GRAND BOLIVIA PART I

Eastern Lowlands, Inter-Andean Valleys, Bolivian Pantanal, Amazon Rainforest, & Cerrado of the North

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GRAND BOLIVIA PART II

Foothills, Cloud Forest, & Altiplano

September 9–24, 2027
September 22–October 4, 2027



The endemic Rufous-faced Antpitta © Andrew Whittaker

The landlocked nation of Bolivia has always been less well known to birders than its neighbors. Now, though, an excellent field guide and ever-improving tourist infrastructure make Bolivia one of the most appealing destinations in South America. Our two tours cover all of the country's spectacular and varied habitats, home to some 1450 bird species—in an area hardly a tenth that of the United States. That tremendous diversity includes about 25 endemic birds, along with 100 or more other species that barely cross Bolivia's borders; many more widespread species are more reliably seen in Bolivia than in neighboring countries, thanks to an abundance of intact habitats, generally easy road access, and a system of parks and preserves that protect large tracts of land.

In the course of Part I, which visits the Yungas forest, Inter-Andean dry valleys, Pantanal marshlands, Amazonian rainforest, Cerrado, and grasslands, we hope to enjoy two of the rarest macaws in the world, both endemic to Bolivia. One of our delightful ecolodges stands at the very center of the

breeding and roosting areas of the magnificent Red-fronted Macaw; we also visit the last stronghold of the Blue-throated Macaw, in the bird-rich palm “islands” of the Bolivian Pantanal. In addition to these spectacular parrots, we may see as many as 450 bird species in our time together.

The slightly shorter Part II takes us to the mighty Andes, Puna, cloud forests, and Lake Titicaca. Our route is carefully planned to give us time to acclimate to the high elevations visited at the end of the trip. As in Part I, our final bird list will be impressive, likely approaching 300 species, among them a large number not seen on Part I.



The endemic Red-fronted Macaw © Andrew Whittaker

Bolivia’s human culture is just as captivating as its biodiversity. The country has experienced significant social and economic improvements over the past quarter century, but modernization has not eliminated the colorful traditions and customs still observed by many Bolivians.



A male Band-tailed Fruiteater © Andrew Whittaker

Either part of our Grand Bolivia experience can be taken as a stand-alone trip, or the two can be combined into a single truly grand exploration of this wonderful country. In combination, Part I and Part II can be expected to produce an incredible total of nearly 600 bird species.



Lush Yungas forest © Andrew Whittaker

GRAND BOLIVIA PART I

Eastern Lowlands, Inter-Andean Valleys, Amazon Rainforest, Cerrado, & Pantanal



Hooded Mountain Tanager © Andrew Whittaker

September 9–10, Days 1–2: Arrival in Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Most flights from the United States will depart on Day 1, arriving at Santa Cruz's Viru Viru International Airport (airport code VVI) early on Day 2. After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by our ground agent for the transfer to our group hotel, Camino Real Hotel Santa Cruz, where a room is reserved in your name. The hotel gardens feature a delightful pool and a roost of hundreds of Mitred Parakeets in the trees.

We will have an early lunch and a short rest before gathering again in the mid-afternoon to bird the city's botanical gardens and rich wetlands. Half a century ago, Santa Cruz was a sleepy village with sandy streets, few conveniences, and an uncertain future. Today, this is a modern, bustling city, the economic hub of all of eastern Bolivia. Though its booming economy relies heavily on mining, lumber, agriculture, gas, and oil, there are still many areas of good habitat on the outskirts of the city. These wetlands and woodlands will provide our first introduction to the local avifauna.

The wetlands, depending on water levels, can yield sightings of Ringed and Brazilian teal, Wattled Jacana, and a variety of migrant shorebirds. In the parks, we can hope to see the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Purplish Jay, Blue-crowned Trogon, and Yellow-tufted Woodpecker. At times, hundreds of Bare-faced Ibis and Snail Kites roost here. Among the mammals we may encounter are the Black Howler, Brown Capuchin, South American Coati, and the rare endemic White-eared Titi Monkey; Brown-throated Three-toed Sloths are fairly common. Past tours have even seen the Jaguarundi.

NIGHTS: Day 1: In transit (September 9); Day 2: Camino Real Hotel Santa Cruz (September 10)



Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth with baby © Andrew Whittaker

September 11, Day 3: Lomas de Arena and departure for Los Volcanes

After an early breakfast, we will drive onto the grasslands of nearby Lomas do Arena in search of the Greater Rhea, Red-legged Seriema, and White Woodpecker. We will spend the best hours of the morning here, then head west into the forested foothills of the Andes.

The Bolivian Yungas, a transitional zone between the moister forests of the Upper Amazon and the semi-arid grasslands of the Andean puna, is home to a number of notable birds more easily seen here

than anywhere else, including the Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, Golden-rumped Euphonia, Yungas Manakin, and Two-banded Warbler. Among the more common species in these streamside woodlands are the Turquoise-fronted Amazon, Channel-billed Toucan, and Purplish and Plush-crested jays.

We'll arrive in time for lunch at Los Volcanes, a tranquil ecolodge surrounded by lush forest and steep sandstone cliffs. The entrance road affords incredible views of the peaks of Amboró National Park, and our drive in will be accompanied by the unforgettable chorus of Gray, Tataupa, and Brown tinamous. White-throated Piping-Guans roost around the lodge clearing, where we can hear their wing-rattling display. Military Macaws and Mitred Parakeets often gather in the later afternoon, an excellent opportunity to watch and to photograph these imposing parrots.

NIGHT: Refugio Los Volcanes



Birding the lodge at Los Volcanes © Andrew Whittaker

September 12, Day 4: Los Volcanes and Amboró National Park

The red sandstone cliffs and tropical forests surrounding Los Volcanes make for a stunning show of color at dawn and dusk. We will explore the area on foot, walking well-maintained trails in search of treasures including some 270 species of birds and an abundance of bromeliads and orchids; with a bit of luck, we may even encounter some of the forest's mammals. Placid streams and pools are home to

the Sunbittern, Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, and the white-winged form of the Black Phoebe, while sheer cliffs are inhabited by the King Vulture and Andean Condor—even Harpy Eagles have been seen here. Inside the forest, we hope to meet up with the rare and poorly known Subtropical Pygmy-Owl, Black-streaked Puffbird, or the endemic Bolivian Tapaculo; we may even be rewarded with a shy Barred Forest Falcon or the very rare, bamboo-loving Bolivian Recurvebill. A flash of vivid scarlet and blue in the understory could reveal a male Yungas Manakin. Another of the special understory birds here is the highly localized Slaty Gnatcatcher.



Male Slaty Gnatcatcher © Andrew Whittaker

Other avian delights include the taxonomically complex Short-tailed Antthrush, Red-necked Woodpecker, and Blue-browed and White-winged tanagers. Roving flocks may contain Sclater's Tyrannulets, Black-capped Antwrens, Ocellated Woodcreepers, and Black-goggled Tanagers.

We will head out after dark to try for Spectacled and Black-banded owls, Rufescent and Tawny-bellied screech-owls, Rufous and Band-winged nightjars, and Ocellated Poorwills.

NIGHT: Refugio Los Volcanes

September 13, Day 5: Red-fronted Macaw Lodge

We will get an early start this morning, driving back to the road to meet our bus. We'll gradually enter drier habitats that can be good for the Picui Ground Dove, Ultramarine Grosbeak, Black-capped Warbling Finch, and Red-crested Finch. We will enjoy a great lunch in the square of the historic town of Samaipata. Early afternoon will find us passing through stunning dry forest dominated by majestic columnar cacti. Down in the valleys, we will work our way west through fertile farmland to cozy Red-fronted Macaw Lodge, where we expect to arrive in the late afternoon.

Red-fronted Macaw Lodge is owned and operated by the Asociación Armonía, a Bolivian non-profit dedicated to preserving Bolivia's birds and their habitats. The eponymous macaw is endemic to this region, nesting and roosting on the cliffs. Our stay at this lodge (with four shared bathrooms) is not just a rare opportunity for a close encounter with these magnificent birds, but it also makes a real contribution to research and the protection of these avian gems. As evening falls, the macaws fly over to the cliffs to roost, while the antics of the local White-fronted Woodpeckers will keep us amused as they play in the columnar cacti of the garden.

NIGHT: Red-fronted Macaw Lodge



Spectacular scenery and birding at Red-fronted Macaw Lodge © Andrew Whittaker

September 14, Day 6: Red-fronted Macaw Lodge, and on to Samaipata

We will position ourselves early this morning for more close-up encounters with this most spectacular of the macaws; the light should be excellent, for observation and for photography. The same cliffs provide a home to Mitred Parakeets, Turquoise-fronted Amazons, and Cliff Parakeets (recently recognized as a species distinct from the Monk Parakeet). Overhead, we may see Southern Martins, Andean Swifts, Cliff Flycatchers, the local Peregrine Falcon, or a Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle.



Red-fronted Macaws © Andrew Whittaker

We will return to the lodge for a hearty breakfast on the veranda, where the birdfeeders can be busy with White-fronted Woodpeckers, Blue-and-yellow Tanagers, and two more endemic species, the Bolivian Blackbird and the Gray-crested Finch. Around the lodge, we may find the Spot-backed (Chaco) Puffbird, Blue-tufted Starthroat, and a host of warbling finches, including Ringed and the lovely Black-and-chestnut.

Having taken full advantage of the best hours of the morning, we will bird our way back to the charming town of Samaipata for lunch. In dry valleys along the way, we will try for the Bolivian Earthcreeper, Stripe-crowned Spinetail, and Moss-backed Sparrow.

At an altitude of more than 5,000 feet, Samaipata is a delightful colonial town set among succulents and towering palm trees. In the sixteenth century, Guarani warrior tribes from the south invaded the valley and defeated both Incas and Chanes; similar incursions continued for nearly 300 years. Today's old Samaipateño families are the descendants of those Guarani invaders and of Spanish colonists, many of them of Sephardic origin. Beginning in the 1880s, Arabs also settled in Samaipata, to be followed by a few Croatians and Italians.

Following a delightful lunch on the town square, we will check in to our lovely family-run hotel above town. Later in the afternoon, we will explore the rolling dry Chaco for White-tailed and Bicolored hawks, Blue-crowned Parakeet (the highland form), Glittering-bellied Emerald, Giant Antshrike, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, and more.

That evening, we will offer a short excursion for owls and Scissor-tailed, Band-winged, and Rufous nightjars.

NIGHT: El Pueblito Hotel, Samaipata

September 15, Day 7: The Southern Cloud Forest

Weather permitting, we will leave very early for an exceptional site in the cloud forest, where past tours have found Black-and-chestnut and Solitary eagles, Crested and Golden-headed quetzals, and the localized Green-throated Tanager. Other species of interest to look for here include the Blue-banded Toucanet, White-throated and Scaled antpittas, Bolivian and White-striped Brushfinches, and a host of colorful tanagers, including Golden-naped, White-winged, and Beryl-spangled. We will check flocks here for Crimson-mantled and Golden-olive Woodpeckers, Spectacled Redstarts, and Bolivian and Mottle-cheeked tyrannulets.

Three distinctive isolated forms here are likely candidates for elevation to full species status: the orange-crowned race of the Saffron-crowned Tanager, the stunning *flavinucha* Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, and the visually distinctive Common Chlorospingus of the "fulvous-throated" subspecies *fulvigularis*.



Male Crested Quetzal © Andrew Whittaker

A different set of species awaits in the drier valleys, among them the Huayaco Tinamou, the highland form of the Olive-crowned Crescentchest (a good candidate to be split), Blue-tufted Starthroat, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, and the king of the antbirds, the Giant Antshrike.

NIGHT: El Pueblito Hotel, Samaipata



A female Giant Antshrike © Andrew Whittaker

September 16, Day 8: Return to Santa Cruz and flight to Riberalta

An early start will take us back to the capital for an early afternoon nonstop flight to the northern outpost of Riberalta, a commercial hub of about 100,000 inhabitants in the southern Amazon basin, at the confluence of the mighty Madre de Dios and Beni Rivers. The department of Beni is an exciting ecotone between tall Amazon rainforest, tropical Cerrado woodland, and tall natural grasslands. All of those habitats offer a tremendous variety of birds. If our flight schedule allows, we will make a short late afternoon excursion into the Várzea forest of Hamburgo Reserve. These seasonally flooded woodlands are home to the endemic and endangered Masked Antpitta and to the delightful Purus Jacamar. The antpitta was discovered by one of Andrew's associates, the late Sjoerd Mayer, in the early 1990s, and its entire population is found in an incredibly tiny area around this town.

NIGHT: Hotel Jomali, Riberalta



Masked Antpitta © Andrew Spencer

September 17–18, Days 9–10: Amazon Rainforest, Cerrado Woodland, and Grasslands of Riberalta

These two exciting days will find us exploring an impressive range of bird-rich habitats. The possibilities in the Amazonian rainforest are virtually endless, including the Undulated Tinamou, Paradise and Bronzy jacamars, Curl-crested Aracari, Black-spotted Bare-eye, and Fiery-capped, Red-headed, and Band-tailed manakins. We will keep a sharp eye out, too, for Purple-throated and Bare-necked fruitcrows, the Amazonian Umbrellabird, and Paradise and Flame-crested tanagers.

Farther south, we will explore the open cerrado woodlands and natural grasslands of Pampa San Lorenzo hoping to find the enormous Chaco Eagle (an armadillo specialist), the skulky Ocellated Crake, and the magnificent Horned Sungem. Other birds here may include the Red-throated Caracara, Red-bellied Macaw, and Yellow-bellied Dacnis.

NIGHTS: Jomali Hotel, Riberalta



Band-tailed Manakin © Andrew Whittaker

September 19, Day 11: Flight to Trinidad, and the Bolivian Pantanal

A morning flight from Riberalta will take us to the frontier city of Trinidad, in the ranching heartland of the Bolivian department of Beni. It is just a short drive from the airport to our delightful lodge on a lovely lakeshore where birds abound. North and slightly west of Santa Cruz, the remote, sparsely populated Beni region features grassland, scrub, gallery forest, marsh, and seasonally inundated woodland, a combination similar to that found in the more open parts of the Brazilian Pantanal. Depending on time, we may be able to bird briefly around our lodge before lunch.



Whistling Heron © Andrew Whittaker

Scrub vegetation and seasonal lagoons here host large numbers of raptors and wading birds. Among the many species we are likely to see are the Jabiru, Whistling Heron, and Southern Screamer. Parrots are likely to include the Yellow-collared and Chestnut-fronted macaws and Cobalt-rumped Parrotlet, and Black-backed Water Tyrant, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Yellow-browed Tyrant. A wide range of other passerines are also frequently seen.

NIGHT: Tapacare Resort, Trinidad

September 20–22, Days 12–14: The Beni Wetlands

The rediscovery in the wild of the endemic Blue-throated Macaw by Charles Munn in 1992 made major headlines in conservation circles. Though a few other sites for this fine parrot have been found, the entire population is still estimated at only 350 individuals. A new nest box project, local education, and opportunities for ranchers to profit from ecotourism have at least helped stabilize the population. These macaws are the prime reason for our visit, but we will see many other birds in this birder's paradise, including Blue-and-yellow Macaws for convenient comparison with the much rarer endemic.

The wetlands here are extraordinarily diverse, and many of the birds are easy to see. Our stay in this area should produce a very long list of birds, likely to include the Greater Rhea, Maguari Stork, and the wild-looking Red-billed Scythebill.



The endangered Blue-throated Macaw is a highlight among the many endemic species we expect to see © Andrew Whittaker



Red-billed Scythebill © Andrew Whittaker

We will also be looking for the rare Large-billed Seedfinch—and for the endemic Beni Greenlet, a species formally described and named in 2026 and seen well on both of our two most recent tours.



The endemic Beni Greenlet, described in 2026 © Andrew Whittaker

Rich gallery forests just a short drive away are home to Black Howlers, the rare Beni Titi, and Capuchin Monkeys. We will enjoy the odd Hoatzin while flocks of Velvet-fronted Grackles chatter in the dim understory alongside shy Razor-billed Curassows. We will be looking especially for the endemic nominate subspecies of the Plain Softail (two others are good candidates for elevation to full species status), or we might locate a roosting Great Potoo. We could replicate the success of our past two tours in finding the very localized Sulphur-bellied Tyrant Manakin or the spectacular Band-tailed Manakin. And of course, we will keep a sharp eye out and our ears tuned in for the almost mythical Uniform Thrush, an endemic species heard on last year's tour. The possibilities here are almost

endless, from the Great Black Hawk to South America's smallest songbird, the Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant.

One afternoon, we´ll take a relaxing boat trip along the Rio Ibare in search of River Dolphins. The endangered form found here has recently been split as the endemic Bolivian River Dolphin. Adults in breeding condition are an amazing pink. With luck, we might also encounter a group of rare Bolivian Red Howlers. This pleasant excursion may also take us to the threatened Orinoco Goose, a cool-looking waterfowl species still common here.



The endangered Orinoco Goose © Andrew Whittaker

Sunbitterns patrol the creek banks along with Green Ibis and Pied Lapwing, while Large-billed Terns and Ringed, Green, and Amazon kingfishers hunt the river. We could also enjoy foraging Gray-cowled Wood-Rails or an Undulated Tinamou or Razor-billed Curassow coming down to drink.

NIGHTS: Tapacare Resort, Trinidad

September 23, Day 15: Flight from Trinidad: Join Grand Bolivia Part II, or return to Santa Cruz

Depending on flight times, we may have time for some relaxed birding before our mid-morning flight from Trinidad. Those continuing onto **Grand Bolivia Part II** will leave the plane in Cochabamba; see that itinerary, below.

Those of us returning home after Part I will fly on to Santa Cruz's Viru Viru International Airport, where you will be met by our ground agent. Depending on flight schedules from Trinidad to Santa Cruz, some participants departing for home may depart from Santa Cruz this evening. Otherwise, participants will be provided a transfer to our hotel in nearby Santa Cruz for the night, to depart tomorrow. Dinner tonight is on your own.

NIGHT: Hotel Camino Real, Santa Cruz

September 24, Day 16: Departures

Those not continuing on Grand Bolivia Part II or departing the evening before will be provided a transfer to the Santa Cruz airport this morning for international flights home.



The endemic Black-hooded Sunbeam © Andrew Whittaker

GRAND BOLIVIA PART II

Foothills, Cloud Forest & Altiplano



White-tufted Grebes © Andrew Whittaker

September 22–23, Days 1–2: Arrival in Bolivia, and flight to Cochabamba

Most flights from the United States will depart on Day 1 (September 22), arriving in Bolivia early on Day 2 (September 23). US flights will take you either to Santa Cruz's Viru Viru International Airport (airport code VVI) or to La Paz's Alto International Airport (airport code LPB). Whichever Bolivian airport you land in, **after passing through immigration and customs, you will take a connecting domestic flight to Jorge Wilsterman International Airport in Cochabamba (airport code CBB), arriving that same morning.** You will be met in Cochabamba by our ground operator for the transfer to our group hotel, where a room will be reserved in your name. This is where you will meet up with the members of our group continuing from Grand Bolivia Part I.

Those continuing from **Grand Bolivia Part I** will arrive in Cochabamba from Trinidad on September 23. Depending on the arrival time of our flight from Trinidad, we will meet those joining us on **Grand Bolivia Part II** in the hotel lobby for lunch and some city birding, or for dinner.

Cochabamba is the ideal base for our exploration of the rich Yungas cloud forest, drier valleys, and Andean Puna that are the focus of this second part of our tour.

NIGHTS: Day 1: In transit (September 22): Day 2: Hotel Aranjuez, Cochabamba (September 23)

September 24–25, Days 3–4: Birding mid-elevation cloud forest

The paved road to Villa Tunari climbs out of the Cochabamba Valley to cross a mountain pass at 11,700 feet before descending gradually through miles of lush cloud forest. We'll leave our hotel early on both days to bird along the road at elevations between about 7250 and 9250 feet; breakfast and lunch on both days will be in the field. Our precise schedule and localities will depend on the weather: fog and low clouds may force us to descend to bird at lower elevations where it is clear. A clear morning can be excellent for raptors, and our past tours have enjoyed the lovely Black-and-chestnut Eagle, Swallow-tailed Kite, and White-rumped, White-throated, and Bicolored hawks.

Deserted side roads offer plenty of opportunities to enjoy orchids, mosses, and colorful bromeliads. As we bird these enchanting forests, we will be hoping to encounter the rare Black-winged Parrot, the exquisite Hooded Mountain-Toucan, and endemics such as the Rufous-faced and Bolivian antpittas, Black-throated Thistletail, and Bolivian Brushfinch.



The highly sought-after Hooded Mountain-Toucan © Andrew Whittaker

Among the hummingbirds, we have good chances at the Sword-billed Hummingbird, Rufous-booted Racket-tail, Long-tailed Sylph, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, and Tyrian and Scaled metaltails. Tanagers are also well represented, with Grass-green, Blue-and-black, Blue-capped, Rust-and-yellow, and the endemic subspecies of the Blue-winged, plus Chestnut-bellied, Hooded, and Scarlet-bellied mountain tanagers.



The Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager © Andrew Whittaker

Other species present here include the Yungas Pygmy-Owl, Golden-headed and Crested quetzals, and a fine variety of chat-tyrants.

We will also explore the spectacular Yungas forest in search of such great birds as the Blue-banded and Chestnut-tipped toucanets, the rare Yungas Tody-Tyrant, and the spectacular Versicolored Barbet. Abundant fruiting trees support a host of colorful mid-elevation tanagers and finches, including Orange-eared and the rare Green-throated tanagers and the Orange-bellied Euphonia.

On one day, we will visit a nearby lake for ducks and migrant shorebirds from the Arctic; the Slate-colored Coot, Andean Lapwing, and Puna and Andean ibis are possible. Songbirds should include the Olivaceous Siskin, Cream-winged Cinclodes, and Plain and Band-tailed seedeaters. An afternoon at Laguna Alalay, right on the edge of the city, will be an opportunity to make the acquaintance of a number of high Andes species, including the Silvery Grebe (of the Andean subspecies *iuninensis*) and the even lovelier White-tufted Grebe. Songbirds here include the Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Yellow-

winged Blackbird, and Wren-like Rushbird. A prime target is the stunning Andean Avocet; Andean and Chilean flamingos are also occasional visitors to Laguna Alalay.

We will close both days with a great Bolivian dinner at our hotel.

NIGHTS: Hotel Aranjuez, Cochabamba



Chestnut-tipped Toucanet © Andrew Whittaker

September 26, Day 5: Dry valleys, Polylepis forest, and dry Puna

Another early start will find us driving toward snow-capped Cerro Tunari; we may reach elevations as high as 12,500 feet today.

The agricultural fields along the way are simply alive with birds in the early morning, and we have a good chance at encountering such notables as the endemic Cochabamba Mountain Finch and the rare Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager. We will also keep our eyes open for Andean Tinamous, which sometimes parade around the edge of the fields. Spectacular Olive-crowned Crescentchests (of the

highland race) and the odd White-tipped Plantcutter sing from low scrub, while Maquis Canasteros and Streak-fronted Thornbirds skulk in thorny brush. Three particularly breathtaking hummingbirds occur here: the Giant Hummingbird, the Red-tailed Comet, and the nearly endemic Wedge-tailed Hillstar.



Red-tailed Comet © Andrew Whittaker

Black-hooded and Peruvian sierra finches, Ringed and Rufous-sided warbling finches, and Golden-billed Saltators scour the fields for seeds. Roadside scrub holds the very locally distributed Fulvous-headed Brushfinch, while the endemic Bolivian Warbling Finch displays on cactus-clad hillsides and Rock and Bolivian Earthcreepers sing from their favorite boulders.

As our bus climbs ever higher, we'll search roadside polylepis forest for the endemic Gray-bellied Flowerpiercer, Puna Tapaculo, and Yellow-billed and Tufted tit-tyrants. We will keep an eye peeled likewise for the uncommon Andean Parakeet, White-capped Dipper, and Torrent Duck, while Andean Swifts, Variable Hawks, or Mountain Caracaras pass overhead.

Higher still, the treeless plateau of the puna is studded with huge boulders and threaded with crystalline streams. This is the realm of the Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, Glacier Finch, d'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant, and, with luck, the rare White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant. Open grassy areas are the favorite habitats of Taczanowski's, Cinereous, Ochre-naped, and White-browed ground-tyrants, sometimes alongside flocks of Bright-rumped Yellow Finches. Small pools attract Crested Ducks, Yellow-billed Teal, and

Andean Geese. The Andean Hillstar, a dazzling hummingbird that occurs as high as 16,400 feet above sea level, finds the cactus flowers irresistible.

We plan to be back at our hotel in the late afternoon, with time for a well-earned rest before gathering for dinner and the daily checklist.

NIGHT: Toloma Gran Hotel, Cochabamba



Mountain Caracaras © Andrew Whittaker

September 27, Day 6: La Paz and Lake Titicaca

A short morning flight will take us from Cochabamba to La Paz and its international airport. The stunning views from the plane are a foretaste of what awaits us as we land amid snow-capped mountains.

Over these past days, we have carefully and gradually climbed from an elevation of 8,000 feet in Cochabamba, a comfortable strategy that we have found helps us acclimate more easily to the heights around La Paz, the highest capital city in the world at 12,000 feet. At these elevations, the arid areas between river valleys are only sparsely vegetated, while in the river bottoms, tall eucalypt forests,

cultivated fields, and settlements are interspersed with patches of pampas grass, willows, mesquites, and pepper trees.

We plan to pass through bustling La Paz in time for a late lunch on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the largest lake in South America. The Inca considered Lake Titicaca the birthplace of the sun, and it is still a sacred site for many locals. At 12,500 feet, Lake Titicaca is one of the highest on earth, fed by 25 different rivers and waterways.

Our delightful accommodations are right on the lakeshore, and after lunch, we will start with some relaxed birding in the flower gardens. Commonly found species include the Andean Gull, Plumbeous Rail, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, Black Siskin, and Peruvian Sierra Finch. We can also look forward to tremendous views of the flightless Titicaca Grebe, found at only a few other sites in Bolivia and southeastern Peru.



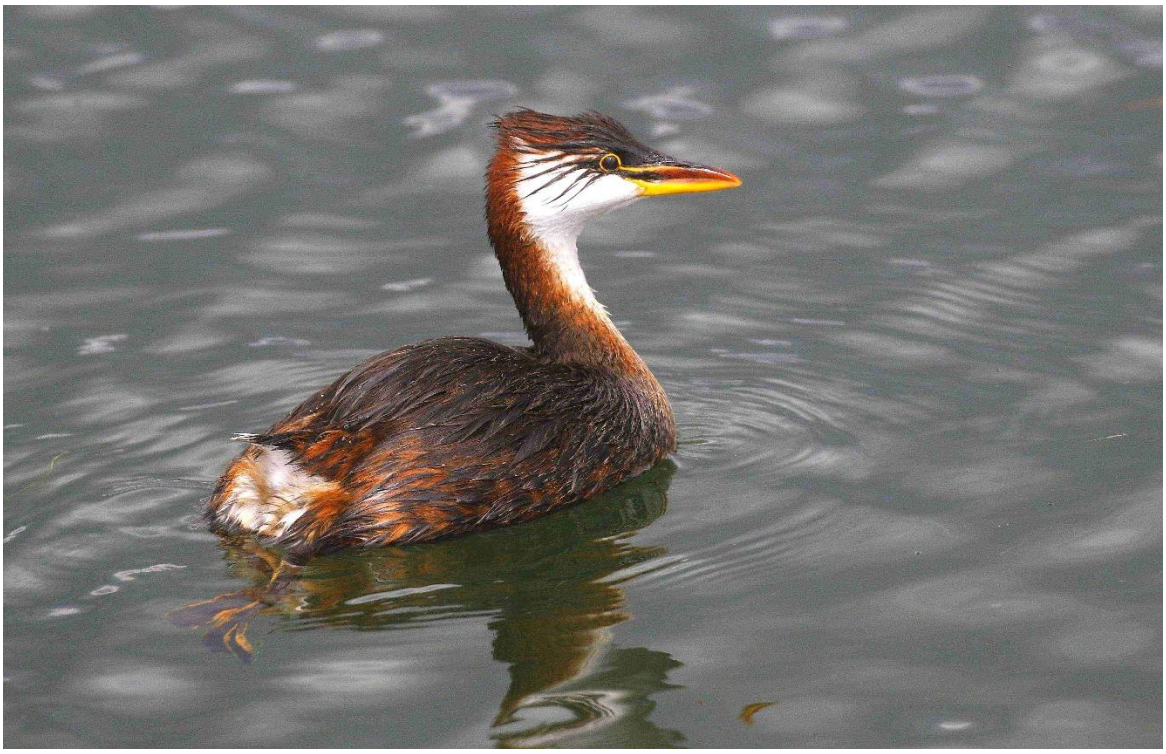
Birding at Lake Titicaca © Andrew Whittaker

Right on the hotel grounds is the museum of the indigenous Inca Utama people, its exhibits interpreted by informative audio guides. On display here are reed boats of the kind used by Thor Heyerdahl on his 1947 *Kon-Tiki* expedition.

NIGHT: Inca Utama Hotel, Lake Titicaca

September 28, Day 7: Lake Titicaca and Sorata

Following a pre-dawn breakfast, we'll drive past towering snow-capped Illampu, at nearly 21,000 feet above sea level the fourth-highest mountain in Bolivia. Our destination is the tiny town of Sorata, at 9000 feet, where we hope to get good views of the endemic and simply stunning, Black-hooded Sunbeam. This is one of the most spectacular members of the entire family, combining a turquoise back and rump and fiery orange tail with a striking black hood and belly. No painting can do this hummingbird justice; it has to be seen to be believed.



The flightless Titicaca Grebe © Andrew Whittaker

We also hope to encounter the endemic Berlepsch's Canastero, both Stripe-headed and Puno antpittas, and Golden-billed Saltator. As we explore the high, dry Puna, we may come across the Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Andrean Hillstar, or a feeding flock of the uncommon Andean Ibis.

We will also visit a remote lake to look for the noisy and well-named Giant Coot; depending on water levels, the coots may be sitting on their huge nests. We will also look for the Altiplano form *titicacae* of the Common Miner, a good candidate for a future split.

In the afternoon, if winds allow, we may offer a short boat excursion to the homes of the Uros Indians, built atop artificial floating islands of totora reeds. Afterward, we will bird the road along the reedy edges of Titicaca, home to Yellow-winged Blackbirds and spectacular Many-colored Rush Tyrants. Open areas are home to the neat Andean Negrito and Andean Lapwing. We will search the large flocks of shimmering Chilean Flamingos for Andean and James's flamingos, both sadly rare now.



Chilean Flamingo © Andrew Whittaker

We should also enjoy Cinereous Harriers or Short-eared Owls quartering the reed beds. Damp fields are preferred by the Darwin's Nothura, Puna Pipit, and Peruvian, Plumbeous, Ash-breasted, and Band-tailed sierra finches. We will always have one eye open for the localized and rare Puna Snipe.

NIGHT: Inca Utama Hotel, Lake Titicaca

September 29, Day 8: Lake Titicaca to Coroico

We will leave after a very early breakfast, passing La Paz to ascend the breathtaking Cumbre Pass, with spectacular views along the way. At elevations from 11,000 to slightly more than 15,000 feet, we will take it slow this morning, with only the tour leaders doing any walking in search of the area's many specialties. Starting above tree line, we will work our way down to the scrubby talus slopes near

Pongo. At bogs and lakes, our main targets are the much sought-after Rufous-bellied and Gray-breasted seedsnipe; both are typically hard to find, but we have encountered them on all but one of our tours.



Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe © Andrew Whittaker

Skulky Streak-throated Canasteros and Rock Earthcreepers inhabit the short grass bogs. We will sort through flocks of Glacier Finches, Bright-rumped Yellow Finches, and Plumbeous and Ash-breasted sierra finches in hopes of finding Taczanowski's, Puna, and White-fronted ground-tyrants. A spectacular road takes us slowly down through incredible rocky gorges into grassy valleys home to Andean Ibis, Andean Hillstars, and Scribble-tailed Canasteros. Other possibilities at these high elevations include the striking Stripe-headed Antpitta, Line-fronted Canastero, Puna Tapaculo, and Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant. We will be on the lookout, too, for the charming Mountain Viscacha, a rare rabbit-like rodent often seen sunning on the rocks.

We will enjoy a scrumptious restaurant lunch of fresh grilled trout and fried plantains, then, on the way down into the lush Amazon foothills, we will bird the yungas cloud forest along famous Death Road. We will arrive at our lovely lodge in time for some birding at the lodge feeders, which host Gould's Incas, Great Sapphirewings, and Blue-capped Tanagers. Later in the evening, we will hopefully be rewarded by the endemic Rufous-faced Antpitta coming to worms.

NIGHT: Jucumari Lodge, Yanacachi



The charming Mountain Viscacha © Andrew Whittakerr

September 30–Oct 2, Days 9–11: Yungas Cloud Forest

From our delightful mountainside base, we will spend three truly spectacular days at very different elevations, each featuring a different set of neat birds. The old Yungas Road winds along spectacular cliffs with breathtaking views of orchid- and bromeliad-rich forest as far as the eye can see; those woodlands are home to a plethora of colorful cotingas, tanagers, and hummingbirds, along with skulking antpittas and tapaculos.

For birders, the Yungas Road, better known as the old Death Road, offers treasures rivaling those of more famous routes such as Peru's Manu Road. This little-traveled road takes us to elevations between 3,600 and 6,500 feet, with waterfalls splashing onto the roadbed and ferns and mosses draping sheer cliffs.



Golden-collared Tanager © Andrew Whittaker



White-collared Jay © Andrew Whittaker

The possibilities here are nearly endless, as demonstrated by the discovery on one of our recent tours of Bolivia's second-ever Leymebamba Antpitta and Lanceolated Monklet. Mountain birding is notoriously fickle, but we hope to encounter mixed-species flocks at each of our stops. The forest along the upper section of the road is very wet, with abundant mosses, spectacular orchids, and bamboo. Species observed in this zone could include the Solitary Eagle, Diademed Tapaculo, the

endemic Black-throated Thistletail, and Rufous-faced, Undulated, and Bolivian Antpittas. Flocks may contain the sought-after Crimson-winged Woodpecker, Golden-collared and Slaty tanagers, Light-crowned Spinetail (white-crowned form), and the striking Orange-browed Hemispingus.



Orange-browed Hemispingus © Andrew Whittaker

Among the more common residents here are Pale-eyed and Glossy-black thrushes, Hooded Mountain-Toucan, Ocellated Piculet, and Barred and Band-tailed fruiteaters, while the dazzling hummingbirds include the Amethyst-throated Sunangel, Rufous-capped Thornbill, Rufous-booted Racket-tail, Buff-thighed Puffleg, and Sword-billed Hummingbird. We will also be keeping a sharp lookout for the iconic Andean Cock-of-the-rock.

At middle elevations, we will concentrate on such rarer species as the Black-winged Parrot and the enigmatic Scimitar-winged Piha, both seen on all but one of our previous tours. This is the realm of the Golden-headed and Crested quetzals, Yungas Pygmy-Owl, Andean and Sickle-winged guans, and the skulky Trilling Tapaculo. We will also be on the lookout for colorful male Chestnut-crested Cotingas showing off to the females.



A female Andean Cock-of-the rock © Andrew Whittaker

Mixed-species tanager flocks here can be awesome, with a stellar lineup of tanagers, possibly joined by a Scaled Fruiteater, Golden-rumped Euphonia, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, or Southern Emerald Toucanet.



Yungas Pygmy-Owl © Andrew Whittaker.



Southern (Black-throated) Emerald Toucanet © Andrew Whittaker

As time allows, we will spend an afternoon at lower elevation in search of such colorful residents as the Swallow Tanager, Yellow-bellied Siskin, and Versicolored Barbet. Other species possible here include the Black-capped Tinamou, Amazonian Motmot, White-wedged Piculet, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Upland Antshrike, and Stripe-chested Antwren.

NIGHTS: Jucumari Lodge, Yanacachi

October 3, Day 12: Return to La Paz

After an early breakfast, we'll start the ascent to La Paz, birding along the way. Both Stripe-headed and undulated antpittas are found in the elfin forest on the old Yungas Road, and flocks of tanagers are a common sight. Grassy slopes, stunted bushes, and boulders are home to White-browed and Blue-backed conebills, Paramo Pipit, Line-fronted Canastero, and Puna Tapaculo.

We plan to arrive at our comfortable hotel in La Paz for a late lunch, with time for a break and packing before enjoying a farewell dinner together near the hotel.

TRAVEL NOTE: Some participants may have the option of departing La Paz for home this evening. Please do not schedule your departing flight for earlier than 6:00 pm.

NIGHT: Ritz Apart Hotel, La Paz



The magnificent Versicolored Barbet © Andrew Whittaker



The breathtaking Yungas cloud forest, stretching as far as the eye can see © Andrew

October 4, Day 13: Departures

The tour ends this morning with the transfer to La Paz's El Alto International Airport (airport code LPB).

Essential Tour Information

TOUR SIZE: Grand Bolivia Parts I and II are each limited to 9 participants.

TOUR LEADER: This tour is led by Andrew Whittaker.



Andrew Whittaker acquired his birding passion at the early age of seven in the UK (thanks to his parents). Andy is a true all-around naturalist with an innate fascination for all aspects of the natural world; he loves sharing his intimate knowledge of birds, wildlife, and orchids in a fun and enthusiastic manner. Andy is a qualified 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. He has also spent time researching shorebirds in Borneo. 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, he has led tours in the bird-rich rainforests of West Africa and on the mammal-rich savannas of East Africa, and in the Himalayas of Nepal to observe the cute Red Panda and exotic tragopans. Andy was born in England, but he 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. He is an authority on Amazonian birds and the author of numerous technical publications on the region's avifauna. Andy recognized for his intimate knowledge of South American avian taxonomy and bird vocalizations, with over 800 hours of his bird recordings housed in the British Library Sound Archive. This knowledge has enabled him to discover several new bird species, such as the Cryptic Forest-Falcon in 2002, and to rediscover others thought to be extinct. An excellent communicator and organizer, Andy loves nothing better than finding and sharing a rare, poorly known skulker, or telling one of his many fascinating birding and travel stories. His enthusiasm in the field is contagious, making him a favored leader among participants. 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 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 a dedicated photographer (with many of his bird images used in books). He is also an avid football fan of Birmingham City FC and Real Madrid, whose worldwide mega-star Jude Bellingham comes from his home team. Andy lives in Porto Alegre, Southern Brazil, with his partner, Jaqueline, and their many orchids.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE for Part I, Bolivia: Eastern Lowlands, Beni Grasslands & Inter-Andean Valleys: $TBC per person in double occupancy or **$TBC** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from lunch on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 16, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, roundtrip internal flight (economy class) between Santa Cruz and Trinidad (or Cochabamba if continuing on to the next part of the tour), and guide services provided by the tour leaders. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Santa Cruz, and return, airport departure taxes, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based on group tariffs; if the tours do not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

Please Note: The cost of the internal flights is included in the tour fee. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours reserves the right to assess a surcharge for the price of the air ticket should costs increase significantly.

TOUR FEE for Part II, Bolivia: Foothills, Cloud Forests & the Altiplano: $TBC per person in double occupancy or **$TBC** for a person requiring single accommodation from Cochabamba. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 13, accommodation as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Cochabamba or the return from La Paz, airport departure taxes, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based on group tariffs; if the tours do not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

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. 180 days before departure, 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 prior to the tour departure date (May 12, 2027, for Part I; May 25, 2027, for Part II).

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: If you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least four months before your departure date. We can easily make hotel arrangements and arrange transfers, often at our group rate, if we receive your request far enough in advance of the tour.

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 AND 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 destination--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 before 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 less before 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 before 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 travel sellers to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of $50,000. CST #2014998-50.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION: To safeguard 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**.** It is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Ripcord

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a "Cancel for Any Reason" benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit:

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 ensure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

About MedjetAssist

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

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

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: Medjet.com/VentBird or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and terms 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 of 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 have 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 airline 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 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 about permissible carry-on items.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

PASSPORTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Bolivia is required for United States citizens to enter the country. It is advised to have printed versions of the tour itinerary, your flight details, and a copy of the passport page on you.

VISAS: U.S. citizens are required to obtain a tourist visa to enter Bolivia. Visas may be obtained upon arrival and the visa fee may be paid in U.S. dollars or local currency. Travelers of other nationalities should consult the appropriate Bolivian consulate to confirm current entry and visa requirements.

Because requirements are subject to change, all travelers should review the Embassy of Bolivia website prior to departure for the most current information.

For Help obtaining a VISA: If you need assistance with your VISA, we recommend working with Travel Document Systems (https://www.traveldocs.com/ or 202-640-0257 in Washington, D.C.by phone), a company which efficiently handles visa procurement. Non-United States citizens should check with your local consulate or embassy for instructions.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: Lightweight, loose-fitting field clothing will be useful at low elevations, but **we urge you to please avoid white or unusually bright-colored clothes, especially white hats.** Movement is much more noticeable in bright, white, or light-colored clothing, and more likely to frighten shy birds and animals. Mid-elevation cloud forests are cool and damp. Dressing in layers is necessary to prevent chilling.

- **Long pants and long-sleeved shirts:** useful in lowland areas, where biting insects are possible; insects are not a problem elsewhere. Three or four changes.
- **T-shirts or short-sleeved shirts:** can be worn on some days even in the Andes (during mid-day breaks), although temperatures can vary markedly over short periods of time.
- **Good hat for sun:** there is a greater risk of sunburn at high elevation.
- **Rain jacket**

FOOTWEAR: Rubber boots are not necessary, but Gore-Tex boots will be useful, as some trails or roads in the cloud forests may be muddy. Most areas, however, will be quite dry.

- **Sturdy walking shoes**
- **Spare pair of sneakers**
- **Shower sandals:** Optional for use in hotel or shared bathroom facilities. One pair is sufficient.

EQUIPMENT:

- **A small light or headlamp and extra batteries**
- **Umbrella**

- **Between-meal snacks:** nuts, dried fruits, granola bars, etc.; we may not be able to purchase them in Bolivia.
- **Walking Stick:** can be helpful on hilly terrain on both tours.
- **Insect Repellent**
- **Large-mouthed ½- to 1-quart plastic water bottle**: bottled water is available for purchase, but we will try to carry water in large containers; bottles with large openings are easier to refill.
- **Sunscreen Lotion:** a newly purchased high-SPF sunscreen is recommended to avoid sunburn at high elevations.
- **Supply of Plastic Bags:** A few roads are very dusty, and plastic bags protect cameras, binoculars, and other personal items.
- **Medications including first-aid supplies, and extra eyeglasses**
- **Checklist, Small Pocket Notebook, and Pens**
- **Sunglasses**
- **Daypack:** good for carrying books, sunscreen, etc.
- **Travel alarm:** very important, as not all hotels have wake-up service.
- **Pocketknife**: optional (pack it in your checked luggage).

Binoculars: We strongly recommend a pair of good 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 binoculars. 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 AND WEATHER: This tour is scheduled for the period of transition from the late dry to the early rainy season. We do not expect much rain, and indeed, it would be welcomed in most areas.

Two areas of cloud forest, however, may be wet, and they can be foggy or covered in low clouds virtually year-round. Temperatures will range from cool to pleasant or even hot and dry around Santa Cruz; it will be damp and chilly in the cloud forest, and cool, possibly even frosty, in the early morning at some of the higher elevations visited in Part II. Note that occasional cold fronts can occur in the lowlands bringing wind and chilly temperatures. Please remember to bring a set of cold-weather clothes.

CONDITIONS: Grand Bolivia Part I operates at low elevations, below about 4,000 feet. Grand Bolivia Part II reaches significantly higher elevations in the Andes, to over 15,000 feet on the last few days of the tour. Our itinerary is designed so that our ascent to high elevation occurs gradually over a period of several days, which can make acclimatization to higher elevations easier. Even so, the air is very thin at these elevations, and the risk of developing altitude sickness is real. We will always make a point of walking slowly, avoiding unnecessary exertion, staying well hydrated, and closely monitoring our responses to the relative lack of oxygen. Your guides will be outfitted with supplemental oxygen, available to anyone who shows signs of distress. Please consult your physician about any concerns about travel at high elevation.

Though we avoid extreme exertion on our outings, both tours involve some walking on steep terrain, so good mobility, stamina, and balance are required to participate in this tour. Trails can be narrow, uneven, and sometimes wet. Many participants find a walking stick useful. If you are unable to comfortably walk a mile at a slow "birding pace," you should reconsider registering for this tour.

Drink only bottled water and bottled beverages in Bolivia, and be sure to avoid ice, which may be made with tap water. We will always have purified water available in vehicles, usually in large containers from which you can refill your wide-mouthed drinking bottle.

Please note that Red-fronted Macaw Lodge has shared bathroom facilities.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY NOTIFICATION: Even the best-prepared traveler can develop altitude sickness, a serious condition. Supplemental oxygen has never been needed on many of our tours.

It is essential that anyone considering registering for Grand Bolivia Part II be in good health, with no cardio-pulmonary conditions that could cause a medical emergency under the stress of traveling at high elevation. To ensure that all participants are fit enough for this tour, VENT maintains a screening standard that requires all participants to complete a short health questionnaire as part of the

registration process. VENT reserves the right to decline a registration for this tour. Similarly, VENT reserves the right to require a doctor's approval for travel on this tour. Please refer to the CONDITIONS section for more information about the physical requirements of the tour.

Altitude sickness: Altitude sickness is a condition that can occur when the body doesn't adjust to the decreased availability of oxygen at higher elevations. The condition can occur anywhere above 7000 feet and ranges in severity from mild to extremely dangerous. Acute altitude sickness is most often revealed by a headache at high elevation, which may be accompanied by nausea and/or fatigue. These symptoms are a common experience even at ski resorts in the western United States, which are at a significantly lower elevation than the altitudes on the Grand Bolivia Part II tour. For example, these symptoms are not uncommon among people staying near the base of the mountains in Aspen, Colorado, or Mammoth Mountain, California, which are at only approximately 8000 feet. Taking Tylenol or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug and drinking copious amounts of water help with these symptoms, as does supplemental oxygen, but the symptoms may be avoided with a prophylactic medication prescribed by a physician.

There is a tendency to think "it won't happen to me," but it certainly can. To help prevent severe altitude sickness, avoid tobacco and alcohol consumption, increase your intake of fluids, and do not take sleeping pills. Altitude sickness seems to be more frequent in people suffering from diseases such as anemia, COPD, angina, heart failure, and cystic fibrosis, among others; a recent heart attack or stroke may also predispose you to dangerous altitude sickness.

For additional important information about altitude sickness, its causes, symptoms, and preventive measures, visit the CDC Yellow Book.

CURRENCY: The local currency is the Boliviano, widely available in cities. US dollars can be exchanged at banks.

ELECTRICITY: 110 volts, but 220 volts in some cities; standard flat-pin two-prong electrical outlets are used in almost all hotels. If you are traveling with devices that cannot run on both 110 and 220 volts, you will need a voltage converter.

LANGUAGE: About 70% of Bolivians speak Spanish, with three dozen indigenous languages also in use. English is infrequently spoken away from hotels and major tourist destinations.

TIME: Bolivia operates on Bolivia Time (BOT), which is one hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST). Bolivia does not observe daylight saving time, so during U.S. daylight saving time, Bolivia is on the same time as Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

LAUNDRY: Laundry facilities are available in Santa Cruz (useful for participants on Part I tour), Trinidad, and Cochabamba.

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH: Please see above for information about altitude sickness.

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 ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

INSECTS: Biting insects ("no-seeums"), ticks, and mosquitos are sometimes a problem in eastern Bolivia, especially in open areas, and insect protection is important.

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 DEET ingredient 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

Several traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com, which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com, which specialize in

ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com, which can help finding out-of-print titles.

FIELD GUIDES

Birds

Herzog, S. K., et al. 2016 *Birds of Bolivia: Field Guide*. Santa Cruz, Bolivia: Asosiación Armonía. Printed in Bolivia and filled with terrific illustrations and excellent maps, all in a convenient portable format that makes sorting through the tremendous diversity of birds we will observe even more of a pleasure. Please note: This field guide can be extremely difficult to find in the U.S. but can be purchased through Future Generations University.

Schulenberg, T. S., et al. 2010. *Birds of Peru.* 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton UP. Relatively compact (but remember, there are almost 1800 species in this book), though not as small or lightweight as field guides to North America and Europe.

Butterflies

D'Abrera, B. 1984. *Butterflies of South America*. Melbourne: Hill House. Good pocket guide covering many genera in nice pictures. Some newer books on butterflies (including some published privately) are available and may be useful on this trip. Check the internet for resources including

Garwood, K. and Lehman, R. 2009. *Butterflies of Southern Amazonia.* Edition Ricale.

Mammals

Emmons, L. 1990. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*. U Chicago P. Paperback, with good pictures and excellent text. Useful only for Bolivia Part I.

General Nature

Forsyth, A., and K. Miyata. 1984*. Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rainforests of Central and South America.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Excellent introduction to tropical ecosystems. Does not deal much with birds, but a top-notch text covers just about everything else.

Hilty, S. L. 2005. *Birds of Tropical America: A Watcher's Introduction to Behavior, Breeding and Diversity.* 2nd ed. Austin: U Texas P. An introduction to a wide variety of topics of interest to birders and naturalists, including why there are so many species in tropical America; why antbirds don't eat

ants, why there are so many flycatchers, why tropical birds are so colorful (or not), how hummingbirds survive and prosper in the cold Andes, why manakins and cotingas dance, and many more. A must for visitors to the New World tropics.

Kricher, J. C. 1997. *A Neotropical Companion: An Introduction to Birds, Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics.* 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton UP. Another good introduction to tropical ecosystems. Ambitious, wide-ranging, informative, and an excellent read for anybody wanting a broader look at wildlife in the New World tropics.

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 19, 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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