



THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

A Caribbean Birding Adventure

April 2 – 10, 2027



Ridgeway's Hawk. Photo David Ascanio

Welcome to the Dominican Republic—an exciting Latin American country in the Caribbean featuring outstanding nature, a rich human history and, best of all, wonderful birding. Like other locations in the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic embodies the classic vacation in paradise: sandy beaches, palm trees, beautiful coastline, rugged mountains, and lush tropical forests. Add to this a splendid array of endemic or nearly endemic bird species and the picture is complete.

The Dominican Republic is surely the most geographically diverse country in the Caribbean, containing four mountain ranges, with peaks rising over 10,000 feet, as well as an inland lake, Enriquillo, that lies an astonishing 130 feet below sea level. Nearly half the plant species are endemic, and we will visit at least four of the country's five major vegetation zones. The birding, of course, is superb. Out of a remarkable 30 endemic bird species, we have a chance to see almost all of them! Among the numerous possibilities, we should encounter the Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo, Hispaniolan Amazon, Hispaniolan Parakeet, Hispaniolan Mango, Hispaniolan Emerald, Hispaniolan Pewee, Hispaniolan Woodpecker, Hispaniolan Trogon, Hispaniolan Spindalis, Hispaniolan Oriole, Antillean Piculet, plus Green-tailed Warbler and White-winged Warbler.

A special family of birds endemic to the Greater Antilles is the todies; one of nature's more fascinating creations. These sprites of the forest would seem more at home in a cartoon rather than the woods of

the Dominican Republic. We should have the great fortune of encountering two species, the broad-billed and narrow-billed.

The richness of this island is further revealed through the presence of at least 15 other bird species endemic to the Caribbean region as a whole, including West Indian Whistling-Duck, Antillean Palm-Swift, Rufous-throated Solitaire, Red-legged Thrush, Antillean Euphonia, Greater Antillean Elaenia and Greater Antillean Bullfinch.



Broad-billed Tody. Photo David Ascanio

This tour includes an opportunity to search for the Ridgway's Hawk, considered to be one of the most threatened buteo in the world. For this endeavor, we will journey to the northeast part of the island, to the buffer zone of Los Haitises National Park. Here, few known pairs of this critically endangered species hang on. Should an active nesting site be located, a local guide will take us there, giving us a good chance of finding the hawk.

The wonders of the Dominican Republic are certainly not limited to its impressive birdlife. We are certain to encounter marvelous scenery everywhere we go. Additionally, the island exudes a charm that is manifested through its friendly people and delightfully painted houses. In Santo Domingo, we plan to spend an afternoon for you to explore the city's beloved colonial zone by your own, site of the earliest Spanish colony in the New World.

Our tour is scheduled to coincide with the peak of the breeding season, maximizing our chances of seeing the greatest variety of birds. Aside from the island and regional endemics, we may encounter lingering Neotropical migrants. This dynamic island will not only give the birder a unique impression of the alluring beauty of the Caribbean and its birds but is also guaranteed to impart a true sense of adventure.

April 2, Day 1: Arrival in Santo Domingo; transfer to Hotel El Embajador

Participants should plan to arrive in Santo Domingo (airport code SDQ) any time today. Participants willing to arrive a day earlier can contact our office for a hotel reservation. The grounds of the hotel in Santo Domingo are often birdy and will produce sights of Hispaniolan Woodpeckers, Palmchats, Bananaquits and Yellow-faced Grassquits. Of special interest is the Vervain Hummingbird (only larger by 0.16 inches to the Bee Hummingbird in Cuba). One of the more exciting events of the trip is the daily spectacle of hundreds of wild Hispaniolan Parakeets descending on the large trees and royal palms of the hotel grounds as they congregate for the evening roost. These green beauties are loud and easy to locate as they swirl amongst the trees and buildings in tight, screeching flocks. We should have repeated opportunities for good views of these birds.

NIGHT: Hotel El Embajador

April 3, Day 2: National Botanic Gardens; Drive to Puerto Escondido de Duverge

Today will begin with an early morning visit to the Dr. Rafael M. Moscoso National Botanic Gardens. Created in 1976 and named for the botanist who first catalogued the flora of Hispaniola, the gardens are truly one of the special landmarks in the capital city of the Dominican Republic. The wide, paved paths wind through gardens, open lawns, forests, and past a wooded meandering stream. Native and exotic plants include ferns, palms, cacti, and flowers.

Remarkably, some endemic and near-endemic species are found in and around the gardens, nestled in this city of 4.2 million people! From the moment we come through the gate, we are assured of a rewarding morning of birding and some exciting encounters with the birds of the Dominican Republic. Antillean Palm-Swifts soar just above the tops of the stately royal palms; a pair of striking Hispaniolan Woodpeckers chatter as they work a dead limb; a handsome Black-crowned Palm-Tanager investigates a clump of tangled vines; a dazzling Antillean Mango darts about in the morning sun; a Black-

whiskered Vireo sings overhead, just out of sight. We may see the diminutive Vervain Hummingbird, the world's second smallest bird (only the Bee Hummingbird of Cuba is tinier). We should also see the Palmchat—not only a Hispaniolan endemic, but the sole representative of its family! These gregarious birds are conspicuous, and we should see them at their communal nest sites or “apartments.” Bananaquits are downright abundant and even the prehistoric-looking Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo is likely. A shaded paved path parallels the garden's waterway, and close attention may turn up Least Grebes, often with chicks, the regional threatened West Indian Whistling-Duck, or a Limpkin stalking the water's edge.

Following the visit to the botanical gardens, we will begin the drive to Barahona, located on the rocky Caribbean south coast, to climb the slopes of the Sierra de Bahoruco on our route to Duvergé. During our drive west from Santo Domingo, the subtropical forests of the Santo Domingo lowlands give way to an increasingly arid region of acacias and thorn scrub. We expect to arrive in the late afternoon.

NIGHT: Duvergé, Independencia

April 4, Day 3: Zapotén Cloud Forest

Lying in the southwest corner of the Dominican Republic is a remote and largely inaccessible mountain range known as the Sierra de Bahoruco. Quite unlike the other ranges of the country, the story of the Bahoruco is a fascinating one of evolution, endemism, and island biogeography. Twenty million



White-fronted Quail-Dove. Photo David Ascanio

years of mountain building and changing sea levels routinely connected and separated the Bahoruco from the rest of the island in a continuing cycle. The effect on the flora and fauna of the island cannot be overstated. Nearly all the endemic bird species are found on this part of the island, and we will spend two and a half days exploring the different habitats of the Bahoruco range. The changes in birdlife can be monitored as we reach elevation and thus, a different habitat.

This first full day in the area will involve a very early departure for the higher reaches of the Baboruco. The early departure is necessary for taking advantage of birding in the early morning hours. At the middle elevations, we might flush the Least Pauraque and Hispaniolan Nightjar, two rarely seen island endemics. As we reach the higher elevations (about 7,000 feet), the forest becomes much wetter, with magnificent, twenty-foot-tall tree ferns dominating the understory. The birdlife here is totally different. We will target the seldom-seen La Selle Thrush and Western Chat-Tanager, and may also spot Hispaniolan Emerald and Hispaniolan Spindalis, White-winged Warbler, Rufous-throated Solitaire (its haunting early morning song is ethereal in the dripping cloud forest), Greater Antillean Elaenia, Golden Swallow, and Antillean Siskin. The always shy White-fronted Quail-Dove is possible along the roadside in the early morning hours. One bird we will be especially alert for is the Hispaniolan Crossbill, a scarce and elusive species that can be difficult to detect. To improve our chances, we will search the native pine forests along the road.

After a whole morning in the Zapotén area, we will start heading down to drier forest habitat where, in previous years, we have found the incredibly elusive Bay-breasted Cuckoo. Other species that we have observed at mid elevations include Flat-billed Vireo, Olive-throated Parakeet (presumably introduced) and Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo.

NIGHT: Duvergé, Independencia

April 5, Day 4. Sierra de Baboruco & Lago Enriquillo

Our second day in the area will see us on the farmlands neighboring the Baboruco mountains. Here, we will look for Plain Pigeon, Antillean Euphonia, Greater Antillean Grackle, and White-fronted Quail-Dove (rare and unpredictable). For most of the day, we'll be birding the zone where thorn-scrub meets semi-evergreen, sub-humid forest. Birds are often plentiful, and we may see as many as 20 island and regional endemics this morning. Among our targets are the beautiful Hispaniolan Amazon, the solitary Hispaniolan Pewee, the comical Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo, the extravagant Bay-breasted Cuckoo (infrequently heard, rarely seen), Black-crowned Palm-Tanager, Stolid Flycatcher, Zenaida Dove, Key West Quail-Dove and Antillean Piculet. Following a picnic lunch, we will head to the alkaline

shore of nearby Lago Enriquillo. Lying to the north of the Sierra de Bahoruco is the Neiba Valley, a highly alkaline coral desert. Now 130 feet below sea level, this valley was once a strait of the Caribbean. What is left now is a massive body of water fed by about ten streams and rivers, but with no outlet! Evaporation is high and, as a result, the lake is three times as salty as the sea. Descending from the higher elevations, the view of the sprawling lake below us is one of great panoramic beauty. The deep valley is further highlighted by the view of the Neiba Mountains to the north. Photographic opportunities are plentiful here.

The purpose of our visit is to seek out another island endemic, the Hispaniolan Palm Crow. Normally a bird of the pine forests, they occur in small numbers around the shore of the lake. By driving near the lakeshore, we stand a good chance of locating them. Other birds we may come across are Plain Pigeon, Antillean Nighthawk, and Hispaniolan Oriole. We will then proceed to the hotel, arriving in late afternoon, simply to relax or watch the late afternoon sun set on the ocean.



Antillean Piculet. Photo David Ascanio

NIGHT: Hotel El Quemaito, Barahona province

April 6, Day 5: Cachote; Eastern Chat-Tanager Search followed by an afternoon in Laguna Oviedo

Today we will take another dirt road; much shorter than the one taken to Zapotén. We will head to the village of Cachote to search for the Eastern Chat-Tanager. Until about 20 years ago, the species was thought to occur only in areas that we had no real chance of accessing. Further DNA work on chat-tanagers in the eastern end of the Bahoruco Mountains has verified what some had suspected; the birds that occur here are indeed Eastern Chat-Tanagers! Getting to see this bird involves another early departure from the hotel as we need to make sure we get there at the crack of dawn. Cachote will offer also opportunities for seeing the Narrow-billed Tody and Hispaniolan Trogon. Sometimes, we

are prized with a White-fronted Quail-Dove walking at the forest edge while a Rufous-throated Solitaire can be enjoyed serenading the morning with its unique flute-like whistles that are part of its song.

After lunch in the lodge or in the vicinity of Cachote, we plan to continue our birding day with a visit to a contrasting habitat, a brackish water wetland called Laguna de Oviedo. This lake expands over 6100 acres and contains small sedimentary islands. At the edge, the presence of shallow muddy beaches becomes a paradise for waterbirds including egrets, herons, shorebirds, gulls and terns. A sampling of the species seen in previous tours included Red Knot (some molting to breeding plumage), Sandwich, least and Royal terns, White-cheeked Pintail and Black-bellied and Semipalmated plovers.

NIGHT: Hotel El Quemaito, Barahona Province

April 7, Day 6: Return to Santo Domingo; Free afternoon time to walk the Colonial Zone Tour



Palmchat. Photo David Ascanio

An early morning optional tour to the slope of the Cachote road will give us the opportunity to enjoy some forest birding which will be followed by breakfast and a return drive to Santo Domingo allowing for free time in the afternoon to walk around the Colonial Zone.

Columbus reached Hispaniola in 1492, and the island became the focal point of his searches for gold. The Spaniards also attempted to convert the indigenous Taino people to Christianity. After a failed attempt at a permanent settlement on the wild north coast, Santo Domingo was established on the more hospitable south coast in 1494 and is considered the oldest city in the Western Hemisphere. Walking through the Colonial District, you can absorb the colorful history of

the city. Many of the structures are well-preserved originals, including the oldest church in the New World, the Cathedral Basilica Menor de Santa Maria, completed in 1544. Several houses constructed in the 1520s were home to some of the important colonial figures of the time. The National Pantheon, built in 1747, served many functions, but is now a burial ground for national heroes. There is also a National Amber Museum with its impressive collection of amber as well as the national stone of the country, the aqua-blue larimar.

NIGHT: Hotel Hodelpa Caribe Colonial, Colonial Zone of Santo Domingo

April 8-9, Days 7-8: Search for Ridgway's Hawk

After a relaxed breakfast in Santo Domingo, today we will head to the southern side of the Samana Bay, the buffer zone of Los Haitises National Park where we will spend the next two nights. A couple of stops along the road might provide more views of the conspicuous Palmchat and the Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo. We may also come across groups of Antillean Palm-Swift, a pair of the active Black-crowned Palm-Tanager and the fairly common Yellow-faced Grassquit. Caño Hondo is located in the buffer zone of Los Haitises National Park; home of one of the most threatened birds of prey, Ridgway's Hawk. The park landscape probably involves some of the most rugged and impenetrable terrain in the entire Dominican Republic. Los Haitises National Park today is a **wild, protected sanctuary** of karst hills, mangroves, caves, and rich wildlife, offering visitors a glimpse into both the natural and cultural history of the Dominican Republic. The Ridgway's Hawk was on the brink of extinction when The Peregrine Fund began working with the hawk in 2002, the species was on the brink of extinction, with fewer than 300 individuals surviving, all within Los Haitises National Park. Since then, intensive conservation efforts have established additional populations through reintroduction programs in Punta Cana and Aniana Vargas. These initiatives include protecting nest sites, restoring habitat, relocating young birds to suitable areas, and working with local communities to reduce persecution and encourage the species' recovery. Although the population has increased, Ridgway's Hawk remains one of the Caribbean's rarest raptors. Fewer than 400 individuals are thought to exist across Hispaniola, with fewer than 100 occurring in the Dominican Republic, primarily in protected areas and

reintroduction sites. Happily, they are still with us. We have allotted a day for the pursuit of this enigmatic bird of prey in the buffer zone of the park.

The specific area where we will focus our search efforts will be determined by our local guide. Several nest sites have been reported in the buffer zone of the park, with some sites much easier to get to than others. Participants should be prepared for changing plans as we will do what is necessary to enjoy success in locating the hawk. Of course, nothing is guaranteed, but we feel our chances for finding the bird are good. In addition, we might explore the grounds at night in search for another endemic bird, the Ashy-faced Owl.

NIGHT: Hotel Las Colinas – Sabana de la Mar

April 10, Day 9: Early morning in Paraiso Caño Hondo. Drive to Punta Cana. Departure.



Ashy-faced Owl. Photo David Ascanio

An additional morning is kept in case we need to consider a second search for the Ridgway's Hawk. Otherwise, we might continue looking for Hispaniola endemic or near-endemic birds of the Caribbean including White-necked Crow, Hispaniola Woodpecker, Antillean Mango, and Hispaniolan Oriole. After breakfast we will start our drive to Punta Cana. Participants are free to depart Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ) no earlier than noon.

ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 9 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 LEADER(s): This tour is led by David Ascanio and another local guide.



David Ascanio is a Venezuelan birder, naturalist, and field guide author with nearly four decades of experience leading tours across the Neotropics. Over the past 39 years, he has guided throughout Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Costa Rica, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, the Guianas, the Lesser Antilles, Cuba, Chile, Panama, and beyond.

Renowned for his extraordinary ear, David has built a private collection of bird vocalizations that includes recordings of more than 70% of Venezuela's species. His fascination with sound and behavior has inspired a lifelong passion for sharing the language of birds with others—whether through guiding, teaching, or writing. He coauthored the scientific descriptions of two new species—the Río Orinoco Spinetail and the Delta Amacuro Softtail—and has published extensively on the birds of the llanos, Orinoco River islands, and the unique pan-tepui endemics. David is also senior author of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Venezuela* (2017) and the author of a children's book on bird songs.

Known for his humor, generosity, and tireless energy in the field, David brings unmatched expertise and enthusiasm to every VENT tour he leads.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: \$6,350 per person based on double occupancy or \$7,045 for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 9, 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 prior to the tour start date, 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 3, 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](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 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 Dominican Republic is required.

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

IMPORTANT: The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of July 22, 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.

All visitors to the Dominican Republic are charged a \$10 tourist card fee that is incorporated into airline charges. Once issued, the card allows for stays up to 30 days but can be extended at the General Directorate of Migration in Santo Domingo.

WHAT TO PACK

CLOTHING:

- Light Field Clothing: muted natural colors & casual attire
- Long Pants
- Long Sleeved Shirts
- Swimwear
- Hat: good for sun & rain
- Light Rain Jacket

FOOTWEAR:

- Comfortable & Sturdy Walking Shoes
- Rubber Boots: Useful for muddy trails in Los Haitses

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

- Umbrella
- Small flashlight or headlamp

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: The rainy season in the Caribbean runs from mid-spring through early fall, with the dry season running from mid-November to April. However, peculiarities of the island's topography create microclimates where rain can occur at any time. Though significant rainfall is not expected,

heavy afternoon thunderstorms are a possibility. In both islands, temperatures will be in the 80s to possibly 90 degrees. In the mountainous areas, temperatures could dip to the mid-50s. In the more arid southwest, temperatures may rise into the upper 80s and low 90s. Humidity levels will be low to moderate. Participants need to be prepared for conditions ranging from hot and dry to wet and muddy. Overall, conditions should be pleasant with cool mornings and warm afternoons. Elevations will range from sea level to 7,000 feet.

CONDITIONS: The Dominican Republic is a beautiful and fascinating destination, yet participation on a tour here is demanding. Road conditions are often moderate at best; the hotel in Barahona is satisfactory, but not great; and there are various very early starts. Still, the quality of birding is very high, and the spirit of adventure is strong.

There will be numerous leisurely bird walks. All walking will be easy on maintained paths, roads, and trails. There will be several early departures, with at least two before dawn. Every activity is optional unless it is scheduled on a travel day.

The roads in the Dominican Republic are not very wide. While mostly paved, the roads are often bumpy and marked with shallow holes. This can lead to riding conditions that are at times uncomfortable. We try to mitigate this issue by using a comfortable touring bus with driver for the duration of the trip. The roads on the north side of the Bahoruco Mountains can be downright awful if they have not been graded recently. Although the distance isn't great, the going is always slow. Travel to the cloud forest and to Cachote will be in 4x4 vehicles. Snacks and drinks will be readily available between meals each day.

Los Haitises is a legendary location for several reasons, one of which is that travel is difficult here. Seeing the Ridgway's Hawk may be as simple as walking 1.5 miles through pasture lands to the forest edge, or the experience may require considerably more effort. For this reason, participants should be prepared for a lengthy walk on a rocky trail, possibly with mud and mosquitoes as travel companions.

CURRENCY & SPENDING: The Dominican Republic uses the Dominican Peso (RD\$). Money can be exchanged upon arrival in the Dominican Republic airport (exchange booth).

ELECTRICITY: 120 volts, 60 Hz, using Type A and Type B plugs. The same as the United States.

INTERNET ACCESS: Generally good in cities and tourist areas. Most hotels offer Wi-Fi and mobile data is widely available through your mobile carrier.

LANGUAGE: Spanish is the official language. English is widely spoken.

TIME: 1 hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is available at most of our hotels.

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.

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 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: If the rainy season starts early, mosquitoes might be a problem around the coast and the middle elevations.

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

Latta, Steven, Christopher Rimmer, Kent McFarland, Dana Gardner, and Barry Kent MacKay. Field Guide to the Birds of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022. The most important field guide for this tour. This field guide should be the bible of any birder going to the D.R. The book is a collaboration of the people who know the island's avifauna best and features the most recent taxonomic changes.

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 22, 2026, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "Airline") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete [Terms and Conditions](#) on our website.

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