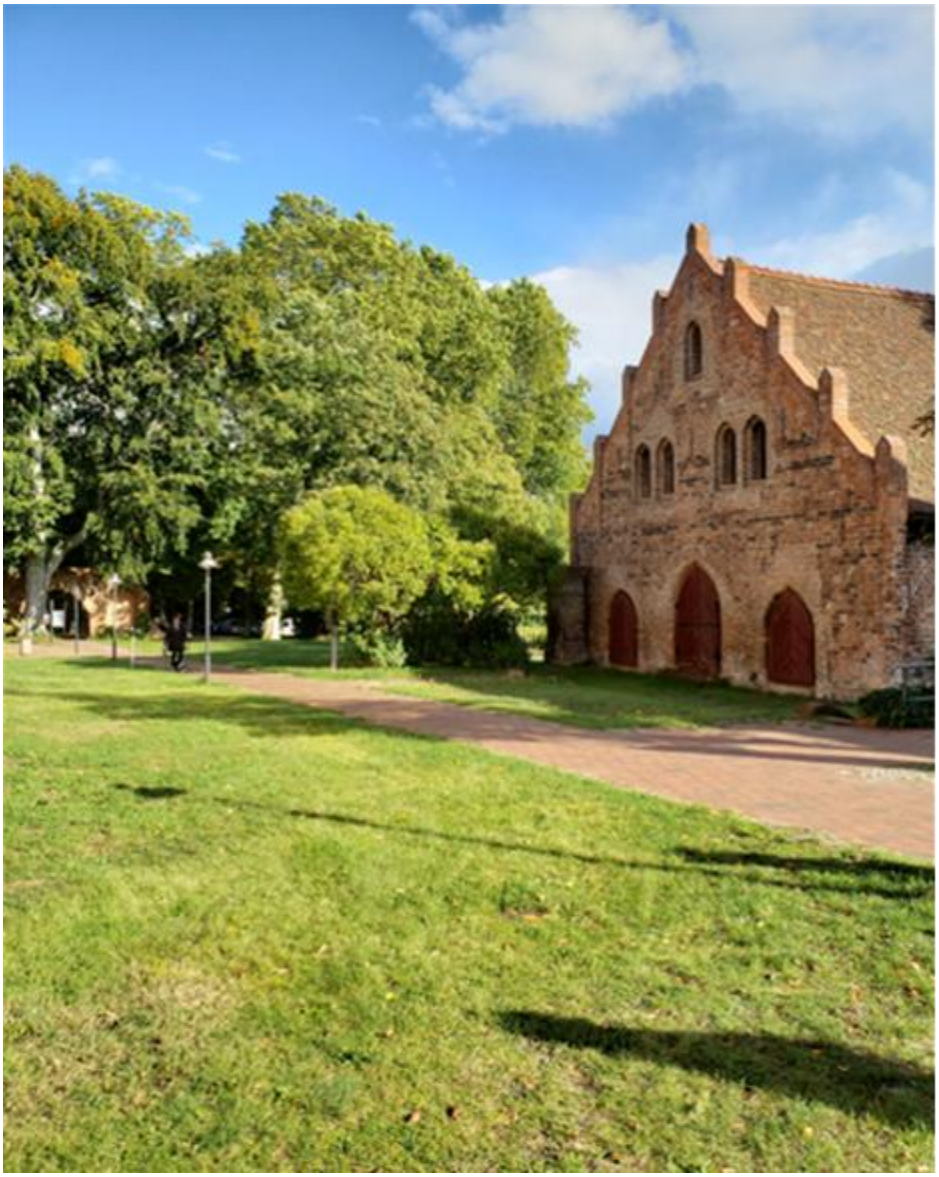
Saturday, June 19, Day 5: Johannisthal and Charlottenburg

We will head south this morning to Johannisthal, a former airfield now preserved as wildlife habitat. The grasslands and open woods here host a suite of once-common breeding larks—Woodlark, Skylark, and the now inexplicably scarce Crested Lark—and Common Nightingales and Northern Wheatears often nest here. On warm, sunny days, this site can be a treasure trove for butterflyers, too.



Peacock butterfly. Photo: Rick Wright

We will return to the western portion of Berlin for lunch, then take a quick stroll in the gardens of Charlottenburg Palace. This stunning baroque complex was built beginning in 1695 as a summer home for Queen Sophie-Charlotte; beautifully restored, this is perhaps the most eloquent surviving witness to the courtly culture of its period.



The fifteenth-century granary of Lehnin. Photo: Rick Wright.

As we admire the views from the large park and garden, we'll also be on the lookout for the very secretive Eurasian Goshawk, and the lakes and secluded ponds which shelter Gray Herons, Mandarin and Tufted ducks, Great Cormorants, and other water birds.

After our look at the palace gardens, we hope for a chance to visit one of Charlottenburg's fine smaller museums. The Bröhan Museum features decorative arts from France, Germany, and Austria, while the Berggruen is justly famous for its modern art, including a rich collection of works by Picasso, Matisse, and Klee. Note that these museums have irregular hours and may not be open at a convenient time, or at all, during our time in Berlin.

We will return to our hotel before dinner.

NIGHT: Westin Grand Berlin, Berlin

Sunday, June 20, Day 6: Museums of the Kulturforum

Yesterday was likely to have been long but productive, and we will take some time today to catch up. We will start with a leisurely optional birding walk through the Tiergarten. This is one of the best sites in the city to find Eurasian Jays. Eurasian red squirrels, Hooded Crows, Greenfinches, and European Nuthatches are usually common and easily seen, along with many of the birds and other wildlife we will be familiar with by now.

After lunch we will move on to Potsdamer Platz, once the desolate backdrop to an especially desolate stretch of the Berlin Wall but now one of the city's most popular and most bustling commercial and cultural centers. Across from the unmistakable gold-clad Philharmonic are the Gemäldegalerie, housing an overwhelming treasure of masterpieces of European painting from the Middle Ages to the



Big, noisy, colorful: the Eurasian Nuthatch. Photo: Rick Wright

eighteenth century, and the Berlin Museum of Decorative Arts, home to collections ranging from fashion and furniture to precious examples of breathtaking medieval metalwork. We will visit one or both before returning to Potsdamer Platz for a slightly earlier dinner than usual.

NIGHT: Westin Grand Berlin, Berlin



A late medieval Wild Man in the Museum of Decorative Arts. Photo: Rick Wright

Monday, June 21, Day 7: Havelland and Gülper See

Today will be an early start, as our minibus takes us west to the rural lowlands of the Havelland, where most of Germany's remaining Great Bustards reside. From a pre-war population of some 4,000 individuals, the country's bustard population had declined to about fifty birds by 1997. Intensive conservation efforts, including human fostering and subsequent re-release of the vulnerable fledglings, have resulted in more than quintupling that number, and the birds are once again reproducing on their own. Finding the bustards on the vast open fields here can be ridiculously easy—or frustratingly impossible. We will drive to a few sites that have been

reliable in the past, and with luck will encounter anywhere from a few to a few dozen of these giant birds. Among the birds of prey on our route, we will be looking especially for Red Kites and Common Buzzards; hedgerows may produce Lesser Whitethroats, Red-backed Shrikes, or Yellowhammers.

After lunch, we will continue to the Gülper See, a large lake that has long been one of the best-known birding sites in Brandenburg. The sparse conifer woods here are a good spot for Black Woodpecker, and water birds even at this season can include a nice smattering of ducks and shorebirds. The tree-lined allée leading to the south shore of the lake is traditionally a reasonably good spot for a very difficult bird, the Ortolan Bunting. Another of the specialties here is the White-tailed Eagle, often seen harassing waterfowl or simply loafing in the shallows.

We will return to Berlin for a short rest before dinner in our hotel.

NIGHT: Westin Grand Berlin, Berlin

Tuesday, June 22, Day 8: The Döberitz Heath

Just west of the Berlin city limits, the Döberitzer Heide is one of many former military installations in the area now dedicated to conservation. Combining open heathland and forest, this large preserve is one of the best sites near Berlin to look for such uncommon dryland breeders as Eurasian Wryneck, Eurasian Hoopoe, and Black and Common redstarts. Marsh and Barred warblers are also possible here, and this is as reliable a place as any to find Honey Buzzard, Hobby, Tree Pipit, Whinchat, and Stonechat. An early start is necessary to maximize our chances of finding some of these birds, but on a good day, this locality more than repays the effort.

We will return to central Berlin for lunch on our own, then have the rest of the afternoon free for shopping, sightseeing, or some casual birding; some of us may even want to rest before we assemble again for dinner together.

NIGHT: Westin Grand Berlin, Berlin

Wednesday, June 23, Day 9: Tegel, Museum Island, and Linum

We will take an optional very early walk through the Tegeler Forst this morning, the best location in Berlin for the rare and very sneaky Red-breasted Flycatcher; this small, retiring bird would probably never be seen if not for its simple, cheerful June song, and even when it is heard clearly, it can be hard to track the tiny singer down in the beech canopy it favors.

We will regroup for breakfast at our hotel, then take a quick ride to Berlin's renowned Museum Island. With their origins in the private holdings of the Prussian kings and, later, German emperors, the almost overwhelmingly rich collections exhibited here are housed in imposing buildings constructed between 1824 and 1930. These grand structures suffered badly during the Second World War, but a thorough restoration beginning in 1999 has turned most of them once again into a state-of-the-art cultural landmark.

There is far too much here to see in a single morning, or in a lifetime of mornings. Unless there are unforeseen closures, our tickets will admit you to the small but breathtaking Islamic Museum, highlighted by delicate manuscripts, paintings, and the early seventeenth-century drawing room of a wealthy Syrian merchant; the Bode, with its ancient and modern sculpture (and splendid café); the Altes Museum and its seemingly endless paintings; and the "New" Museum (built 1843–55), housing the famous Celtic Golden Hat and the bust of Nefertiti, the most recognizable piece of Egyptian art on the planet.

The Pergamon Museum, with its monumental installations of the Pergamon Altar, the marketplace façade of Miletus, and the Ishtar Gate, is a special case. Constructed on wooden pilings driven into the shifting sands of the Spree, the museum over the last dozen years has been closed more than it has been open as engineers and architects work to save the building. At the time of writing, the north wing is scheduled to reopen on June 4, 2027, making the Pergamon Altar and its astonishing sculptural friezes accessible again to an awestruck public. The entire building is expected to be open sometime between 2037 and 2043. We'll take what we can get.



The Berlin Golden Hat, a ceremonial calendar from the Bronze Age. Photo: Rick Wright

You will need to purchase separate tickets yourself to visit the over-the-top “cathedral” next door or the equally impressive German Historical Museum, just off the island (note that most of the labeling in this fine museum is in German, but if that is a challenge, one of the leaders might be persuaded to accompany you).

We will gather for a light lunch in the area, then return to our hotel for another quick break. In the early afternoon, we will make the 45-minute drive into the soggy landscapes just northwest of Berlin. The fields, ponds, and marshes around the village of Linum are another of the outstanding wetland sites close to the city, home to everything from Bearded Reedlings to Purple Herons. The village has some of the highest densities of nesting White Storks in the world, and they can be encountered just about anywhere.



A battle scene from the incredible Pergamon Altar. Photo: Rick Wright

After walking the easy trails around the ponds, we will return to Berlin. In anticipation of tomorrow morning's quite early start, dinner this evening will probably be in our hotel restaurant.

NIGHT: Westin Grand Berlin, Berlin

Thursday, June 24, Day 10: Unteres Odertal and Chorin Monastery

As it approaches the Baltic Sea, the Oder River spreads out to create one of the finest and wildest floodplains anywhere in western Europe. Wet fields and pastures alternate with tall forests and dry brushlands, creating excellent conditions for a wide variety of breeding birds. We will make an earlier start this morning, taking our minibus to the Teerofenbrücke near

Schwedt. After a quick field breakfast, we will start out on a walk of about two miles on wide, flat paved paths toward the river and the Polish border. Ducks and shorebirds can be conspicuous in the fields and marshes, where they are watched over by raptors, often including the impressive White-tailed Eagle. More heavily vegetated areas may harbor Thrush Nightingale, Black Woodpecker, and the usual suite of colorful tits, finches, and buntings, often including Hawfinches and Yellowhammers.

After lunch, we will pay an afternoon visit to the beautiful old church at Chorin. The ruins of the Cistercian monastery here are among the most important examples of red-brick Gothic in Germany. Construction began in 1273; the monastery complex was repurposed in the Reformation and gradually left to fall into disrepair. “Rediscovered” by the romantic nationalists of early nineteenth-century Prussia, the ruins were stabilized and are now a cultural center with a full summer program of exhibitions and concerts, and a favored site for Black Redstarts and White Wagtails, which sing from the roof of the ruined nave just as their ancestors did. The return drive to our hotel is a bit more than an hour, leaving us a short break before we gather for a final dinner together in Berlin.

NIGHT: Westin Grand Berlin, Berlin



Linum. Photo: Rick Wright

Friday, June 25, Day 11: Departures for Home

Participants may schedule their departures from Berlin any time today. Private transfers will take us to Berlin airport this morning, a thirty-five-minute trip.

Berlin has excellent air and rail connections to the rest of Europe. If you would like to extend your stay in Germany or elsewhere on the continent, our office can help you make the arrangements given sufficient advance notice.



Great Reed Warbler. Photo: Rick Wright

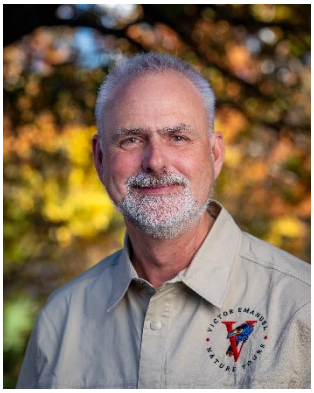


Chorin Monastery. Photo: Rick Wright

ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 10 tour participants.

TOUR LEADERS: This tour is led by Rick Wright and Alison Beringer.



Rick Wright is a widely published author and sought-after lecturer and field trip leader. A native of southeast Nebraska, Rick studied French, German, Philosophy, and Life Sciences at the University of Nebraska before making a detour to Harvard Law School. He took the Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literatures at Princeton University in 1990, then spent a dozen years as an academic, holding successive appointments as Assistant Professor of German at the University of Illinois, Reader in Art and Archaeology at Princeton University, and Associate Professor of Medieval Studies at Fordham University. His numerous scholarly publications include two books on the Latin animal literature of the later Middle Ages. Among Rick's recent books are second editions of the ABA Field Guide to Birds of New Jersey and the ABA Field

Guide to Birds of Arizona; his Peterson Reference Guide to American Sparrows is a standard work on the passerellids. He is also the co-author with Sanford Sorkin of Watching Birds in Montclair and Watching Birds in the New Jersey Meadowlands. Especially interested in the history and culture of birding, he is hard at work on a study of hummingbird collecting in France from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. In his spare time, he teaches Latin courses online for the Paideia Institute. Rick lives with his wife, Alison Beringer, and their black lab, Quetzal, in northern New Jersey.



Alison Beringer is Associate Professor of Classics and Humanities at Montclair State University, where she teaches courses in literary history, women's studies, and medieval literature and culture. She holds the M.A. in Classics from the University of Victoria and the Ph.D. in German Studies from Princeton University. Her scholarly research focuses on the transmission and illustration of Latin and German literature in the medieval and early modern periods. Her first book, The Sight of Semiramis, appeared in 2016, and was followed in 2020 by the publication of Gender Bonds, Gender Binds; Speaking Stones, a study of the place of monumental sculpture in the life and literature of the late Middle Ages, will appear in 2027. A native of Canada, she lives in northern New Jersey and birds widely in the Americas and Europe, most often with her husband, Rick Wright.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: $10,395 per person based on double occupancy or **$11,600** for a person requiring single, accommodation. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 through breakfast in our hotel on Day 11 (with the exception of lunch on Day 8, which is on your own), accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare to or from Berlin. The fee also excludes laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the TIPPING sub-section below.

If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

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 (February 15, 2027) before the tour departure date.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or to extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months before your departure date. We can easily make hotel arrangements, 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 charges have been passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL SURCHARGES: Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to impose 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 leaders 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 leaders $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 with 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

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: **Ripcord Travel Insurance**; or click the Ripcord logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > 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 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: Please limit baggage to one piece of luggage and one carry-on. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for information pertaining to permissible carry-on items.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

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

VISAS: At the time of publication, citizens of the United States do not need a tourist visa to enter Germany for stays under 90 days. However, citizens of the US and many other countries are required to use the EU's new entry and exit system (EES) to be admitted for visits of up to 90 days to any of the 29 European countries, including Germany, using the system. Your fingerprints, facial image, passport details, and entry and exit dates will be collected on entering an EES country and stored digitally.

In addition, visitors to most European nations from the US and many other countries must obtain the ETIAS travel authorization in advance of departing for Europe. You apply for the

authorization online at https://etias.com/etias-application; the cost is approximately US $25, and the authorization is valid for three years or until your passport expires, whichever comes first; the fee may be waived for applicants over the age of 70.

Citizens of countries other than the US should check with their local German consulate or embassy for instructions.

IMPORTANT: The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of September 2026. Because entry requirements can change without notice, we remind all participants to double-check the latest information before traveling. Travelers using non-US passports are responsible for confirming any entry requirements that apply to their home country.

CLOTHING: As this trip combines birding with walking in cities and at historical sites, you should consider bringing a mix of clothing that prepares you for all activities. The following are recommended:

- Pants: A couple of pairs of pants are essential. Many people prefer mid-weight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim, though not as comfortable, is certainly acceptable for wearing in the field. In restaurants, museums, churches, and palaces, you will be more comfortable wearing neat, but still informal, attire.
- Field clothing: Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of lightweight, yet durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular.
- Shirts: Comfortable long-sleeved shirts of any style are good for field wear.
- Hat: A hat for protection from the sun is essential.
- Sweaters and coats: No truly cold weather is anticipated on this trip, but a good warm sweater may come in handy on some early mornings. In the event we encounter rain or mist, you'll want to have a water-repellent jacket as well.
- Gloves: Light gloves will help keep you warm should the weather turn chilly; they can also help protect against any mosquitoes we encounter.

FOOTWEAR: Water-resistant hiking shoes are best for our birding expeditions; boots are fine, too, of course, but not necessary. In the city, lighter-weight shoes will be more comfortable.

EQUIPMENT: One of the most important aspects of an enjoyable travel experience is the proper equipment. The following will come in handy during your trip to Germany:

- Small daypack for extra clothing, books, supplies, and optics.
- Notebook and pencils.
- Alarm clock.
- Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection.
- High-SPF sunscreen.
- Lip balm and lotions.
- Cameras, lenses, and extra batteries and memory cards (readily available in Berlin, but not so at many of our birding sites).
- Telescoping walking stick – highly recommended for those with difficulty walking.
- Toiletries.
- Pocket packages of Kleenex.

BINOCULARS & SPOTTING SCOPES

Binoculars – We strongly recommend good 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 binoculars. 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 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. The leader will let you know each evening whether scopes will be useful the following day. You will find it especially useful to

have your own scope when we are watching waterfowl, shorebirds, bustards, and even open-country songbirds.

INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS

CLIMATE & WEATHER: Late spring is usually a very pleasant time to travel in eastern Germany. The heat of summer is still too come, and persistent rain is infrequent in most years. Nighttime low temperatures are generally in the 50s and afternoon highs in the mid-70s.

CONDITIONS: Our days will be full of natural and cultural experiences, but our pace will always be easy and relaxed. Though birding will predominate on some days and cultural tourism on others, most of this tour is characterized—thanks to Berlin's abundance of green space—by a balance between the two.

Our 4/5-star hotel, the Westin Grand Berlin, is in the heart of Berlin's historical center. Close to the main station, government district, and historic landmarks. This hotel offers a spa, an attractive garden, and a unique lobby with grand staircase. Deluxe twin bedded rooms will not have a view. The Brandenburg Gate is a 10-minute walk away. Nearest S-Bahn station: Friedrichstraße (S2, S3, S5, S7 lines) — located just across the street from the hotel, about 7–10 minutes on foot**.** The Relish Restaurant & Bar serves modern food with French and Asian influences. You will be given public transit tickets to cover all the days of the tour, and our visits to sites in central Berlin will usually combine subway, train, or bus travel with walking.

The sun rises very early at this latitude. We plan on leaving our hotel most mornings at about 7:00 am, with some optional earlier outings; we are likely to leave early for the Havelland and the Unteres Odertal. Even on those days, we hope to be able to schedule a break between our return to the hotel and dinner.

Dinner will usually be in a restaurant within easy walking distance of our hotel, though on some evenings we may also ride the subway; on days before an early morning start, we may eat in the hotel's own restaurant.

Early risers and night owls will be able to take advantage of the season's almost 17 hours of daylight to explore more of the city on their own.

The physical demands posed by this trip are easy to moderate, but bear in mind that some of our historical sightseeing involves a moderate amount of walking and standing. Towns and villages often have uneven pavement, and in general, European cities have more curbs, stairs, and other minor obstacles than you may be used to. You will never be subjected to physical demands exceeding your capabilities.

While we are birding, our walking will be restricted to paths and roadsides, and at most sites we will not walk more than two miles at a time. If you are not able to comfortably walk at a reasonable pace two miles without a long rest on broad, level paths, ascend and descend stairs in train stations, or stand for several minutes at a time as we search for birds, you will not find this tour as enjoyable.

Many of our activities are optional, and thanks to our central location with excellent access to clean, efficient public transportation, it is always possible to simply take part or all of a day off to enjoy the city on your own if you'd like.

Extra time in Berlin and Germany: Berlin has excellent rail and flight connections to the rest of Germany and to the other countries of central and eastern Europe. Our tour program is intended to include what we think of as many of the area's top historical and natural sites and many of its wonderful birds. But there is much more to see in Germany and nearby portions of Europe; participants with an interest in enjoying activities beyond the stated program should come early or stay on after the tour ends.

CURRENCY & SPENDING: Your tour payment includes most necessary expenses while you are in Germany. You will need cash to cover such personal expenses as taxis, gifts, laundry, gratuities, and snacks and meals on your own.

The official currency in Germany is the euro; US dollars are not accepted anywhere in the country. The current exchange rate can be found at xe.com. You can order euros through your bank before leaving home or withdraw them from ATMs at the airport or in Berlin. Please ask your bank or credit card issuer about the use of your ATM and credit cards abroad.

ELECTRICITY: Electrical current in Germany is 220-240V (110-120V in the US). Electrical outlets are one of the two European standard socket types: the “Type C” Europlug and the “Type E” and “Type F” Schuko. All of these outlets are ungrounded, with openings for two round pins. Most new electronic devices can run on 220V, but if you with travel items that do not, you will need a step-down transformer in addition to the plug adapter.

INTERNET ACCESS: Our hotel offers free internet in the rooms and public areas.

LANGUAGE: German is spoken throughout the area, but Berlin is a large, cosmopolitan city, and nearly everyone speaks good English.

TIME: Germany observes Central European Time, which is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Time and 9 hours ahead of Pacific Time. Daylight Saving Time will be in effect in Germany for our entire tour.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is available in our hotel for an extra charge, but it is most convenient to bring enough clothes to see you through the entire tour.

HEALTH & SAFETY

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

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

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 ultraviolet-blocking, polarized sunglasses.

BITING INSECTS: At some of the lowland locations we visit, mosquitoes can be an annoyance early in the morning. Long sleeves and long pants, a hat, light gloves, and perhaps a head net will keep you from being bitten, as may one of the repellents described below.

TICKS: Ticks are present throughout, and just as in much of the northern hemisphere, some can transmit serious disease to humans. To avoid ticks, please stay out of tall vegetation and check your clothing and skin regularly; light-colored clothing makes it easier to detect ticks before they have a chance to bite.

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.

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 it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- **Insect Shield® apparel:** Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

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

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

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

SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION

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. **www.buteobooks.com** and **www.nhbs.com** specialize in ornithology and natural history books; **www.abebooks.com** can be good for out-of-print and otherwise hard-to-find titles.

FIELD GUIDES

Birds

Mullarney, K., L. Svensson, and D. Zetterstrom. 2023. Birds of Europe. 3rd edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press. This is the standard field guide. If you have an older edition of this splendid guide, please update it to the third. If you bring any other bird guide, it should be in addition to, and not instead of, this book. Also available as an app, under the title Collins Bird Guide, from Apple and Google Play.

Mammals

MacDonald, D., and P. Barrett. 1993. Mammals of Europe. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

History, Art, Architecture

Henckel von Dommersmarck, F. 2014. The Lives of Others: A Screenplay. Pushkin Press.

Larsen, E. 2012. In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin. New York: Crown.

MacLean, R. 2014. Berlin: Portrait of a City through the Centuries. New York: St. Martin's Press.

CLO Apps

eBird. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Among the largest and most successful citizen science projects in existence, eBird is an essential tool in promoting bird study and conservation. Among a range of benefits, eBird allows users to keep a variety of lists in a single application. When taxonomic splits are incorporated, lists are automatically updated. Additionally, trip leaders can share daily lists, so one only needs to accept a shared list and it will upload to your files. Highly recommended.

Merlin Bird ID. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer

a series of questions about his or her bird sighting, including date and location, and color, size, and behavior of a bird. Merlin then processes the viewer's responses to present a shortlist of possible identifications, from which the user can choose the likely bird. Species profiles include a brief physical description, photographs, and sound samples. The Photo ID feature allows anyone with a camera to snap a photo and obtain a list of suggestions. Merlin's Sound ID feature allows identification of birds through audible recognition. To use Merlin, download the app and the appropriate regional "pack." Highly recommended.

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 October 26, 2026, 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.

View the complete Terms and Conditions on our website.

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