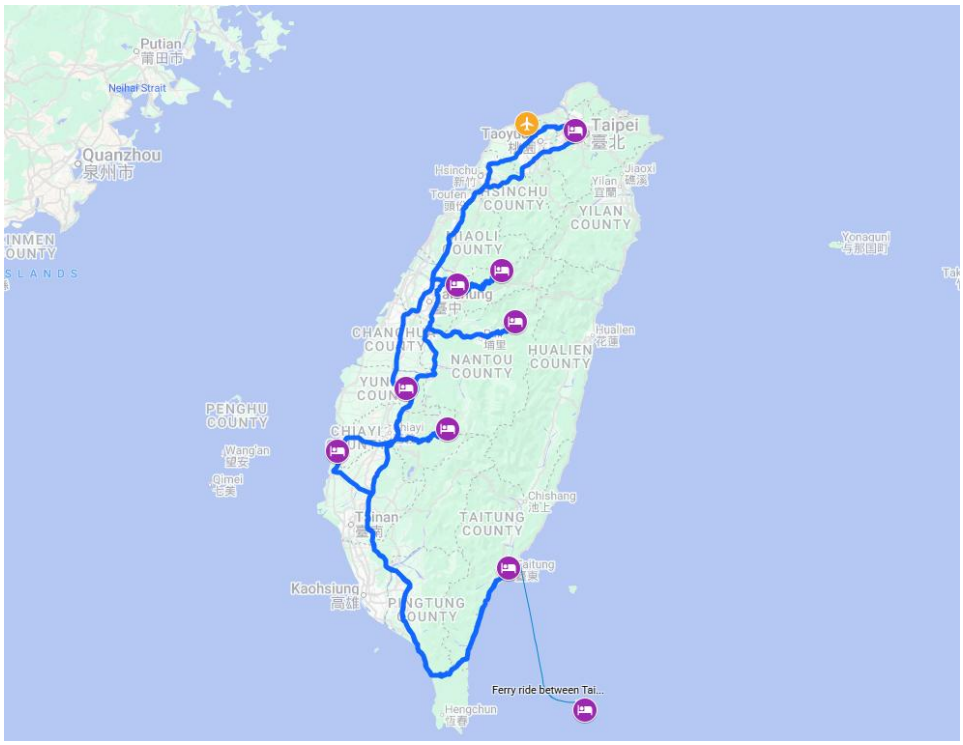



# TAIWAN

## The Beautiful Isle

*April 10 - April 24, 2027*

Taiwan lies on the western edge of the Pacific “Rim of Fire.” As a result, continuous tectonic movements over millennia have created majestic peaks, rolling hills and plains. Formosa—‘The Beautiful Island’— lies off the south-eastern coast of mainland Asia, across the Taiwan Straits from China—a solitary island on the western edge of the Pacific Ocean. To the north lies Japan and Okinawa, to the south, the Philippines. The isolation of Taiwan and its varied and dramatic topography have led to the development of a rich and varied flora and fauna. With at least thirty-two endemic species and more than fifty endemic subspecies of bird, excitement awaits around every corner!




Our journey will take us from Taipei, the bustling, modern capital in the north, through the dramatic Central Mountain Range, down along the west coast, past numerous scattered islets and rich estuaries to the tropical rainforests of Lanyu Island. The extraordinary scenery of this unique island rivals that of anywhere in the world and this will add considerably to the wonder and enjoyment of our tour.

One of the exciting aspects of birding in Taiwan is that it is possible to see the majority of the endemic species in one visit. And the endemics are, without exception, all super birds! Names like Mikado Pheasant, Taiwan Blue-Magpie, White-eared Sibia, and Flamecrest spark the imagination, and the added attraction of non-endemic spectacular species such as Fairy Pitta, Golden Parrotbill, Malayan Night-Heron and Black-faced Spoonbill make Taiwan a very difficult birding destination to resist!

Taiwan is a very safe, contemporary country with excellent infrastructure, very friendly people, and great food, but most importantly, the flora and fauna of this enigmatic island is simply captivating. There is the added bonus of a relatively short flight from the USA. Why not join us on this very comfortable and exciting tour to this truly amazing part of the world!

## April 10-11, Days 1-2: Arrive in Taipei

Flights from the United States bound for Taipei (airport code TPE) depart on April 10 and arrive the following day. Upon arrival and after clearing customs, you will be met outside the baggage claim area by a representative of our ground agent and transferred to the hotel where a room is reserved in your name. On April 11, we will meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 p.m. for a brief orientation followed by dinner.

Taipei, Taiwan's capital city, is a bustling, crowded and fascinating place full of friendly people, excellent food and interesting historic sights. One of the main attractions is the world-renowned National Palace Museum, which houses an extraordinary collection of art treasures that originated in 10$^{th}$-Century mainland China under the patronage of the emperors. During the communist revolution, the collection was taken to Taiwan; if it had remained in China, it would almost certainly have been destroyed. Those arriving early with some spare time should try to visit this museum along with other attractions such as the Long Shan Temple.

**NIGHT:** In transit (April 10)

**NIGHT:** Hotel Riverview, Taipei (April 11)



*Mikado Pheasant is only found at high altitudes on Taiwan © Max Breckenridge*

## April 12, Day 3: Taipei to Dasyueshan

Before moving on from Taipei, we will make an early morning visit to the Taipei Botanical Garden to beat the crowds. Our first birds may include Light-vented Bulbul, Asian Glossy Starling, Swinhoe's White-eyes, the strange Malayan Night-Heron, and the noisy Taiwan Barbet. All are regularly encountered here.

Afterwards, we will depart Taipei by road and make our way south. We will visit the coast first in search of the vulnerable Chinese Egret and should get our first taste of some East-Asian migratory shorebirds in stunning breeding plumage. The forest and parkland surrounding the Shimen Reservoir are a good place to see the beautiful Taiwan Blue-Magpie and hopefully a dazzling Taiwan Whistling-Thrush. From here it is a two-hour drive to Dongshi and Dasyueshan (also referred to as Daxueshan or Anmashan), the most important birding sites in Taiwan. The mountains here are covered in dense forests ranging from 600 to 3,000 meters in elevation, with low-altitude broadleaf trees gradually

giving way to coniferous forests near the peaks. If the weather cooperates, glorious scenery will be a feature of our time at Dasyueshan.

After settling into our comfortable hotel in the small town of Dongshi, if time, we may bird some low to mid-elevation forests looking for Collared Finchbill, Plumbeous Redstart, Brown Dipper, Black-necklaced Scimitar-Babbler, Taiwan Scimitar-Babbler, and Taiwan Liocichla.

**NIGHT:** Chang-Ti Hotel, Dongshi

## April 13 Day 4: Dasyueshan

We will spend two full days in the Dasyueshan area and should see a broad selection of Taiwanese endemics. Most of the birding at Dasyueshan is done along a two-lane road which snakes up the mountain. We will be driving and stopping often, walking short distances along the paved road with easy access to the vehicle and facilities. Most birds are relatively unafraid in Taiwan, and Dasyueshan is no exception.

Our first morning will likely be spent birding the lower to mid-elevation forest up to the entrance gate. Key targets like Mikado and Swinhoe's Pheasants are often unafraid as they have become used to passing vehicles and the odd telephoto lens! Hopefully we encounter both species — less likely the skulking Taiwan Partridge — along the road; otherwise, we can try several stakeouts.

Birding often comes in waves here, with mixed feeding flocks typically dominated by the adorable Taiwan Yuhina, White-eared Sibias and Taiwan Liocichlas. However, with enough time, we should encounter Rusty and Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush — both fantastic representatives of this Old World family — as well as plentiful White-tailed Robins (much easier to see in Taiwan than elsewhere in Asia), Taiwan Whistling-Thrush, the striking Taiwan Yellow Tit, rare Ashy Wood-Pigeon, White-bellied Green-Pigeon, Gray-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Gray-chinned Minivet, Rufous-faced Warbler, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Taiwan Vivid Niltava, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Asian House Martin, Rufous-capped Babbler, excitable Black-throated, Coal and Green-backed Tits, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Bronzed Drongo, Large-billed Crow and White-rumped Munia.

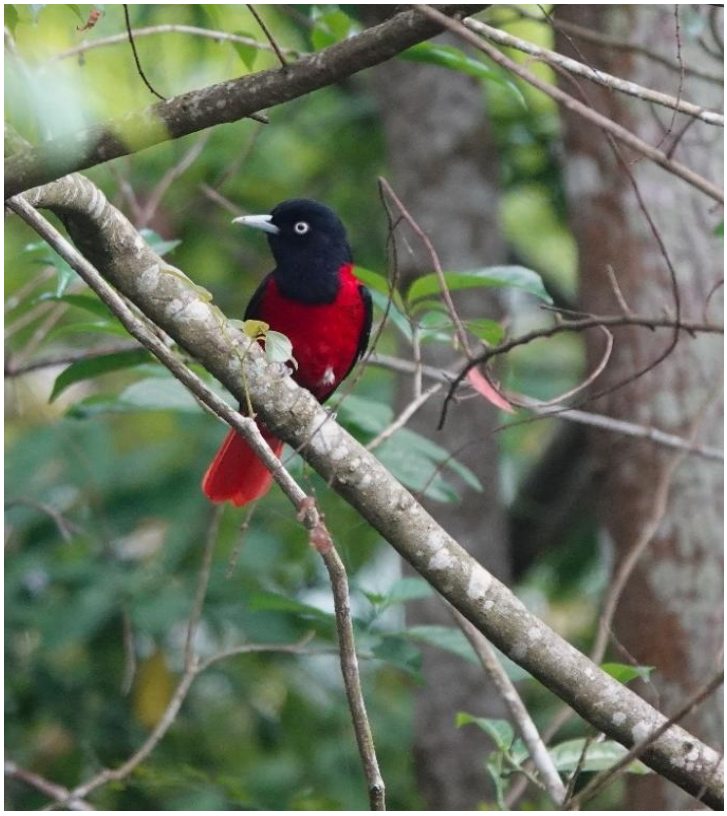
**NIGHT:** Hui Lai Snow Peak Forest Resort, Dasyueshan

# April 14, Day 5: Dasyueshan

Today will be an early start to reach the summit area of Dasyueshan. If the weather is kind, we will be able to enjoy wonderful views over Taiwan's central mountain range from one if it's highest points. Conifer and bamboo forest dominate the upper sections of Dasyueshan and will reveal several species we have yet to encounter.

Targets typical of higher altitudes include the stunning endemic Flamecrest, at home in the pines; Taiwan Shortwing; the wonderful Collared and Taiwan Bush-Robins; the noisy Taiwan Bush Warbler; Taiwan Cupwing (a bird so small and mouse-like it needs to be seen to be believed); Taiwan and Morrison's Fulvettas; and Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler. Rarer but nonetheless targetable species include the beautiful Taiwan Thrush (recently split from Island Thrush); Scaly Thrush (a bird with confusing taxonomy); Taiwan Barwing; and the quiet Brown Bullfinch.

**NIGHT:** Hui Lai Snow Peak Forest Resort, Dasyueshan



*The beautiful "Crimson" endemic race of Maroon Oriole © Max Breckenridge*

## April 15, Day 6: Dasyueshan to Puli

This morning, we will head down the mountain, birding along the way. Occasionally, the cute, yet shy Collared Owlet can be observed at certain points on the Dasyueshan road. At the bottom of the hill, we may see a species of laughingthrush known as Hwamei. In this part of Taiwan, two species hybridize (Taiwan and Chinese), so we will try to search for the local Taiwan species later in the trip where hybridization does not occur.

From Dasyuehsan, we will drive through several valleys, before stopping in the small town of Puli. Here, at one of the buddhist temples, is a good location to see the striking 'Red' Maroon Oriole, a subspecies endemic to Taiwan, as well as another shot at Black-necklaced Scimitar-Babbler. Fruiting trees here can occasionally yield Eyebrowed or Brown-headed Thrush, stocking up before they migrate farther north. If necessary, we can also make a quick detour to an area where Chestnut-bellied Tit is often seen.

After reaching our hotel, we can spend the afternoon in the tea plantations nearby where we may find the often heard, but difficult to see, Taiwan Bamboo-Partridge, Striped Prinia, and Vinous-throated Parrotbill (a Chinese near-endemic).

**NIGHT:** Qinjing Farm, Nantou County

## April 16, Day 7: Hehuanshan to Hengchun

An early morning departure will allow us to look for some high-altitude specialties around the Hehuanshan Pass, the highest road in Taiwan. In among the high montane coniferous forest and alpine meadows, we will search for the restricted Alpine Accentor. Birds such as White-whiskered Laughingthrush, Taiwan Rosefinch, Eurasian Wren, and Taiwan Bullfinch are also encountered at this high altitude.

We then descend to the lowlands once again, retracing our steps to Puli, before beginning the drive south to Hengchun along the western edge of Taiwan's central mountain range. We will arrive at our modern hotel in the late afternoon in preparation for the short crossing to Lanyu Island tomorrow.

*Please note: Previous tours visited the Taroko Gorge area on this day; however, the gorge and surrounding roads sustained extensive damage during the April 2024 earthquake. Although limited sections have reopened, major repairs remain underway, and access along Provincial Highway 8 continues to be restricted by scheduled traffic controls and occasional closures. These limitations make a visit to Taroko Gorge impractical for this itinerary.*

**NIGHT:** Riverside Hotel, Hengchen



*Traditional fishing boats line parts of the shore on the tranquil Lanyu Island © Max Breckenridge*

## April 17, Day 8: Hengchun to Lanyu Island

Today we will cross from Hengchun to Lanyu Island by ferry. Lanyu Island has a tropical climate, and its geography and ecology are considered more closely related to the Philippines than Taiwan. There are many species of plants and animals not found on Taiwan, and some are endemic to the island. The Yami aboriginal people still live on Lanyu Island and rely on farming and resources provided by the ocean for their living. Flying fish are the main target for the local fishermen, and we will likely see some ourselves gliding above the water during the crossing. The distinctive traditional fishing boats make a striking first impression on visitors to Lanyu. The crossing is typically pleasant, and there is a chance at a few seabirds including Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Streaked Shearwater, Bulwer's Petrel, and Red-tailed Tropicbird.

Upon our arrival, we will set out to search for such key birds as Ryukyu Scops-Owl, Whistling Green-Pigeon, Philippine Cuckoo-Dove, and the beautiful Black Paradise-Flycatcher. There are plenty of other birds to look for including Brown Booby, White-breasted Waterhen, Asian Emerald Dove, Brown-eared Bulbul, Blue Rock-Thrush, and Lowland White-eye (an endemic subspecies).

**NIGHT:** Alaen Hostel, Lanyu

## April 18, Day 9: Lanyu to Hengchun

Before our ferry departure today, we can visit some of the remarkable underground houses, built to withstand typhoons, and still inhabited by the local people of Lanyu. There will also be time for better looks at some of the island's specialties, with a good chance of bumping into passage migrants on their way to Japan or further north.

Back on the mainland, we will have a relaxed afternoon, with the option to visit some local spots in search of Oriental Pratincole, Lesser Coucal, Brown and Long-tailed shrikes, Oriental Skylark, and Black-faced Bunting.

**NIGHT:** Riverside Hotel, Hengchen

## April 19, Day 10: Hengchun to Chiayi

Today we will head north towards Taiwan's eastern coast. Around Chiayi we will visit two wetland areas of international importance, Aogu and Budai, in search of migrating waders among others. Today will also be our best chance to find the endangered, Black-faced Spoonbill and a slim possibility of picking up a critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper amongst the large flocks of East Asian waders. On the expansive mudflats, we may also find hundreds of Kentish Plovers, Dunlin, Siberian Sand-Plovers, Red-necked Stints, Common Greenshanks, Black-bellied Plovers, Pacific Golden Plovers, and Purple Herons. In the fishponds by the roadside, we will stop to check out the incredible numbers of Eurasian Black-winged Stilts and hundreds of plovers and peeps. We might pick out Black-tailed Godwit, Long-toed Stint, Spotted Redshanks, and even the scarce Ruff. As we search through the shorebirds, Whiskered Terns and Black-headed Gulls will be actively flying around us.

Finally, at Aogu in Chiayi County, we will be astonished at the huge flocks of waders and water birds in the ponds. Among the thousands of Dunlin and Kentish plovers, we might find Little Grebe, Long-billed Dowitcher, Ruddy Turnstone, Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Great Cormorants, more Black-faced Spoonbills, Osprey, and Eastern Marsh-Harrier. Daurian Redstart can often be found in the nearby fields.

**NIGHT:** Maison de Chine Hotel, Chiayi City



*The wonderful Pheasant-tailed Jacana is highly localized in Taiwan © Max Breckenridge*

## April 20, Day 11: Chiayi to Alishan

This morning, we can visit a few more coastal areas where there is a good chance of encountering passage migrants and residents such as Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Common Snipe and possibly Greater Painted-Snipe.

We will aim to reach the historic Alishan Hotel on the upper slopes of Alishan for lunch. This hotel is the only 4 star-rated, premium accommodation, set within Yushan National Park itself. A Luxury lodge with convenient access to the best birding areas. We can spend the afternoon birding the local area. There is also the option of spotlighting this evening, with chances of Northern Boobook, Mountain Scops-Owl, Himalayan Owl and perhaps the stunning Taiwan Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel.

**NIGHT:** Alishan Hotel, Alishan

# April 21, Day 12: Alishan



*The striking Taiwan Blue-Magpie © Max*

This morning, we will head uphill to Tataka, the summit area of Alishan, and reacquaint ourselves with some of Taiwan's higher altitude birds. This eastern section of Alishan is home to East Asia's highest peak, Yushan, at 13,113 feet. The Mikado Pheasant is often easier here than at Dasyueshan. Walking along the Tataka Trail can be very exciting with possibilities including endemics such as Taiwan Barwing, Collared Bush-Robin, Taiwan Bush Warbler and Taiwan Fulvetta.

Other standout goodies that can be seen here include Golden Parrotbill, Taiwan Rosefinch, Taiwan Shortwing, and Taiwan Bush-Robin, Southern Nutcracker (the Taiwan race showing very little spotting), and Eurasian Wren. With luck, we may spot the elusive Taiwan Serow, an endemic goat-like creature that inhabits the cliff sides of these dramatic mountain ranges. More common is the rambunctious Formosan Rock Macaque. While black bears still inhabit the area, they are now very scarce.

**NIGHT:** Alishan Hotel, Alishan

# Apr 22 Day 13: Alishan to Douliou

This morning, we will visit the lower slopes of Alishan again to locate any remaining targets. It is a relatively short drive from Alishan to our final destination, Douliou. After settling in at our hotel in Douliou, we will head out to the nearby bamboo foothills and meet our local 'pitta handler.' Early May marks the return of the Fairy Pitta, a bird which has suffered dramatic declines in the last few decades, largely a result of its wintering grounds being essentially unknown. Despite this, they are eager to start calling in preparation for the breeding season upon their return to Taiwan. We will spend the afternoon exploring the small back roads and tracks here in search of the stunning and

elusive Fairy Pitta. The Douliou area is also a good bet for Taiwan Bamboo Partridge, Black-necklaced Scimitar-Babbler, Maroon Oriole, Bronzed Drongo, Chinese Goshawk, and Oriental Cuckoo.

**NIGHT:** Grand Earl Hotel, Douliou



*The stunning Fairy Pitta will be a big target during our final days in Taiwan © Max Breckenridge*

## April 23, Day 14: Douliou to Taipei

This morning, we will likely continue birding around Douliou with our local guide looking for Fairy Pitta. Depending on which targets we have yet to see, we will then head north and visit some more coastal sites en route to Taipei focusing on finding the uncommon Chinese Egret or any other remaining targets.

We will have our farewell dinner tonight, reflecting on the superb birding, incredibly spectacular scenery, and natural beauty hidden in the tucked away isle that is Taiwan.

**NIGHT*:*** Hotel Riverview, Taipei

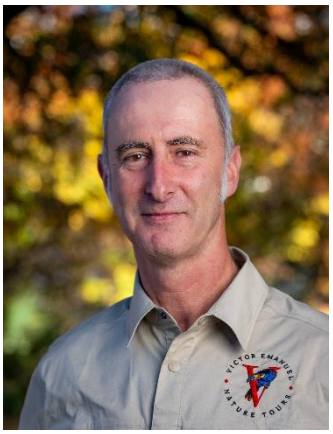
## April 24, Day 15: Depart Taipei

Participants may schedule their flights home at any time today. Transfers from the hotel will be available. Check out time is noon.

## ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour is limited to 8 tour participants.

**TOUR LEADER(s):** This tour is led by Scott Baker.



**Scott Baker's** interest in wildlife began early on growing up in the leafy, outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne which, although a highly urbanized environment, retained significant tracts of remnant natural woodland. It was here at the age of 11 that he got his first pair of binoculars and began what was to become a lifetime quest to identify all the birds in an ever-expanding neighbourhood. By the age of 15 he was running weekly bird walks and talks and became a founding member of the very successful Yarran Dheran Junior Field Naturalists Club. In 1988 he was named the Nunawading Young Citizen of the Year in recognition of his contribution to natural history and conservation. Pursuing mutual interests in life science and fine art, Scott went on to hold various roles in business, education, and environmental consultancy. This has facilitated opportunities to explore the wild places and wildlife of Australia and beyond. In 30 plus years, he has travelled extensively throughout the continent with a major focus on birds. He loves the rare and sometimes challenging, cryptic varieties but also shorebirds and seabirds, having spent many days at sea. To date he has recorded (and photographed) almost all of the regular and resident land birds and pelagic species likely in the country. Scott has a passion for wildlife, not just birds, and conducts studies and regular surveys for mammals, reptiles, and frogs. His fieldwork will often involve additional nocturnal spotlighting sessions, requiring late nights and early mornings to maximize the "tetrapod" options, when possible. Scott is a well-regarded member of the Australian birding community, a moderator on several birdwatching forums and rare bird committees, and, since 2017, has run birdwatching and nature tours within Australia and parts of southeast Asia. He currently resides in Victoria but is frequently interstate or abroad.

### TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

**TOUR FEE: $8,950** per person based on double occupancy or **$9,950** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 15,

accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare to 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. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

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

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (December 11, 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**

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

service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

**About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan**

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

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: **Ripcord Travel Insurance**; or click the Ripcord logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The "pay as you go" approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to "pay as you go," you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

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

**About Medjet's MedjetAssist Plan**

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

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

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

## GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

**AIR TRAVEL:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: $50 domestic; $75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.

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

**BAGGAGE:** Please limit baggage to one piece of luggage and one carry-on. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

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

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

**PASSPORTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Taiwan is required. You must carry your passport with you at all times while in Taiwan.

**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 July 24, 2026. 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:**

- Casual & Conservative: a mix of items for warm & cooler weather. No short skirts, short shorts, or halter-top type clothing. Layers are ideal
- Smart Causal: One smarter type of outfit is optional for Taipei
- Rainproof Jacket & Pants
- Warm Sweater
- Down Jacket or Vest
- Warm Head Covering
- Gloves

- Scarf
- No Bright Colors Please

**FOOTWEAR:**

- Sturdy Hiking Boots: These are essential. No sneakers.

**EQUIPMENT:** Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable. Below is a list of items that will ensure you are well-prepared:

- Small Daypack: Waterproof best.
- Water Bottle
- Flashlight or Headlamp
- Sunglasses
- HandiWipes or Tissues
- Sunscreen & Lip Balm

**Binoculars:** We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. Please do not bring mini binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

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

## DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS

**CLIMATE & WEATHER:** At the time of our visit (April), and because of the wide range of altitudes (0 to 10,000 feet) that our tour covers, we will encounter a wide range of temperatures, including cold and damp, and almost certainly some rain. Nighttime temperatures in the mountains in Taiwan may drop below freezing and even the days will be cool above 6,000 feet. By contrast, the lowlands are warm and humid, with pleasant nights.

**CONDITIONS:** In Taiwan we will be birding mostly at elevations up to 6,000 feet. On one or two occasions we will drive 10,000 feet and walk at this elevation for short distances. There will be several walks along forest trails and some short, but fairly steep walks. Where possible, most ascents will be

by vehicle, and we will then work a given area by walking down-hill. While all the hotels/guesthouses we stay at in Taiwan are of a good-high standard, we will be spending one night in basic accommodation on Lanyu Island. This is due to a lack of accommodation or accommodation places allowing for less than two-night stays. The private rooms here have air conditioning, flushing toilets, hot showers and ample space.

**FOOD & WATER:** Taiwan offers a wide variety of excellent cuisine, and food served in hotels, restaurants, and reputable street-food stalls is generally safe. Travelers should use normal precautions, such as choosing freshly prepared foods and ensuring that meat and seafood are thoroughly cooked. Tap water is treated but is not generally recommended for drinking unless it has been boiled or filtered. Bottled water is widely available, and hotels typically provide safe drinking water. Ice served in established hotels, restaurants, and cafés is generally considered safe.

**CURRENCY & SPENDING:** In Taiwan the currency is the New Taiwan Dollar, which is convertible outside Taiwan. Credit cards are widely accepted in Taiwan.

**ELECTRICITY:** In Taiwan the supply is 110V, 60 cycles, as in the U.S. Type A and Type B outlets.

**INTERNET ACCESS:** Complimentary Wi-Fi is available at most hotels included in the tour, generally in guest rooms and public areas. Connection speeds and reliability may vary, particularly in more remote locations. Wi-Fi availability at smaller properties may also be limited or subject to change.

**LANGUAGE:** The official language is Putonghua or Mandarin Chinese. Our local guides speak English.

**TIME:** 12 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

## HEALTH & SAFETY

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

If you are taking 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.

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

**INSECT REPELLENTS:** There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

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

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

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin): is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to

complete and must be done outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.

- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

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

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

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

## SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION

A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. 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** for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

### FIELD GUIDES:

#### *Birds*

Brazil, M. *Birds of East Asia*. Christopher Helm, 2009. An excellent, if now dated, guide to the birds of the broader region, including Taiwan.

Hsiao, Mu-Chi., Li, Cheng-Lin,. and Wu, Jian-Long. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Taiwan*. Wild Bird Society of Taipei, 2018. The recommended guide dealing solely with all the birds of Taiwan.

**CLO Apps**

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

***Merlin Bird ID.*** **Cornell Lab of Ornithology.** Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions about his or her bird sighting, including date and location, and color, size, and behavior of a bird. Merlin then processes the viewer's responses to present a shortlist of possible identifications, from which the user can choose the likely bird. Species profiles include a brief physical description, photographs, and sound samples. The Photo ID feature allows anyone with a camera to snap a photo and obtain a list of suggestions. Merlin's Sound ID feature allows identification of birds through audible recognition. To use Merlin, download the app and the appropriate regional "pack." Highly recommended.

**TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary

that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

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

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

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on July 24, 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.

TAI:20270410

P:05/21/2025 – MB

REV: 07/24/26 SE

7/27/26: DE

Publish Date: 8/3/26