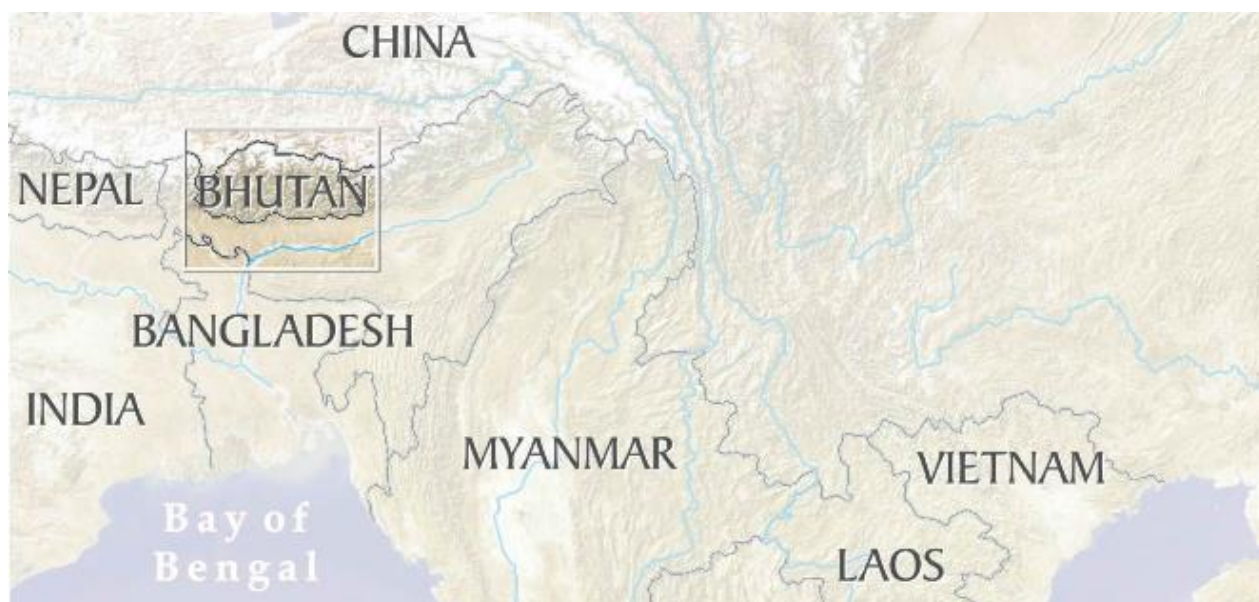




BHUTAN

March 26 – April 12, 2027

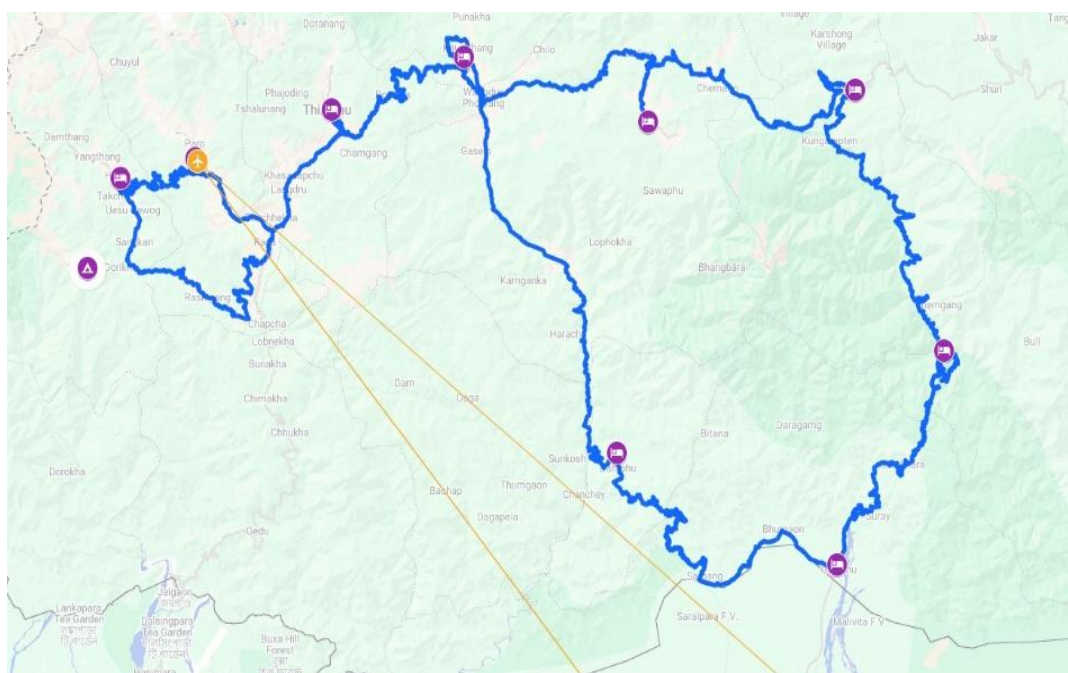
Bhutan is truly paradise on earth, and without a doubt one of the world's finest travel experiences. Untouched, primeval forests extend as far as the eye can see, and the birding is fantastic beyond doubt. The Bhutanese people have one of the most fascinating and least disturbed cultures in the world, a rich Buddhist culture that respects all forms of life. Some of the very special species that we hope to encounter on this tour include the unique Ibisbill, breathtaking male Satyr Tragopan, gorgeous Himalayan Monal and Blood Pheasant, endangered Rufous-necked Hornbill, the beautiful Ward's Trogon, and the exquisite Beautiful Nuthatch. There is an abundance of other interesting and little-known Himalayan species.



Bhutan is THE place to see Himalayan avifauna.

Our tour is scheduled to coincide with the onset of spring. Many species will be in song, and many plants will be flowering, including spectacular rhododendrons. The Himalayas are the world's highest mountains, pristine and majestic. Skies are pierced by rugged, snow-encrusted crags, their slopes blanketed in forests. Bhutan is the pinnacle of that diversity, and we will sample its biodiversity from a high pass at 13,000 feet down through evergreen, broad-leaf, deciduous and subtropical forests to the sal forest of the lowlands. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours has operated more than 30 full-length Bhutan birding tours, making us the most experienced bird-tour company to explore this country. Our tour has been redesigned over the years because of new discoveries and to accommodate the changing face of this fascinating kingdom.

One thing you can be assured of is exemplary hospitality. Our ground agents do a magnificent job of making things as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. We are treated to very comfortable walk-in tents and cots for just two nights of camping (much reduced from previous years). Tasty, cooked breakfasts and lunches prepared by our ground agents in the field add considerably to the relaxation and overall enjoyment of the tour. Some of our dining locations in the shadow of towering, snow-covered mountains just have to be seen to be believed. Most of our birding will be along little-traveled, paved roads that bisect untouched forest. When appropriate and the opportunity exists, we will walk forest trails; however, this will not be a strenuous tour. Although a sense of adventure will be a decided advantage, anyone in reasonable health will be able to cope with this very special spring tour.



[Click here for an interactive Google Map for this tour.](#)

March 26, Day 1: International Flight to Bangkok

Most flights from the United States connect with flights bound for Bangkok that typically arrive late in the early hours of the morning. If time permits, we recommend arriving a day early to allow for potential flight delays and to be well rested. We will depart for Bhutan early on Day 3. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements.

NIGHT: In transit (overnight flight)

Ventbird.com | Bhutan

March 27, Day 2: Arrival in Bangkok

Upon arrival, after clearing immigration and customs, make your way to the Hyatt Regency Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport. Look for signs directing you toward the **Airport Rail Link / train station**. **Do not take the train**. Instead, look for the signs for **Hyatt Regency / hotel walkway**. Follow the **air-conditioned underground passageway** connecting the terminal to the hotel walkway. The walk is roughly **5–10 minutes** (about 300 meters).

NIGHT: Hyatt Regency Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok

March 28, Day 3: Fly Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan

Today we will take a Druk Air flight to Paro, Bhutan (currently scheduled as an early morning flight, but this could change). With a bit of luck and clear conditions, we should enjoy good views of the Himalayas, an incredibly rugged landscape encompassing many of the highest mountains in the world, including Everest, Kanchenjunga, Makalu and Jomolhari (sacred to the Bhutanese). After clearing immigration and customs, we will be met by our Bhutanese hosts and from the airport work our way to the hotel, just a short drive away.

We will spend part of our first day in Bhutan exploring the lovely but relatively dry Paro Valley where we can see such typical Himalayan riverine species as Brown Dipper, White Wagtail, White-capped Redstart, Blue Whistling-Thrush and the ubiquitous Plumbeous Redstart, in addition to widespread species such as Oriental Turtle-Dove and Russet Sparrow.

With luck we may spot our first Ibisbill along the clear rushing river. This unique Himalayan shorebird, placed in a family of its own, is often so subtle and well-camouflaged as to be taken for a glacial stone. There is also a chance of Black-tailed Crake or the occasional Little Bunting.



Blood Pheasant from Chele La © Benny Baeten

NIGHT: Khangkhu Resort, Paro

March 29, Day 4: Chele La; Drive to Ha

From our hotel we will wind upwards through blue pine and hemlock forests to a pass at over 13,000 feet. If we are lucky and the weather is clear, we may be treated to splendid views of both sacred Jomolhari and adjacent Jiju Drake, not to mention a 270-degree view of the Paro and Haa valleys and their surrounding hills. But this is not our main objective. Chele La (La means “Pass”) provides to us with our best opportunity of the tour to ascend to the tree line and sub-alpine meadows and dwarf rhododendron scrub, and thus a good chance for several birds we are unlikely to find elsewhere. Without doubt our primary target will be the Himalayan Monal, a pheasant of unparalleled beauty. Coveys of Blood Pheasants are often approachable. Other species that we may encounter today include Kalij Pheasant, Snow Pigeon, Black-faced Laughingthrush, White-throated and Blue-fronted Redstarts, White-collared Blackbird, Himalayan Bluetail, White-browed Fulvetta, Rufous-breasted and Alpine accentors, Rosy Pipit, White-winged Grosbeak, and the exquisite Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch, to mention a few.

After breakfast near the pass, we will cross over into the Haa Valley and bird our way through tall fir and pine forests into a little-explored and tantalizing new region for birding in Bhutan. Rufous-vented, Coal, and Gray-crested tits are all possible in this area, as well as Hodgson’s Treecreeper and the tiny Goldcrest. Tonight, we will stay in a cozy and authentic Bhutanese guesthouse where we can rest up before an exciting expedition to Tergola and beyond.

NIGHT: Risum Resort, Haa

March 30, Day 5: Ha to Tergola (12,124ft) & Gakiling (2,650ft)

The western Bhutanese provinces of Haa and Samtse have been infrequently visited by birders until recently. Efforts to encourage more eco-tourism in the Haa Valley (and Bhutan generally) have involved local birders surveying this region and uncovering an amazing abundance and diversity of some of Bhutan’s classic avifauna, as well as several rarer and unexpected species. Recent upgrades to local roads have also improved access to some areas of truly untouched and beautiful Himalayan forests. We will spend two full days exploring these forests alone, enjoying an excellent range of elevations and enjoying some very comfortable camping right amongst the action.

We will begin by ascending out of the Haa Valley to an elevation just above 12,000 feet at Tergola Pass on the Gakiling Range. Along the way we will look for some upper elevation birds that favor the bamboo-rhododendron forests here like Southern Nutcracker, Buff-barred Warbler, Green Shrike-Babbler, Stripe-throated and Rufous-vented yuhinas, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, and a good chance of such jewels as Great Parrotbill, Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler, Spotted Laughingthrush and Fire-tailed Sunbird. Below the pass, we will start descending into more deciduous forest, dotted by beautiful flowering magnolias, and surely ring with the calls of Large Hawk-Cuckoo and Himalayan Cuckoo. We will continue down the road towards the Samtse Valley and finish the day by camp at a lower elevation where the overnight temperatures will be more pleasant. There is the opportunity for some spotlighting along this quiet road in the evening.

NIGHT: Camping at Gakiling, Samtse

March 31, Day 6: Birding around Gakiling

This paved but infrequently traveled road leads through some of the most beautiful broad-leaf forests in the entire Himalayas. We have ample time to explore them, from the cool mid-elevations down to the warmer subtropical. Stretching away seemingly endlessly to the horizon, these magnificent forests have many tall trees sporting impressive girths on huge buttresses. Epiphytic orchids abound on



A typical campsite in Bhutan © Max Breckenridge

the heavy branches, while the understory is often relatively clear. The mid-story is typically strung with enormous woody vines and lianas, and thick bamboo stands line the road in places. The diversity of forest habitats makes for a great number of birds possible along this transect.

The following is a selection of just some of the birds recorded in this area: Rufous-throated Partridge (heard often, rarely seen); Black Eagle; Speckled Wood-Pigeon; Rufous-necked Hornbill; Ward's Trogon; Collared Owlet; Golden-throated and Blue-throated barbets; Bay Woodpecker; Gray-chinned Minivet;

Black-headed and White-browed Shrike-babblers; Common Green-Magpie; Sultan and Yellow-cheeked tits; Sikkim Treecreeper; Striated Bulbul; Pygmy Cupwing; all three tesias; a great variety of warblers including Gray-hooded, White-spectacled, Gray-cheeked, Chestnut-crowned and Black-faced; White-naped Yuhina; Rufous-capped and Golden babblers; Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler; Yellow-throated Fulvetta; the exquisite Himalayan Cutia; Striated, Scaly, Gray-sided and Blue-winged laughingthrushes; Red-billed Leiothrix; Rusty-fronted Barwing; Blue-winged Minla; Pale and Pygmy blue-flycatchers; Large Niltava; Lesser Shortwing; White-tailed Robin; Sapphire Flycatcher; Fire-breasted Flowerpecker; Black-throated Sunbird; and Scarlet Finch (the males have to be seen to be believed!).

The extensive bamboo thickets at various elevations harbor some rarely seen specialties and with a bit of luck we might find Black-throated or White-breasted parrotbills, Slender-billed and Streak-breasted scimitar-babblers, the range-restricted Broad-billed Warbler, and even the elusive, Black-crowned Scimitar-Babbler.

NIGHT: Camping at Gakiling, Samtse

April 1, Day 7: Drive to Thimphu

Breaking camp this morning, we will depart early for the drive back to civilization for two nights in a modern hotel. Along the way we can bird the pass at Tergola again for chances at any late-staying accentors, thrushes, or even a Solitary Snipe. From here we will have a fair drive to the capital Thimphu, through quant agricultural country south of Paro. Located at 7,700 feet, the small city of Thimphu is one of the few capitals in the world that lacks traffic lights! Instead, some very theatrical policemen direct traffic. There will be the opportunity for shopping either this evening or the following afternoon.

NIGHT: The Seva Hotel, Thimphu

April 2, Day 8: Birding the Cheri Valley

We will have the entire morning to explore the magnificent forests of the Jigme Dorji National Park in the Cheri Valley today. We should find many different species, perhaps including the desirable Satyr Tragopan, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Great Barbet, the intriguing Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, Black and Mountain bulbuls, Chestnut-headed and Slaty-bellied tesias, Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler (with a

remarkable song), Spotted Elachura, Nepal Fulvetta, Chestnut-crowned and White-throated laughingthrush, Dark-sided Flycatcher, the glowing Small Niltava and the stunning Scarlet Finch. We may have a chance to watch a pair of elegant Spotted or Slaty backed forktails as they forage in a Himalayan torrent. Typical in the tall trees are species like Rufous-bellied and Darjeeling woodpeckers, Greater Yellownape, Long-tailed Minivet, Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike, Eurasian Jay, Gray Treepie, Verditer Flycatcher, and Whiskered Yuhina. Rarer species possible include the strange Long-billed Thrush and lovely Maroon-backed Accentor. The beauty of the dramatic landscape coupled with the colors of the surrounding forests is truly quite enchanting.

The afternoon will be spent at leisure, with several options including a visit to the Royal Takin Sanctuary, shopping in downtown Thimphu for souvenirs, or more birding!

NIGHT: The Seva Hotel, Thimphu

April 3, Day 9: Drive to Punakha

This morning, we will cross the Dochula pass at 10,200 feet with its 108 memorial chortens, breakfasting in the adjacent Royal Botanical Park. If the rhododendrons are flowering, this is a great chance for the nomadic Fire-tailed Myzornis. By lunchtime we will have descended into the dry Punakha valley, afterwards following the Po Chu (Chu means “river”). We will explore along the beautiful river in search of such species as the Ibisbill, River Lapwing, Crested Kingfisher, and Wallcreeper. In addition, migrant waterfowl sometimes rest up on the riverine islands including Ruddy Shelduck, Common Merganser, occasional Bar-headed Geese, and a mix of Eurasian duck species – we have seen up to ten different species along the river here. This valley is an important migration conduit and often harbors interesting migrants. Our hotel also offers some good birding in the cool of the morning with regular sightings of Slender-billed Oriole, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, and at dusk, Gray Nightjar.

If the head abbot is not in residence at the spectacular Punakha Dzong (“fortress”), we hope to tour the colorful inner sanctum of this working monastery. It is decorated with spectacular artwork and home to sacred Buddhist relics, many centuries old. This immense building is one of the great sights of Bhutan and one of the cultural highlights of the entire tour. Photographic opportunities abound.

NIGHT: Hotel Sonamgang, Punakha

April 4, Day 10: Drive to Darachu



Beautiful Nuthatch from Zhemgang
© Ansar Khan

After breakfast by the river in Punakha this morning, we will follow the course of the Puna Tsang Chu south towards Damphu – keeping an eye out where we can for the now highly elusive, White-bellied Heron. As we approach Damphu, we will come to the White-bellied Heron Conservation Centre which we may have time to visit. This is indeed a very good stretch of river to look for this, one of the world's most endangered birds with less than 70 individuals remaining.

Just beyond Damphu is the low pass of Darachu around 6,400 feet. We will focus our attention on the area just beyond the pass this afternoon and the next morning, looking for some special, but at times challenging birds,

including (the truly) Beautiful Nuthatch, Long-billed and Rufous-throated wren-babblers, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, White-tailed Robin, Blue-winged and Gray-sided laughingthrushes, and the gorgeous Red-headed Trogon.

NIGHT: Damphu Resort, Damphu

April 5, Day 11: Damphu - Darachu – Gelephu

We have the entire day to bird our way down to the border town of Gelephu. For much of the route the road is paved and there is very little traffic, but what is most appealing are the magnificent forests that accompany us most of the way from 6,500 feet virtually down to the border at 600 feet, where we abruptly emerge from the foothills onto the rolling plains more typical of Assam, India.

The birdlife here will be noticeably different here in the warm lowlands and we should encounter several new, typically Indian, species. A visit to the local sewage works is certainly worthwhile, being a great hot spot for passing migrants. We should expect to see birds more typical of the Indian lowlands

including Lesser Whistling-Duck, Indian Peafowl, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Indian Cuckoo, Red-naped Ibis, Oriental Pied-Hornbill, Coppersmith and Lineated barbets, Alexandrine and Red-breasted parakeets, Black-hooded Oriole, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, Jungle Babbler, Indian Pied Starling, and Golden-fronted Leafbird.

NIGHT: Hotel Kuku, Gelephu

April 6, Day 12: Drive to Tingtibi

This morning, we will bird the lower parts of the road that leads north from Gelephu to the low pass of Tamala, around 6,800 feet, before descending to the small town of Tingtibi. Here there may be many surprises, like Wreathed Hornbill, Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, the scarce Collared Treepie, Long-tailed and (if we're very lucky) Gray-lored broadbills, Hair-crested and Lesser Racket-tailed drongos, Pale-billed and White-breasted parrotbills, the lovely Long-tailed Sibia, and Crimson Sunbird.

NIGHT: Berti Eco Camp, Tingtibi

April 7, Day 13: Tingtibi

This morning, we will check a regular feeding haunt for the world's rarest, second largest and perhaps least-known heron, the White-bellied Heron. Just knowing that this very endangered bird is a possibility here is exciting, though we will be very lucky to find one as just a few pairs are currently known to survive in the area. There are also good areas of bamboo forest close to town, we will look here for Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon, White-hooded and Gray-throated babblers, White-browed Scimitar-Babbler, Pale-billed and White-breasted parrotbills, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, Plain Flowerpecker, the lovely Blue-throated Flycatcher, and Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch.

NIGHT: Berti Eco Camp, Tingtibi

April 8, Day 14: The Zhemgang Road; Drive to Trongsa

Today we will bird along one of the most beautiful and peaceful roads in the world. Here we will work the warm broad-leaf forests at elevations from under 2,000 feet to 7,000 feet, enabling us to see a

wonderful variety of birds. One of the highlights of this part of the tour is the impressive number of Golden Langurs. Some of the birds that we hope to find in this region include Crested Serpent-Eagle; Asian Emerald Dove; Pin-tailed Green Pigeon; up to seven species of cuckoo; Red-headed Trogon; the sensational Great Hornbill; White-browed and Speckled piculets; Bay, Gray-capped and Fulvous-breasted woodpeckers; Lesser Yellownapes; Long-tailed Broadbill; Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike; Scarlet Minivet; White-bellied Erpornis; Bronzed and Lesser racket-tailed drongos; Sultan Tit; Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch; White-throated Bulbul; Yellow-vented, Rufous-faced and Yellow-bellied warblers; Black-chinned Yuhina; Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler; the comical White-crested Laughingthrush and both the Greater and Lesser Necklaced laughingthrushes; Gray-throated Babbler; Streaked Spiderhunter; and with a bit of luck, the rare Beautiful Nuthatch.

We should encounter several special birds today, perhaps including the strange and rarely observed Yellow-rumped Honeyguide. This bird only occurs in the vicinity of cliffs harboring the hives belonging to the rock bee. A huge colony of Nepal House-Martins nests on the same cliff, the nests jammed together in a mass, the birds rapidly coming and going. Among them we should be able to pick out a few of the Blyth's Swifts that nest here too. At stream crossings we may pick up a Little



Fire-tailed Myzornis © Max Breckenridge

Forktail, an attractive stream specialist of the Himalayas. Trongsa, our destination for the night, lies on the slopes of the deep Mangde Chu valley, and the town and its imposing dzong will be spotted shortly before we arrive at our comfortable hotel.

NIGHT: Norbu Lingka Resort, Trongsa

April 9, Day 15: Trongsa and the Phobjika Valley

We climb through moist oak and broad-leaf forests before a sprinkling of tall conifers comes in at higher elevations. These exquisite mixed forests are likely to be ablaze with flowering rhododendrons and

magnolias. Just below the pass of Pelela we will find ourselves in a wonderland of gnarled moss-covered trees with occasionally open meadows where we are likely to spot our first yaks, perhaps grazing amidst blankets of colorful primulas. We'll make sample stops all along the way to search for the birds of the various zones and will undoubtedly be entranced by the scenes of the magnificent snow-capped Himalayan peaks soaring in the background.

A few of the more unusual birds that we may encounter today include Kalij Pheasant; Black Eagle; Crimson-breasted and Darjeeling woodpeckers; Black-eared and Green shrike-babblers; White-throated Laughingthrush; Fire-capped, Black-throated and Yellow-browed tits; and Brown Bullfinch. At this season these forests are filled with the calls of the arriving cuckoos, and we should hear and perhaps spot Large and Whistling hawk-cuckoos and Himalayan and Common cuckoos.



Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler © Max Breckenridge

After lunch we will ascend to the high Pele La pass (11,400 feet), where we will do some birding among rhododendron thickets, yak pastures and lichen-draped pines. In the late afternoon a slow cruise down the nearly deserted old road provides a chance to spot one of these incredibly beautiful pheasants, as well as other birds of the higher zone and mammals like the Himalayan Goral (a goat-antelope) and Sambar (a large deer related to the North American elk).

NIGHT: Yue Loki Hotel, Phobjika Valley

April 10, Day 16: Pelela; Drive to Paro

We will take a morning drive to spend more time in prime habitat for the Satyr Tragopan and Himalayan Monal. While they are easy to hear, it takes luck and good eyes to spot them when they emerge from the thickets. These upper-elevation mixed forests, lit by rhododendron trees and grazed at their

periphery by herds of yak, are home to much more than pheasants. Small birds can be surprisingly numerous, many of them roaming in mixed-flocks dominated by Rufous-vented and Coal tits. Accompanying the tits are likely to be a variety of laughingthrushes, leaf-warblers, treecreepers, yuhinas and fulvetas. Though irregular in their occurrence, some spectacular “northern finches” may also be found here. Species we will look for include Red-headed Bullfinch; colorful White-winged or Collared grosbeaks; rosefinches like Blanford’s, Dark-breasted and Dark-rumped; and even the demure Crimson-browed Finch. Other birds of this environment include Himalayan Griffon, Southern Nutcracker (typical of all the high passes), Great Parrotbill, Scaly-breasted Cupwing, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, White-collared Blackbird and the elusive Alpine Thrush.

From Pelela it is roughly a four-hour drive back to Paro where we will have dinner together and prepare for the journey home.

NIGHT: Khangkhu Resort, Paro

April 11 & 12, Day 17 & 18: Fly to Bangkok. Return flight home

This morning, we can relax at the hotel or do some last-minute shopping should time allow. We will say farewell to our wonderful hosts at Paro Airport before our flight to Bangkok. Upon arrival at our hotel in Bangkok, we will all check in as normal and have a final dinner together. There should be time for some sleep before most of us depart for flights home later in the evening or early the next morning.

DAYROOM: Hyatt Regency Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok

ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 8 tour participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space is available

TOUR LEADERS: Max Breckenridge with the assistance of a local guide.



Max Breckenridge was born in the UK, but has lived virtually his entire life in Sydney, Australia. At age 12, his passion for birds was fostered when his parents took him and his brother out of school for 10 weeks to travel across Australia. After completing high school in Sydney, Max drove solo from Darwin to Broome, birding all the way, and spent the next month volunteering at the world-renowned Broome Bird Observatory. Max completed a Bachelor of Biodiversity & Conservation at Macquarie University in 2018. Max has birded across every state and almost every corner of the

Australian landmass. He has an excellent eye, and especially ear, for Australian birds. Some of his birding exploits in Australia include two separate trips to the remote rainforests of Iron Range National Park on Queensland's Cape York (including a fly-in-fly-out trip during the middle of the wet season where he spent two weeks under a tarp in order to see some of the key migrants from Papua New Guinea). Max is at home birding in the Old World and has spent the last decade covering as much of it as possible. He is incredibly passionate about wildlife conservation. In addition to guiding, he has spent much of his spare time working for BirdLife Australia, monitoring and researching the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater - including working on several captive-releases of zoo-bred individuals. Max receives immense pleasure from birding and showing birds to others and takes pride in writing detailed trip reports. He is currently living on Lake Macquarie, north of Sydney, with his partner Fernanda.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: The fee for the tour is **\$12,125** per person in double occupancy or **\$12,525** for a person requiring single accommodation from Bangkok. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 3 to dinner on Day 17, lodging during the tour, internal flights, ground transportation during the tour and guide services provided by the tour leader. The fee does not include airfare from your home to Bangkok and return, special gratuities, telephone calls, laundry or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may have to be charged.

Note: The Bhutan Government fee is per person. Included in the tour fee.

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 (November 26, 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: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement 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 are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

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

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

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

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

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

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

CANCELLATION BY VENT:

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

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to

participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement.

A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

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

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may not be available. **For this reason, travel insurance/travel protection which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program.

Alternatively, comparable service can be obtained through **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist** plan. If you choose not to purchase insurance/travel protection through Ripcord or Medjet, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Please refer to the TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION section for additional information.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive **Ripcord** plan, which

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

About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan

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

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

<https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

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

payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

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

About Medjet's MedjetAssist Plan

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

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

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

GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIR INFORMATION: 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: Participants are encouraged to take whatever they think they will reasonably need for this tour, including spotting scope and tripod (if you choose), camera and video equipment.

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 date, with at least three or more blank pages, is required for United States citizens to enter India and Bhutan.

VISAs: Travelers from over 90 eligible countries do not need a visa for tourist stays up to 60 days,

For your Bhutan visa, you must send via email to the VENT office a full-color scan of the pages of your passport containing the passport details and signature. A headshot (passport size photo) and a copy of your travel insurance.

U.S. citizen tourists entering Thailand for fewer than 60 days do not require a visa but [pre-arrival online registration](#) is required.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: Casual is the order of the day. Hard wearing, easy to wash-and-dry field clothes are ideal.

Laundry is available at most of the hotels – including those where we have two-night stays.

Participants are advised to bring as many clothes with them as they need to stay warm in freezing temperatures. Participants should bring layers rather than one or two large items. Sturdy, rainproof

jackets and pants are strongly recommended, in addition to a warm sweater and warm jacket or vest (down or synthetic). Other items that are recommended include a warm head-covering such as a fleece or knit hat, or balaclava, in addition to a regular birding hat, gloves and scarf or neck gaiter. Many of our participants found silk, wool or synthetic thermal long underwear very handy for the cool nights and early mornings. You may not need all this cold-weather gear, but it is far better to be prepared in case you should. Sunglasses are very useful (occasionally essential) at higher elevations. Thick socks that absorb perspiration and cushion one's feet from hard surfaces are important. It is also useful if the socks are long enough so that the bottom of your pants can be tucked inside your socks.

FOOTWEAR: Sturdy hiking boots are essential; sneakers or sports type shoes are not appropriate, as the ground will be wet at times. Wellington (rubber) boots are not really necessary if your hiking boots are rated "water-resistant," and add a lot of extra weight to your baggage, but you may choose to bring them. Flip-flops or shower shoes are recommended.

EQUIPMENT: You should have a quality pair of binoculars in good condition (please check before departure). Your tour leader will be carrying a spotting scope, but you may bring your own spotting scope if you wish (but balance this against the weight and space in your luggage).

You should bring all of the camera equipment, batteries, and digital storage media that you will need, as these would be almost impossible to obtain once we depart Bangkok. **Nearly everyone brings too few batteries and too little digital storage media, and this causes some distress. PLEASE bring loads (we cannot emphasize this enough).** UV and polarizing filters are recommended, especially at higher elevations where glare can be a problem. Plastic bags are very useful to protect equipment from rain and dust. **A really good flashlight or headlamp is essential**, so please ensure that yours is in good working order and that you have spare bulbs and batteries. A spare flashlight or headlamp may come in handy. Couples should bring one flashlight or headlamp each.

A small daypack (either waterproof or with a strong plastic bag inside) is essential for carrying excess clothing, camera equipment, toiletries, snacks, and water. However, in many of the areas where we will be birding, we will have regular access to our vehicle, which will be attended by a driver and his assistant. **Water** will always be available on the bus, and a limited selection of mid-morning snacks will be provided (trail mix, chips and cookies). You may wish to bring your own supply of snacks such as protein bars.

Other useful items include:

- **Flashlights or headlamps** (as previously indicated): A small flashlight or headlamp is essential to find your way around your tent and camp at night, and for use at checklist sessions.
- **Handywipes:** These are very handy, as are paper tissues. All participants should carry sufficient amounts for their personal needs for the entire tour. **There are no shower facilities in the camps, but small wash basins of warm water will be provided every morning or upon request.**
- **Spare glasses or contact lenses.**
- **Sunscreen:** Strongly recommended, especially for higher elevations where the UV is much greater; **lip balm** is also essential.
- **Umbrella:** The collapsible type is easy to carry and useful both against rain and sun.

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 (March/April), and because of the wide range of altitudes (150 to 13,000 feet) that this tour covers, we will encounter a wide range of temperatures, including cold and damp, possibly some snow, and almost certainly some rain. There may also be occasional hot conditions with very bright sunshine, which typically in the mountains (because of the increased radiation) cause sunburn more readily than one often realizes.

CONDITIONS: We will be ascending to elevations above 10,000 and as high as 13,000 feet. Most ascents will be by vehicle, and we will then work a given area by walking downhill; however, there will be rare times when we may opt to walk uphill in search of something that is calling. We will almost always be along a road on easy grades and at a very slow pace, so this should not be a matter of concern for

anyone in moderate to reasonable health. Those with heart or respiratory concerns should contact their doctor prior to departure.

FOOD & WATER: It is advisable to bring some protein or granola-type bars, dried fruit and nuts or other snacks, as snacks are not always available. Most of our meals will be traditional Bhutanese foods and you may find yourself wanting “a little extra variety” at times.

CURRENCY & SPENDING: It is preferred that you change your dollars to Bhutanese currency at the airport upon arrival. This is very easy to do, with a minimum of formalities. Indian rupees are also widely accepted. Credit cards are accepted by some places in Bhutan. ATMs are available in a few large towns but may not work well or provide large amounts of currency. Participants are also advised to carry sufficient funds in low denomination U.S. dollar cash, which can be very useful for minor tips or in an emergency. **Please note Bhutanese currency cannot be used or exchanged outside of Bhutan, including right on the border!**

ELECTRICITY: Both India and Bhutan use 220 volts, 50 cycles.

INTERNET ACCESS: Wi-Fi connections are available at all the hotels at which we stay and generally work. Cell phone connections are also generally reliable, sometimes even in surprising places in the countryside. Local SIM cards can be obtained at Paro Airport on arrival.

LANGUAGE: In Bhutan, Dzongkha is the official language; Central Thai (Standard Thai) is the official and national language.

TIME: 10 to 10½ hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry is available at most of the hotels – including those where we have two-night stays.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS: This very special tour will provide a thorough cross-section of most of the country’s accessible habitats at a pace that permits us to properly imbibe the landscapes, culture, birds, and other natural history. There will be time to stop and stare, take photographs, explore the capital Thimphu and visit the incomparable Punakha Dzong. Our tour will undoubtedly be intensive in the sense that every day we will be in the field, often walking at a leisurely pace or driving. Daybreak is around 5:00 a.m. in Bhutan at this time of year, and we will therefore have some very early starts (often at 5:00 or 5:30 a.m.) in order to catch the best of the early morning birding. This is often THE

time to see such spectacular pheasants as Himalayan Monal and Satyr Tragopan. Later we often have a leisurely breakfast and/or lunch in the field. These are very enjoyable affairs that give us time to relax and contemplate the morning's gifts. However, we are rarely in a position to return to a lodge for a nap in a bed (many take a nap during a drive) and we usually reach our lodge or camp during the late afternoon, taking it easier at that end of the day than at the start.

We will of course certainly concentrate on the specialties, but so few are the opportunities to see many Himalayan birds elsewhere that most species will be "specialties" for most participants, and we will enjoy them all. In general, it can be said that Himalayan Mountain birding can be amongst the toughest in the world. At some moments we will hear many species, but it will take quite some patience and time to finally get an open view of those difficult to see species. On the other hand, the birding can be overwhelming as well with flocks containing up to 30 species of birds in one singular flock! We cross some high passes and spend several nights over 7,000 feet, but we will generally sleep lower than the high points during the day, and we will plan our activities with the thin air in mind (e.g., mostly birding gentle slopes or *down* the road). There may be a few optional, short, energetic activities, but those who don't undertake these will still be in the midst of birds.

CAMPING: Bhutan is not a regular tourist destination. Consequently, the infrastructure for visitors is minimal, especially at the eastern and western ends of the country. Needless to say, the very best forests and birding sites can be a long way from the nearest guest house. Long ago when VENT first visited Bhutan (1994), it was clear then that the only realistic way to operate in this country was to camp. However, as Bhutan has modernized and our itinerary has changed, the need for camping is now far less than just a few years ago. Our land agents will set up a very comfortable camp for us at Gakiling (below 8,000 feet) for two nights. This should be a delightful site located near a beautiful river in a lovely valley. There will be **walk-in**, comfortable-for-two tents with cots, sheets, pillows, and blankets. Hot water and towels will be provided, including the option for a "bucket-and-ladle shower" in a private tented cubicle. **Many clients have commented on how much they really enjoyed the camping.**

TRANSPORTATION/MEALS: In Bhutan we will travel for the duration of the tour in a very comfortable and well-appointed Japanese coaster bus with large, airy windows that are ideal for bird watching and photography. Additionally, a second vehicle will follow us with all of our baggage, and a third vehicle

will carry our camping equipment in addition to a supply of beer, soft drinks, and bottled water. Many members of our Bhutanese team travel in this truck and set out pre-dawn to prepare a marvelous, cooked breakfast in the field, at some of the most unimaginably beautiful and birdy locations. Later in the day they repeat the process for lunch and then push on ahead to set up for the next meal. Dinners are taken at the various lodges and camps. Water will always be available in the bus.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please, absolutely no bright colors for your field gear. Although the birds and other wildlife are relatively approachable, we will be trying to see a few very elusive species. Muted colors are essential to enhance our chances. Please do not wear brightly colored clothes, hats, gloves, bags, or other paraphernalia. Furthermore, if you can avoid crackling nylon/plastic jackets and pants, this will greatly enhance everyone's enjoyment of the trip and enable the leader to hear those critical, but so easily overlooked, subtle call notes of the birds you want to see.

NOTE: Bhutan has some very fine handicrafts, including hand-woven fabrics made from sheep and yak wool.

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH: Participants are advised NOT to drink the tap water or unboiled water placed at the table unless advised by your tour leader. Bottled water will always be available. Participants should not eat uncooked foods such as meat or vegetables, or food that has cooled and/or been sitting in the open, permitting flies to settle. Unpeeled fruit is fine, provided you wash the exterior first in clean water.

No vaccinations are normally required; however, cholera and yellow fever inoculations ARE required if you arrive within five days of departing from an infected area. A number of forms of hepatitis may be present in Bhutan.

PLEASE NOTE: Medical facilities are not always close at hand for certain sections of this trip, at times being a day's drive away or more. All participants should bring a good quantity of all their medical/pharmaceutical supplies, as these would be nearly impossible to obtain anywhere on the tour.

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.

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.

BITING INSECTS: Remove if not a concern, otherwise expand on it.

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. We also recommend Andrew Isles bookstore for the Asia-Pacific region at www.andrewisles.com/AndrewIsles. Andrew can also often obtain difficult finding and out of print books.

FIELD GUIDES AND REFERENCE (BIRDS):

Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C. and T. Inskipp. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. Princeton; newly revised and has the most current taxonomic information.

Inskipp, C., T. Inskipp and R. Grimmett. *Birds of Bhutan*. A&C Black, 2004. The authors of the above work have produced this book specifically concerned with Bhutan. While the text is greatly reduced, this book is much more practical to carry in the field and most participants may prefer to obtain a copy of this book rather than the larger one listed above, unless they plan to bird in India too. (See www.amazon.com for purchase.) **The recommended book to bring on tour but this lacks the fine detail of the Rasmussen book.**

Rasmussen, P. C. & J. C. Anderton. *Birds of South Asia. The Ripley Guide. Vols. 1 and 2*. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. Washington D.C. and Barcelona, 2012. If you want something more detailed and comprehensive than the Inskipp Bhutan book, then you should also obtain the Rasmussen book.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND READING:

Ali, S. *The Fall of the Sparrow*. Bombay, 1984. OUP.

Beebe, W. *Pheasant Jungles*. Reading: World Pheasant Association, 1994.

Bole, P.V. & Y. Vaghani. *Field Guide to the Common Trees of India*. Bombay: WWF India, 1986. OUP.

Daniel, J.C. *The Book of Indian Reptile and Amphibians*. Bombay: Bombay Natural History Society, 2002.

Gurung, K.K. and Raj Singh. *Field Guide to the Mammals of the Indian Subcontinent: Where to Watch Mammals in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1996.

Insight Guides. *Indian Wildlife*. Apa Productions, 1987. A superb evocation of the subcontinent's wildlife, in addition to very useful details of its huge variety of parks and reserves.

Kazmierczak, Krys and Raj Singh. *A Birdwatchers' Guide to India*. Bedfordshire, United Kingdom: Prion Ltd., 1998. This book describes a cross-section of birding sites covering all of India's regions and main habitats and is very informative. It's a wonderful and fascinating book co-authored by Raj Singh, co-author of *Mammals of the Indian Subcontinent*, and owner of the company handling our ground arrangements in India and Bhutan. Currently, it is not available in the USA; however, it is available through Natural History Book Service, www.nhbs.com.

McNeely, Jeffrey A. and Paul Spencer Wachtel. *Soul of the Tiger: Searching for Natural Answers in Southeast Asia*. New York: Doubleday, 1988. One of the most intriguing and beautifully written books on the complex relationships between man, his myriad beliefs and nature, and the implications for conservation.

Menon, V. *A Field Guide to Indian Mammals*. DK Delhi. 2003. Undoubtedly the very finest field guide to the mammals of India.

Owen, E.T. *Bhutan: Land of the Thunder Dragon*. London, 1998. (out of print)

Polunin, O. and A. Stainton. *Flowers of the Himalaya*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984. A very helpful guide; while not quite encompassing Bhutan, it will provide a useful insight into the flora of the region.

Pommaret, F. *Bhutan: An Illustrated Guide*. 3rd edition. Hong Kong: The Guidebook Company, 1998.

Prater, S.H. *The Book of Indian Animals (Mammals)*. Bombay: Bombay Natural History, 1971. Detailed descriptions and illustrations of most, if not all, the animals inhabiting the Indian Subcontinent. an easy book to obtain in India, if it's not available near your home.

Ramsay, C.R. *Bhutan- Excursion to Enchantment: A Journey through the World's Most Beautiful Places*. Washington: National Geographic, 1988.

Santella, C. *Fifty Places to Go Birding Before You Die*. New York: Stewart, Tabori, & Chang, 2007.

Schaller, G. B. *The Deer and the Tiger*. Dehra Dun, India: Natraj Publishers, 1998.

Singh, R.L. *India – A Regional Geography*. Varanasi: National Geographic Society of India, 1989.

Whittaker, R. and Captain, A. *Snakes of India The Field Guide*. Tamil Nadu: Draco Books, 2004.

MAPS: * Himalaya - 1:1,500,000, Nelles series; N.E. India (India 5) - 1: 1,500,000, Nelles series.

** Either map recommended to bring on tour.*

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 need 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 6, 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.

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04/14/26-MB