



# ECUADOR

Cabanas San Isidro Short Tour

*November 30 - December 6, 2026*



*Andean Motmot at Cabañas San Isidro*

This Cabañas San Isidro Short Tour focuses on a relatively small area that holds a wide range of habitats and surprising elevational diversity on Ecuador's northeastern Andean slope, mainly within the subtropical zone, with visits to three higher elevation sites—at Antisana National Park, Guango Lodge, and Papallacta Pass—on our first and final days, while also dipping lower to a couple of Amazonian foothill sites. The internationally renowned Cabañas San Isidro will be our base of operations from which we will explore its domain and additional nearby hotspots. We can expect a wide range of species, representing many Neotropical avian families, which could include: ducks, guans, Andean Condor, hawks and eagles, owls, quetzals, Masked Trogon, Andean Motmot, Southern Emerald-Toucanet, mountain-toucans, woodpeckers, Collared Forest-Falcon, falcons, parrots, antpittas, tapaculos, woodcreepers and a variety of furnariids, fruiteaters, Andean Cock-of-the-rock, a wide variety of tyrant-flycatchers, vireos, jays, wrens, White-capped Dipper, thrushes, siskins, brushfinches, oropendolas,

caciques, and warblers. There will be a high promise of up to 35 species of hummingbirds and as many as 32 tanagers. In addition, we will be on the constant lookout for some impressive Andean mammals, such as the Mountain Tapir and Spectacled Bear.



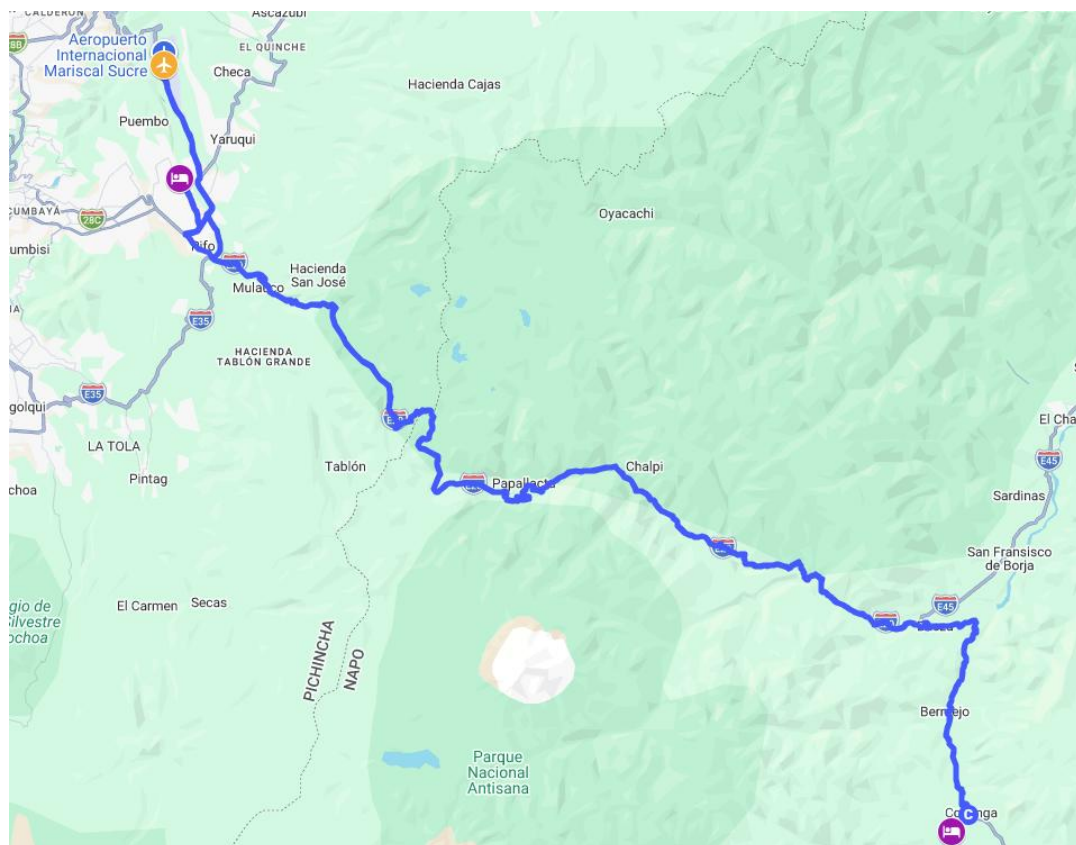
*Andean Cock-of-the-rock*

Cabañas San Isidro ('home-base') is a charming and very birdy location, with ample and well-appointed cabins and a heated swimming pool, set in a forested environment; the cuisine is excellent and original. The comfortable dining area comes complete with its ample deck, which doubles as a prime birding platform! At 6,600 ft. in elevation, we find ourselves in the heart of the humid subtropical zone, in all its natural splendor, and we'll explore a wide range of habitats throughout the area. Here's how Frank Chapman described this Andean ecosystem:

*"Every available foot of ground is claimed by parasitic or epiphytic vegetation. This marvelous Subtropical Zone occupies the humid mountain slopes from the upper limit of the Tropical Zone to an altitude of from 8,000 to 9,500 feet and extends from Bolivia to Mexico. It is remarkable not alone for the richness of its life but for the high percentage of species found only within its boundaries. Protective coloration is at a discount in the Subtropical Zone. The density of vegetation protects; among arboreal birds at least - color unchecked - runs riot. Every day brought beautiful creatures we had never seen before."*

Having four full days to work with, we will take advantage of the deck's moth light, habitat and trails around the lodge and along the Las Caucheras Road, as well as a number of planned (and perhaps even unplanned) excursions to nearby hot-spots, which may include the Cosanga River, the Los Guacamayos Ridge, the Wayra Reserve, the amazing Río Quijos Andean Cock-of-the-rock Lek, and Cabañas Tamiaju, among various options. The possibilities really seem unlimited, and each day will bring new and exciting experiences.

The pint-sized country of Ecuador has long been regarded as the planet's avian epicenter (hummingbirds and tanagers are good examples), and on this special 'short' departure, we will sample many ecosystems within this mountainous region while in pursuit of a variety of species that exemplify the glory of the Neotropics. This five field day itinerary has been designed specifically for birding enthusiasts and photographers along with anyone sporting a whim for the joys of the Neotropics, who might not be able to join one of VENT's longer excursions.



## November 30, Day 1: Arrival in Quito

Participants should plan to arrive in Quito on or before November 30 (Mariscal Sucre International Airport; airport code UIO). Most flights from the United States arrive in the evening. Due to the late flight arrival time, dinner tonight will be on your own. Those preferring to avoid the risk of misconnecting (due to bad weather and flight delays) or who desire more rest time to acclimate prior to the tour are encouraged to consider arriving prior to November 30. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

**NIGHT:** San José de Puenbo, Puenbo (near Quito airport)



*Chestnut-breasted Coronet*



*Andean Ibis*

## December 1, Day 2: Morning departure from San José de Puenbo to Antisana National Park; continuing over the eastern crest of the Andes and descending to Guango Lodge; then onward, to Cabañas San Isidro

We initiate our first day at Hostería San José de Puenbo—located east of the Capital City of Quito and near Mariscal Sucre International Airport—with a drive, first ascending to Antisana National Park in the tundra-like páramo zone (up to ca. 3,800mts/12,500ft.) at the foot of the colossal Antisana Volcano. In this magnificent setting, we hope to see Andean Condor, Black-chested

Buzzard-Eagle, Andean Ibis and an array of additional high elevation avian species, including some of our first hummingbirds, which could include: Sparkling Violetear, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Tyrian Metaltail, Shining Sunbeam, Great Sapphirewing, and White-bellied Woodstar. And, if we're lucky, we might even encounter a Spectacled Bear!



*Shining Sunbeam*

Prying ourselves away from this location won't be easy, but we will depart and head up-and over the crest of the Eastern Cordillera of the Andes at Papallacta Pass and then downslope to Guango Lodge (2,500mts/8,200ft) for lunch, and more birds of course! Here we will find a new set of species in this very different temperate forest ecosystem. We will be on the lookout for Torrent Duck, Andean Guan, Tourmaline Sunangel, Speckled Hummingbird, Long-tailed Sylph, Collared Inca, Mountain Velvetbreast, the amazing Sword-billed Hummingbird, Glowing Puffleg, Buff-tailed & Chestnut-breasted coronets, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Powerful Woodpecker, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Pearled Treerunner, Turquoise Jay, Mountain Cacique, Spectacled Whitestart (Redstart), Black-capped Hemispingus, Hooded & Buff-breasted mountain-tanagers, Blue-capped, Grass-green & Blue-and-black tanagers, Capped Conebill, and Pink-billed Cnemoscopus... among many more possible specialties.



*Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan*

We then continue our descent towards Cabañas San Isidro with one more stop, at La Brisa (1,800mts/5,900ft.), a locally owned and run birding ‘garden’ where we’ll check out their active nectar feeders for: Green & Tawny-bellied Hermits, Geoffroy’s Daggerbill, Lesser Violetear, Long-tailed Sylph, Bronzy Inca, Peruvian Racket-tail, Green-backed Hillstar, Fawn-breasted & Violet-fronted brilliants, Gorgeted Woodstar, Many-spotted Hummingbird, and Golden-tailed Sapphire...these among quite a few additional non-hummers that could show themselves. We will arrive at our destination at some point in the afternoon, depending on how much fun we’re having, and may have time to do some light birding before our daily checklist session and dinner... which could even include a visit by San Isidro’s Mystery Owl!

**NIGHT:** Cabañas San Isidro, Cosanga

## December 2-4, Days 3-5: Cabañas San Isidro and surrounding areas

Over the following four days, we will explore the rich habitat at and surrounding Cabañas San Isidro—now internationally renowned as Ecuador’s classic east-slope subtropical-zone birding *hot-spot*. We will surely be thrilled by the dawn moth-light activity at the lodge dining room deck,

where multiple species gather for often point-blank inspection! The Las Caucheras Road that runs by the lodge entrance will deserve more than one pass to adequately cover various sections, each with the promise of new species. We will take a morning to visit the spectacular Río Quijos Andean Cock-of-the-rock Lek, head out one evening to seek out a Lyre-tailed Nightjar or two and visit additional key sites. A sample of the species we will be aiming for could include: Torrent Duck, Wattled & Sickle-winged guans, Rufous-breasted Wood-Quail, White-throated Quail-Dove, Rufous-bellied Nighthawk, Andean Potoo, White-chested, White-chinned, Chestnut-collared & White-collared swifts, Speckled Hummingbird, Greenish Puffleg, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, Andean Emerald,



*Torrent Ducks*

Southern Lapwing, Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Black-and-chestnut Eagle, Solitary Eagle, White-rumped Hawk, Golden-headed & Crested quetzals, Masked Trogon, Andean Motmot, Southern Emerald-Toucanet, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Red-billed & Speckle-faced parrots, Scaly-naped Amazon, Yellow-breasted Antwren, Streak-headed Antbird, Chestnut-crowned Gnatcatcher, White-bellied Antpitta, White-crowned, Long-tailed & Blackish tapaculos, Barred Antthrush, Tyrannine, Strong-billed, Olive-backed & Montane woodcreepers, Pearled Treerunner, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Azara's & Rufous spinetails, Green-and-black & Black-chested fruiteaters, Dusky Piha, Barred Becard, Rufous-breasted, Cinnamon, Handsome, Pale-edged, Lemon-browed & Golden-bellied flycatchers, Marble-faced & Variegated bristle-tyrants, Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, White-tailed, Sulphur-bellied & Ashy-headed tyrannulets, Rufous-tailed Tyrant, Black-billed Peppershrike, Inca (Green) Jay, Mountain & Plain-tailed wrens, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren,

White-capped Dipper, Pale-eyed, Glossy-black & Chestnut-bellied thrushes, Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia, Yellow-throated & Common chlorospinguses, Chestnut-capped Brushfinch, Subtropical (Scarlet-rumped) Cacique, Red-breasted Meadowlark, Blackburnian, Canada, Citrine, Black-crested & Russet-crowned warblers, Slate-throated Whitestart (Redstart), Black-eared & Oleaginous hemispinguses, Lacrimose & Blue-winged mountain-tanagers, White-winged, Red-hooded, White-capped, Fawn-breasted, Golden-naped, Black-capped, Beryl-spangled, Saffron-crowned, Flame-faced & Golden tanagers, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, and Golden-eyed (Deep-blue), Bluish & Masked flowerpiercers. Quite a haul to choose from!

**NIGHTS:** Cabañas San Isidro, Cosanga

## December 5, Day 6: Morning at Cabañas San Isidro; drive, ascending the east slope of the Andes to the Papallacta Pass and back to San José de Puenbo

On our final field day, depending on how we've done so far and considering how best to use our time, we will organize the day's activities. Our basic plan is to spend part or all of the morning around San Isidro and then backtrack upslope to the Papallacta Pass, where we'll check out some páramo habitat and ascend briefly to over 4,300mts/14,000ft. to search for a rather illusive high elevation species—the Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe—along with several additional species we may not have encountered on our first morning at Antisana National Park. From here we will head to San José de Puenbo, perhaps (time permitting) making a birding stop along the Sigsipamba entrance road. After settling in, we'll meet up for our final checklist session and our farewell dinner. For any members of our group departing tonight, a dayroom will be reserved for you, and airport transfer will be arranged.



*Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe*

## December 6, Day 7: Departure

Departing participants will be transferred to Mariscal Sucre International Airport for their return flights.



*Sword-billed Hummingbird*



*Antisana Volcano*

### **ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION**

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 8 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** This tour will be led by **Paul Greenfield** and **Remi Grefa**.



**Paul Greenfield** grew up near New York City and became interested in birds as a child. He received his B.F.A. from Temple University, where he was a fine arts major at the Tyler School of Art. Since 1972, he has lived in Ecuador where his fascination for birds and art has culminated in the completion of 20 years of work illustrating *The Birds of Ecuador* (Cornell University Press, 2001), which he co-authored with Robert Ridgely. The Spanish version was published in

2006 and *The Birds of Ecuador App* was launched in 2018. Paul is also co-author of *Birds of Western Ecuador, a Photographic Guide* (Princeton University Press, 2016) with Nick Athanas. He has participated in the discovery of a number a new avian species to science and has painted several frontispiece illustrations of these newly described taxa. Paul is very involved in saving Ecuador’s avian diversity and important habitats through his involvement with various foundations, as well as working with and inspiring local governments and communities to get involved in the protection of “their” biodiversity as a pioneer and promoter of birding tourism throughout Ecuador. He was the lead author of Ecuador’s *National Strategy of Bird Tourism* (2006), and its Update (2010). He has been showing visitors the birds of this fascinating country for nearly five decades and has led many Ecuador bird tours. Paul and his wife, Martha, live in Quito.



**Remigio (Remi) Grefa** was born and raised along the shores of the Napo River in the tiny indigenous Kichwa community of Añangu, in the upper Amazon Basin of Ecuador. As a child of the rainforest, he developed a close tie with the rich biodiversity of the Amazonian jungle, but became especially interested in birds as a young boy when he noticed foreign visiting birdwatchers arriving at a nearby nature lodge. It was then that he promised himself that when he grew up he

would learn the names of the local birds, in English. . . and he eventually did! Throughout his formative years, his community had embarked on a groundbreaking nature tourism project of their own—the building and co-management (and eventually outright ownership) of the fabulous Napo Wildlife Center—and by the time Remi graduated from high school he was ready to join the ranks of this incredible endeavor. He began working at the lodge from the ground up (odd jobs, dishwasher, laundry brigade, etc.); after a few months he was promoted to waiting tables, and after

six months he became one of the lodge's bartenders for a year-and-a-half. He then graduated to boatman, where he was the second canoe paddler for many, many birding groups, which gave him the perfect opportunity to receive hands-on apprenticeship in birding, as well as English. In 2009, he took a job as a waiter on the *Manatee Amazon Explorer*, a houseboat style vessel that cruises the country's Napo and Aguarico rivers. He was eventually promoted again as an official birding and naturalist guide at Napo Wildlife Center by 2017 and continues to fill that role exceptionally to this day. Remi and his wife, Lola, along with their two daughters, Kayana and Wita, live in the parish of Dayuma, not far from the frontier town of Puerto Francisco de Orellana (more commonly known as "Coca").

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

**TOUR FEE:** \$3,915 per person in double occupancy or \$4,395 for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to the farewell dinner on Day 10, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, internal air and ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leader. It does **not** include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city; however, flights within the tour (if any) are included. 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.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for this tour is \$1,000 per person. At 180 days VENT will collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (August 2, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

**EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS:** Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very

easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If rates change drastically, it may be necessary to impose a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges have been passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**FUEL SURCHARGES:** 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 institute a fuel surcharge.

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

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

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

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

## **CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:**

### **CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:**

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)

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

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

### **CANCELLATION BY VENT:**

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

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “*Force Majeure*” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

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

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer**

**Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

**To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit.** VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

### **About Ripcord**

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

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

[ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird](http://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird); or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and

Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

\*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, 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.

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19):**

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

### **About MedjetAssist**

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

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

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: [Medjet.com/VentBird](http://Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

## **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:** The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

## **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:**

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

**VISAs:** Visas are not required for U.S. citizens traveling to this destination. If you hold a passport from another country, please check with your consulate or embassy for the most accurate guidance.

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

**CLOTHING:** **Cabañas San Isidro Short Tour** covers a constantly varying transect that descends in altitude down the east Andean slope from the high tundra-like páramo zone just below snowline (cold) through the temperate- and subtropical- zones (somewhat cold to cool), and briefly to the Amazonian foothills (pleasant). Dress is casual or informal throughout and we suggest dark or dull-colored field pants and shirts, especially for forest birding during this trip.

Generally, think layering as we descend the Andes. Warm (or even a lightweight) long-sleeved button shirt over a short-sleeve or long-sleeve undershirt will be the norm for most areas visited, along with a sweater or jacket for layering to provide extra warmth. If you are easily chilled, you may wish to use thermal underwear at higher elevations (i.e., Papallacta and Antisana) on our first and last field days. Good footwear is always essential, and for this, again, we strongly suggest waterproof hiking boots (see FOOTWEAR Section below).

To reiterate: In the Andes, especially at higher elevations, the temperatures can be in the low- to mid-40s on occasion, and you should be prepared to layer for warmth, with thermal underwear and/or a warm long-sleeved shirt, plus a warm jacket or sweater. You can shed layers as the day warms up (or add them as it cools down). Consider bringing gloves and a warm hat if you know that you chill easily, along with thermal underwear or a flannel nightgown for warmth while sleeping. There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in at least some mist or light rain on the east-slope, so a sturdy umbrella or a rain jacket is essential. NOTE: Cabañas San Isidro has an outdoor heated swimming pool, so you may wish to pack a bathing suit!

**FOOTWEAR:** For footwear, we recommend a good trail-walking shoe or a lightweight hiking boot when in the field, and a second, lighter pair to change into during downtime around our lodges.

Athletic shoes are acceptable but will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled from muddy conditions. Sandals or other open-toed shoes are appropriate around hotels and towns. Mud boots will not be necessary, but at the very least footgear for the field should be rated “water-resistant,” as this is a damp climate and even the dew on the roadside grass will get your feet wet!

### **EQUIPMENT:**

One of the most important aspects of having an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with proper equipment. The following items will come in handy during your trip: ☑

- **Daypack** – Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all land excursions
- **Binoculars in good repair** – you may wish to pack a second pair (see BINOCULARS & SPOTTING SCOPE section below)
- **Polarized sunglasses** with good UV protection
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions**
- **An ample supply of all personal medication** – it is a good idea to bring copies of all prescriptions
- **Insect repellent** – see INSECT REPELLENT section below
- **Notebooks and pens**
- **Travel alarm clock**
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Collapsible walking stick** – A highly recommended item for those who have trouble walking
- **Tissue packs**
- **Lens cloth**
- **Flashlight or headlamp**
- **Water bottle**
- **Cameras, lenses, memory cards, and extra batteries**

### **BINOCULARS & SPOTTING SCOPES:**

**Binoculars** – We strongly recommend good binoculars of at least 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 magnification. We recommend that you do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering capacity. Trying to find a bird in your binocular 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 their scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

### **CONDITIONS:**

**CLIMATE:** In the Andes and its eastern slope, temperatures are generally pleasant during the day; cool in the early morning, (low 60s to 70s). However, at higher elevations (especially in the upper temperate and Paramo zones), the temperatures can be as low as the 40s on occasion (briefly on the first and last days of the tour, especially) and you should be prepared to layer for warmth, with thermal underwear and/or a warm long-sleeved shirt, plus a warm jacket or sweater. You can shed layers as the day warms up (or add them as it cools down). Consider bringing gloves and a warm hat if you know that you chill easily, along with thermal underwear or a flannel nightgown for warmth while sleeping, although room heaters are available at Cabañas San Isidro. There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in at least some mist or light rain on the east-slope, so a good umbrella or rain jacket is essential. Cloud cover, even fog and perhaps some drizzle or light rain, can be the norm in the Andes, and preferred for our birding purposes; birds in this region do not like sunny days!

### **ACCOMODATIONS:**

**Cabañas San Isidro** offers a variety of cabins in two areas near its separate dining hall, which includes an indoor sitting area and a terrace, which becomes a trip highlight at dawn (and even, if we're lucky, in the evening). Wifi is available at the dining area and in the cabins and is usually fairly reliable. Rooms vary in size and design, but all have a modern bathroom with flush toilets and hot water. The lodge also has a heated outdoor swimming pool that is available on demand.

The cloud forest and mountain forests (and other varied habitats) that cover the eastern Andean slope make up a fascinating meld of ecosystems that change in composition almost imperceptibly, except perhaps when comparing the bird communities, as one ascends or descends in altitude. Each location we visit will uncover new subsets of familiar and unfamiliar avian families along with subtle differences (to the untrained eye) in the local vegetation as we progress. At several sites we

will enjoy incredible nectar feeders with new (and dizzying) varieties of hummingbird species. Much of our Andean birding will be done along forested roadsides, as access into such dense vegetation is few and far between throughout much of this mountainous terrain, though we will explore a few forest trails, where available, to experience the magic! As in the lowlands, bird activity is at its height in the early morning, although it is not uncommon, under the often cloudy (even foggy) conditions that tend to prevail in the Andes, for mixed-species foraging flocks to continue to move about throughout the day. Cabañas San Isidro offers a moth-light set-up that regularly attracts a wide array of bird species, affording exceptional views... these are usually active early in the morning between 6:00–7:30 a.m.

**CURRENCY:** The official currency of Ecuador is the US Dollar. Your Cabañas San Isidro Short Tour includes all necessary expenses. You may want to bring enough cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as bar bills, laundry, souvenirs and gifts, extra gratuities, meals on your own, and other personal items. It is strongly advised that your money be in U.S. Dollars and in smaller denominations of cash, as many places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. Major credit cards (MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Diner’s Club) are widely accepted in and around Quito and at San José de Puenbo and Cabañas San Isidro (although cash is preferred). Note that traveler's checks are no longer accepted in Ecuador. ATM service is available in the Quito-Puenbo area and (in a pinch) at local banks and in a few towns throughout (i.e., Baeza). If your home currency differs from the US Dollar you can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting “XE-The World’s Favorite Currency Site” at: <http://www.xe.com/>

**ELECTRICITY:** 110 volts is the standard (the same as in the U.S.), as are all electrical outlets throughout Ecuador. If you have equipment that uses 220-240V, you will need an adapter to plug in your appliances as well as an all-purpose transformer if your appliances are not suitable for lower voltage or if they use a different style plug. Most computers provide plugs that accept both 110-120V and 220-240V simultaneously, though you may need a plug adapter that fits the US outlet system.

**INTERNET ACCESS:** Free and generally reliable Internet and Wi-fi access is available as follows: Quito (San José de Puenbo) and Cabanas San Isidro and Termas de Papallacta.

**LANGUAGE:** Spanish is the primary language spoken in Ecuador. English is spoken at Cabañas San Isidro and by some employees at San José de Puenbo.

**TIME:** Ecuador is on Ecuador Time (ECT) and is 1 hour behind Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** Laundry facilities are available at Cabañas San Isidro but may not be able to offer one-day service.

**HEALTH:**

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

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

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19.

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

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

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

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

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

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

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

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded

Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

**SUGGESTED READING:** A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles. We also recommend Andrew Isles books for the Asia-Pacific region at <http://www.andrewisles.com> for difficult to find and out of print books for Australia.

This list includes some basic field guides and reference volumes of use to the visitor. A great deal has been written about all aspects of Australia's natural history. You will find a variety of selections in any library. Browse around a little and you will discover many resources not listed here.

***Field guides:***

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

This two-volume set is the "Bible" for anyone interested in Ecuador's birds. The **Field Guide**, with 96 color plates, include illustrations of basically all the species found in the country. The informative text, designed to help species identification, includes distribution maps for all 1,600 species of Ecuador's birds. The **Status, Distribution and Taxonomy** treats each of Ecuador's species with detailed information not included in the Field Guide.

***Additional Reading:***

Hilty, Steven. ***Birds of Tropical America***. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd, 1994. Subtitle: "A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity." Highly recommended as the most readable and informative book on many different aspects of bird ecology (and birding!) in the Neotropics.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America: Volume I, the Oscine Passerines*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1989. Excellent reference volumes, with text entries for all species and fantastic illustrations of many. This volume and the next together include all of the passerines.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America: Volume II, the Suboscine Passerines*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1989.

### ***Mammals:***

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997. Second edition.

### ***Apps:***

Ridgely, Robert S. and Greenfield, Paul J. *Birds of Ecuador–Field Guide*. Birds in the Hand LLC. This App is the updated version of *The Birds of Ecuador*, including nearly 1,700 species now recorded in this tiny South American country. It can be downloaded through the App Store or Google Play. For more information, click the following link:

<http://www.birdseyebirding.com/app-pages/birds-of-ecuador-field-guide/>

Or connect directly to the App Store:

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/birds-of-ecuador-field-guide/id1194665890>

for Google Play:

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.birdseyebirding.birdseye.ecuador&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.birdseyebirding.birdseye.ecuador&hl=en_US)

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

sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

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

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

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

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on June 4, 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.

EGCSI:20261130

5/14/26 PG, DE

Publish Date: 6/4/2026