



TUCSON, ARIZONA: TANQUE
VERDE RANCH
&
HUACHUCA MOUNTAINS
EXTENSION

*A Special Departure for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's
Chairman's Council*

*May 16 – 20, 2027
May 20 – 23, 2027*



Red-faced Warbler, a highly sought summer specialty bird of Southeast Arizona © Brian Gibbons/Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology/ML621960262

Southeast Arizona has long been known as a must-visit destination for American birders. Sitting just north of the U.S.-Mexico border and home to “sky island” mountain ranges that are the northern terminus of the Sierra Madre Occidental, this area is famous for its incredible bird diversity.

For this special trip, arranged exclusively for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Chairman’s Council, we present a short getaway to the unique Sonoran Desert around Tucson, Arizona. We will spend three days exploring deserts, grasslands, evergreen woodland, and conifer forests seeking birds characteristic of Southeast Arizona and beyond. Hosting this trip will be Ian Owens and Stephanie Herron from the Lab. Guiding our activities will be Brian Gibbons, Brad McKinney, and Peter English from Texas-based Victor Emanuel Nature Tours.

Southeast Arizona is among the most diverse regions in North America for birds and natural history. The range of life zones present in such a relatively small area underpins tremendous avian and natural history diversity. At the lowest elevations, the lush Sonoran Desert blankets the valleys of the Tucson area. Receiving nearly fourteen inches of rain annually, the desert here supports small trees like Palo Verde, mesquites, acacias, and a variety of cacti. The giant Saguaro cactus is the keystone species of

the plant community in this desert. Growing to heights of fifty feet and living for more than a century, their flowers and fruits provide food for dozens of desert dwelling species. Cavities created by Gila Woodpeckers and Gilded Flickers persist for decades in the Saguaros, creating nesting sites for owls, warblers, flycatchers, and Purple Martins. Gambel's Quail, Greater Roadrunner, Verdin, Curve-billed Thrasher, Rufous-winged Sparrow, and Pyrrhuloxia are representative of the desert avifauna. The oak-juniper woodland at middle elevation hosts a fine variety of birds, with area specialties such as Arizona Woodpecker, Painted Redstart, and Yellow-eyed Junco among the more highly sought species.



Gambel's Quail a common resident of the Sonoran Desert © Brian Gibbons/Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology/ML 636607355

In the rolling grasslands around Sonoita, Scaled Quail, Cassin's Sparrow, and Chihuahuan Meadowlark are at home, while the highest elevations are the haunts of birds more closely associated with the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Madre Occidental of Mexico, including Hairy Woodpecker, Greater Pewee, Steller's Jay, American Robin, Olive Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, and Mountain Chickadee.

Our comfortable base for our getaway is the Tanque Verde Ranch, a guest ranch with a colorful history that traces its origins to the late 1800s. Featuring handsomely appointed rooms, high quality food, and good opportunities for birding right on the grounds, the ranch is the perfect venue for an immersive experience. The Saguaro-studded desert around the ranch hosts Gilded Flicker and Gila Woodpecker while the Palo Verde and mesquite on the dry slopes above the ranch are home to Rufous-winged and Black-throated sparrows. The most charming bird on the ranch will undoubtedly be the Vermilion Flycatcher, which prefers the irrigated lawns under the shade trees. One night we will venture out under the cottonwoods and mesquites to discover some of the nocturnal creatures that prowl the desert at night. Elf Owl, the smallest Owl in the world, would certainly be a great find. Western Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owl also inhabit the ranch along with Coyotes, Bobcats, and Gray Foxes.

Finally, while this trip promises exciting birding opportunities in a very special part of the country, it is also a social event—a time to see old friends, make new acquaintances, and learn about recent news from the Cornell Lab.



Yellow-eyed Junco © Brian Gibbons/Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology/ML636100246

Those wanting to experience more of Southeast Arizona beyond the scope of this program are encouraged to join the optional

extension to the Huachuca Mountains southeast of Tucson. Another sky-island range, the Huachucas are perhaps the premier location for observing Coppery-tailed Trogon—the region’s greatest avian prize—and other specialty birds including Montezuma Quail, Blue-throated Mountain-Gem, and Buff-breasted Flycatcher.

While Cornell is pleased to facilitate travel opportunities for its alumni and friends with tour operators that specialize in high-quality educational travel, please be aware that Cornell does not conduct, manage or operate these travel experiences, or act as an agent for travelers interested in tours. Tour operators and travelers are responsible for making their own safety decisions concerning this travel, and, as a facilitator between travelers and the tour operators with whom travelers make arrangements for completing travel, Cornell’s role and liability are strictly limited.

Specific tour operator and national health and safety protocols will apply to each trip, and travelers should review all protocols and trip terms and conditions, including terms and conditions regarding cancellations, refunds, health and safety, and insurance prior to making a reservation. Cornell is not responsible for changes to trips or travel arrangements or for losses or additional expenses resulting from travel.

May 16, Day 1: Arrival and evening welcome

Guests should arrive in Tucson (Tucson International Airport; airport code TUS) at any time today. Upon arrival, you will be met in the baggage claim area by a representative of our ground transportation

service, at which time you will be transferred to our accommodation, Tanque Verde Ranch, where a room has been reserved in your name.

After check-in, you will have the remainder of the afternoon on your own. A walk around the ranch property provides a fine introduction to the birds of the Sonoran Desert ecosystem. Gambel's Quail, White-winged Dove, Cactus Wren, and Curve-billed Thrasher all occur commonly here. We will gather as a group at 6:00 p.m. for a trip welcome and social hour and the chance to meet your fellow travelers and trip leaders, followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Tanque Verde Ranch is a beautiful, historic full-service lodge located east of Tucson at the base of the saguaro-studded foothills of the Rincon Mountains. More detailed information regarding our specific meeting place will be provided in the departure memo a couple of weeks prior to the start of the trip.

NIGHT: Tanque Verde Ranch, Tucson

May 17, Day 2: Birding Mount Lemmon up the scenic Catalina Highway

Our trip begins today with a trip to the high country of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Mount Lemmon is our destination, and our route will take us from the Sonoran Desert to montane forest in short order.

After breakfast, we will drive the sinuous Catalina Highway, climbing from 2,900 feet at the ranch to 8,000 feet near Summerhaven, a small community that has served for decades as a summer escape and winter playground for Tucsonans. Many birds typical of the Rocky Mountains are seen here. Widespread species such as Hairy Woodpecker, Steller's Jay, Common Raven, Mountain Chickadee, and White-breasted, Red-breasted, and Pygmy nuthatches call the mountain home year-round. Some regional specialty birds are also resident in the Santa Catalinas including Arizona Woodpecker, Mexican Jay, and Yellow-eyed Junco, as well as the comical and endearing Acorn Woodpecker.

Most of the summer resident birds should be well into breeding activities now, singing and defending territories. We should be able to find a Painted Redstart in the oak dominated canyons, while Bridled Titmouse, Rock Wren, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow inhabit the lower hills of scrub and oaks. If we are lucky, we may find a Black-chinned Sparrow in the rock-strewn slopes below the towering hoodoo rock formations above Bear Canyon. As we climb into the pine forest, Red-faced Warblers become a common breeder. Several overlooks along the highway allow one to survey the Tucson valley to the south and other “sky island” ranges in all directions, including the Santa Rita, Rincon, and Empire ranges. Further up, we’ll have views to the east, over the San Pedro River Valley and the Pinaleño Mountains, home to Mount Graham International Observatory at 10,000 feet. The Santa Catalinas host a population of Abert’s Squirrels, introduced as a conservation population, they are colorful and sport long ear tufts. On the highest, north-facing slopes above Summerhaven, we will discover a Canadian Zone habitat with its stands of massive Douglas Firs, White Firs, and Ponderosa Pines, along with a few Quaking Aspens. With names like Incinerator Ridge, Bear Wallow, and Windy Point we are bound to enjoy our birding time in the mountains. Olive Warbler, Greater Pewee, and Virginia’s Warbler are summer breeders here, and we will seek them along with a great variety of other Arizona birds. We will return to Tanque Verde Ranch in the afternoon. In the early evening, we will reconvene for a social hour followed by dinner.



The iconic Saguaro, a common sight in the lower Santa Catalina Mountains © Brian Gibbons

NIGHT: Tanque Verde Ranch, Tucson

May 18, Day 3: Exploring the Santa Rita Mountains in Madera Canyon

Today we will head south of Tucson into the Coronado National Forest in the Santa Rita Mountains. Madera Canyon is one of the premier birding destinations in Southeast Arizona. A variety of habitats from mesquite grassland to oak woodlands and coniferous forests host wonderful birds.

In the oak zone we will seek Bridled Titmouse and Painted Redstart. There are a couple lodges that feed birds and are always worth checking for hummingbirds, Arizona Woodpecker, and Mexican Jay. If we are especially fortunate, we might even observe Coppery-tailed Trogon, typically a low-density species, but which nests in Madera Canyon in small numbers. A picnic lunch will maximize our chances of hearing this fantastic bird. Rivoli's and Broad-billed hummingbirds are a couple of the regulars in the canyon, often visiting the lodge feeders. During our time here we hope to see Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, another regional specialty bird and one that prefers sycamores along the canyon's main streambed.

In the early to mid-afternoon, we'll head back to the ranch for a break before reconvening for a late afternoon social hour and dinner.

NIGHT: Tanque Verde Ranch, Tucson



Rivoli's Hummingbird a common hummingbird in oak-dominated canyons © Brian Gibbons/Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology/ML626861604

May 19, Day 4: Birding Sonoran grasslands of the Empire Ranch area around Sonoita

Today we will drive southeast of Tucson through the foothills of the Empire Mountains to the rolling grasslands around the town of Sonoita. At 4,000 feet elevation, the desert vegetation is replaced by grassland habitat, home to sparrows in the summer and longspurs in the winter. Chihuahuan Ravens inhabit this area, and we may see one surveying the land from atop a lonely windmill. This is ranch country and increasingly, viticulture. Empire Ranch is a historic ranch administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Originally founded in the 1860s it grew to more than 100,000 acres in the early 20th century. The second half of the 20th century saw more than three dozen Westerns filmed on the grounds of the ranch. Amid its open country and cottonwood gallery forests, we will look for migrant and resident birds alike. Migration should be winding down but the summer birds will be singing up a storm. Summer residents such as Swainson's Hawk, Western Kingbird, Cassin's Sparrow, Summer Tanager, Yellow Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat all nest in the area. After exploring the grasslands, we will visit the award-winning Los Milics Vineyard for wine-tasting, lunch, and some relaxation before we finish our birding for the day at Paton Center for Hummingbirds, managed by the Tucson Bird Alliance.



Violet-crowned Hummingbird, a gorgeous specialty bird of Southeast Arizona

The Paton property has served as an epicenter of birding in Southeast Arizona for decades. Although a great diversity of birds can always be found here, the place is known as the premier location in the United States for seeing the gorgeous Violet-crowned Hummingbird. This species is a year-round resident. Victor Emanuel, founder of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, was integral in saving this birding

mecca. A decade ago, he implored American Bird Conservancy to buy the property, which it did before transferring ownership to Tucson Audubon Society, now Tucson Bird Alliance. Hummingbird feeders and seed feeders attract a great variety of birds throughout the year. After enjoying the gardens and birds, we will make our way back to Tucson for an evening social hour and dinner.

NIGHT: Tanque Verde Ranch, Tucson

May 20, Day 5: Departure for home

Participants may depart Tucson at any time today. Private transfers to the airport will be provided. Those continuing on the extension will depart the ranch soon after breakfast.

HUACHUCA MOUNTAINS EXTENSION

May 20–23, 2027



The newly renamed Coppery-tailed Trogon lures many birders to Southeast Arizona © Christoph Moning/Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology/ML47866932

Southeast of Tucson and just north of the U.S-Mexico border, the Huachuca Mountains rise as another of Southeast Arizona's magnificent sky-island mountain ranges. From foothill grasslands to the top of 9,400-foot Miller Peak, the Huachucas hold myriad habitats that support a range of Southeast Arizona specialty birds. The main drainages

of these mountains—Carr, Miller and Ramsey canyons—are among the best places anywhere north of the border for observing an array of hummingbirds, flycatchers, tanagers, warblers, and more. Pre-eminent among the birds is Coppery-tailed Trogon, the most northerly occurring member of a tropical family of fruit-eating birds. Nowhere numerous, the Huachuacas likely hold the greatest number of pairs in the region.

On this optional extension to our time at Tanque Verde Ranch, participants will experience the Huachuca Mountains, one of the region's most famous and productive birding areas. We will have more than two days to explore the mountains in search of trogons, Lucifer Humminbird, Buff-breasted and Sulphur-bellied flycatchers, Hepatic Tanager, and Red-faced Warbler among many other birds.

May 20, Day 1: Tucson to Sierra Vista and the Huachuca Mountains

After bidding farewell to Tanque Verde Ranch, we will spend the morning birding our way to the Huachuca Mountains. We will again visit the northern edge of the Santa Rita Mountains en route, this time visiting the striking landscape of Box Canyon, which recently has become the easiest place to find Five-striped Sparrows in the United States. Costa's Hummingbird, Varied Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, and Scott's Oriole also call this bird-rich area home. Winding our way through the canyon, we will eventually pass through the town of Sonoita before traversing the gap between the Whetstone Mountains to the north and the Huachucas to the south. After reaching the town of Sierra Vista and checking into our hotel, we will enjoy an evening watch at the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory's Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary, hoping to catch one of the local Lucifer Hummingbirds that are the specialty bird of Ash Canyon. Many other birds will entertain us during our vigil, with six species of hummingbirds regularly seen here.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn, Sierra Vista



Lucifer Hummingbird © Graham Deese/Macaulay Library
at Cornell Lab of Ornithology/ML461771301

May 21, Day 2: Birding the Huachuca Mountains

Carr Canyon is an oak-studded canyon accessed by a road that ascends to 7,000 feet in just seven miles. Birding our way up this sinuous dirt thoroughfare, we may encounter mixed-species that hold Bushtit, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. The lower stretches of the road are a great place to luck into Montezuma Quail, a beautiful and enigmatic specialty bird. In the higher reaches, Red-faced and Virginia's warblers are breeders as well as three species of jays; Steller's and Mexican jays and Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay. The Reef Townsite camping area is one of the easiest places in the U.S. to find Buff-breasted Flycatcher, one of the most distinctive members of the challenging *Empidonax* flycatcher group. After lunch we will explore nearby Miller Canyon and the Betty's Guest Ranch where a hummingbird feeder ensemble attracts all the regular hummingbirds and occasionally a rare species from Mexico, such as White-eared Hummingbird. Anywhere in the Huachucas may produce Northern Goshawk, and if we are lucky there might be a pair of Spotted Owls in a canyon that requires only minimal hiking. One evening after dinner, we will make an effort to spot Common Poorwill and some of the local owls like Whiskered Screech-Owl and Elf Owl.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn, Sierra Vista

May 22, Day 3: Birding the Huachuca Mountains; return to Tucson

Ramsey Canyon is a beautiful sycamore and oak canyon preserve managed by The Nature Conservancy. Coppery-tailed Trogons have been nesting in this canyon for eons, but a single visit never guarantees an encounter. Plenty of other birds call the canyon home, and we are apt to detect Dusky-capped, Brown-crested, and Sulphur-bellied flycatchers. Painted Redstart, and Bridled Titmouse. Around the visitor center, a few hummingbird feeders attract the regulars and, in the last few years, the rare Berylline Hummingbird from Mexico. After scouring the canyon, we will head to lunch and then back to Tucson for hotel check-in and our final dinner.

NIGHT: Hampton Inn, Tucson Airport

May 23, Day 4: Departure from Tucson

Participants may depart Tucson at any time today.

Essential Tour Information

TOUR SIZE: The main tour is limited to 28 participants. The optional Huachuca Mountains Extension is limited to 10 participants.

TOUR HOSTS AND TOUR LEADERS: Hosting the main trip will be Ian Owens and Stephanie Herron from the Cornell Lab. Leading this trip will be Brian Gibbons, Brad McKinney, and Peter English from Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. Another VENT leader will be added as trip size warrants. The extension will be led by Brian and Brad and accompanied by Ian.



Dr. Ian Owens is the Louis Agassiz Fuertes Executive Director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University. A birder since his teens, he has traveled around the world in pursuit of birds and wild places, and has conducted research across Europe, Australasia, Asia, and the South West Pacific islands. Before joining the Lab, Ian held directorships at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, and the Natural History Museum in

London, and was a professor at Imperial College London and University of Queensland. He has published more than 100 academic papers on birds and a book on *Evolutionary Ecology in Birds: Life Histories, Mating Systems and Extinction Risk*. His main research interests are in large-scale patterns in biodiversity and evolution in wild populations. Ian has edited a number of international journals, sits on the board of a series of conservation organizations, and received the Zoological Medal from the Zoological Society of London for contributions to his field.



Stephanie Herron, Senior Director of Advancement at Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is a seasoned nonprofit leader with three decades of executive experience driving transformational growth in fundraising, marketing, and strategic innovation across the education, healthcare, and research sectors. As Senior Director of Advancement at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, she leads integrated teams responsible for marketing, communications, fundraising, membership, and gift planning—advancing the Lab’s mission to create a world where birds, nature, and people thrive.

Before joining the Cornell Lab, Stephanie held pivotal leadership roles at nationally recognized organizations. She served as Chief Development and Marketing Officer for Stand Up To Cancer, Chief Development Officer for Shriners Hospitals for Children International, and Senior Vice President of Strategy, Digital, and Innovation at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Across her career, she has been recognized for uniting strategic vision with operational excellence to build sustainable philanthropic models and deepen community impact.

Stephanie’s passion for birds and the natural world began in childhood on family camping trips to state and national parks—including birding-rich destinations like Corpus Christi and Galveston Island, Texas. A lifelong birder, outdoor enthusiast, and bird photographer, she brings both personal commitment and professional expertise to her work at the Lab. Her belief in the power of scientific research, education and community engagement to drive conservation impact aligns deeply with the Lab’s values and vision for a healthier planet.

She holds a Master of Public Administration from Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, a Bachelor of Arts from Northern Kentucky University, and Executive Education Certificates from the Yale School of Management and Stanford Graduate School of Business.



Brian Gibbons grew up in suburban Dallas where he began exploring the wild world in local creeks and parks. Chasing butterflies and any animal that was unfortunate enough to cross paths with the Gibbons boys occupied his childhood. A wooden bird feeder kit sparked a flame that was stoked by a gift of the *Golden Guide* and family camping trips to Texas state parks. Thirty years ago, Brian attended two VENT camps for young birders. Birds are now his primary interest, but all things wild continue to captivate him. After college, Brian undertook a variety of field biology research jobs that have taken him to the Caribbean, the Bering Sea, and the land of the midnight sun, arctic Alaska. He enjoys working with kids, hoping to spark environmental awareness through birds. For many years Brian’s field research has involved bird banding. His most amazing recoveries were a female Wilson’s Warbler that had been banded in Alaska and was captured by Brian in Colorado, and a Sooty Tern that perished after a hurricane on the Texas coast; it had plied the Gulf of Mexico and the oceans of the world for 24 years. Brian’s recreational bird-seeking has taken him to Machu Picchu in Peru, the Great Wall in China, the plains of East Africa, and the Himalayas in Nepal. Brian leads birding trips in the United States, Central America, the Caribbean, and Europe. As well as being a fanatical birder, he loves capturing birds with photography. He lives in Tucson, Arizona with his wife, Lacreia Johnson, and their son, Grayson.



Brad McKinney began birding during the winter of 1987–88, an exciting year in which many Mexican rarities were recorded in South Texas. His passion for birds has led to numerous birding trips and photography expeditions across North America, Mexico, Central America, and Hawaii. Brad loves pelagic birding and has guided Texas pelagic trips since 1995, many from his home town of South Padre Island. He has been a longtime tour leader at the Rio Grande Birding Festival and has led birding trips across Texas and Mexico. Brad has served on the Texas Bird Records Committee for six years and co-authored *A Birder’s Guide to the Rio*

Grande Valley. He received his degree in biology at the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree in marine ecology at the University of Texas at Brownsville. Brad's other interests include nature photography, surfing, and snowboarding with his son, Will. He lives at South Padre Island with his wife, Janette, and their dog, Sam.



Peter English grew up birding with Victor Emanuel and other tour leaders and was one of the inaugural camp leaders at the influential VENT youth camps. He went on to lead roughly 150 VENT tours in the US, Central America, and South America over the following 25 years. Peter earned his PhD studying mixed-species bird flocks in Amazonian Ecuador and has been both a Fulbright Scholar and a Watson Fellow. He has produced and published several bird call CDs with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Peter has been involved in rainforest conservation for most of his life, has built and managed ecotourism lodges in South America, has consulted on international ecotourism and conservation initiatives, and has lived or worked in 28 countries. Since his return to Austin, he has been a professor at the University of Texas teaching ornithology and other biology courses while simultaneously serving as the executive director of a large professional society. Peter has brought all that experience to help VENT continue to be the leader in birding and nature tours.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

MAIN TOUR FEE: \$7,055 per person based on double occupancy. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 5, 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.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: If you request single accommodations, a single supplement of \$925 will be added to your tour fee.

EXTENSION TOUR FEE: \$2,025 per person based on double occupancy. This includes all meals from lunch on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 4, 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.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: If you request single accommodations, a single supplement of \$325 will be added to your tour fee.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The deposit for this tour is \$500 per person. We accept MasterCard and Visa.

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 (January 16, 2027) prior to the tour departure date. For the extension, full payment is due on January 20, 2027.

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

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.

*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: As your trip to Arizona is a short one, please refrain from bringing excessive amounts of baggage. Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized bag and one carry-on per person. 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.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: Our time in Tucson and surrounding area could bring exposure to a variety of weather conditions ranging from hot and dry to chilly in the Santa Catalina Mountains at 8,000 feet. Please bring different clothing layers appropriate for changing conditions. Dress will be casual throughout, and we recommend clothing that is both comfortable and practical.

- **Pants and Shorts:** A couple of pairs of pants are recommended. Many people prefer lightweight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim, though not as comfortable, is certainly acceptable. Shorts may be desirable for warmer times of day and when relaxing at the ranch.
- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of lightweight, yet durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular and more reasonably priced than in the past. Please select clothing in muted colors.
- **Sweaters and Coats:** Warm weather will be the rule on this trip, but a fleece or light coat or jacket will come in handy in the mornings and when we ascend to elevation on Mount Lemmon.
- **Shirts:** Several t-shirts, (long and short-sleeved), in addition to other comfortable styles suitable for warm weather.
- **Swimsuit:** Please bring a swimsuit if you like to swim, as the ranch does have a pool and hot tub.
- **Wide-brimmed sun hat:** Essential for protection from the sun. Please bring a baseball cap at the very least.
- **Smart-Casual:** may be preferred by some for the evenings; includes casual dresses or slacks with a blouse or open-collared shirts.

FOOTWEAR: A light hiking boot or trail shoe will be appropriate for all outings. Athletic shoes are acceptable. A good walking shoe (such as an athletic shoe), may be preferred when not in the field, such as when at the ranch and during evening social hours and dinners.

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

- Daypack: For carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all excursions
- Notebooks and pens
- Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection
- Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions
- Personal toiletries
- Collapsible walking stick: A highly recommended item for those who have trouble walking
- Tissue packs

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 & TOUR CONDITIONS

CLIMATE & WEATHER: Tucson weather varies a great deal in spring, with the possibility of hot weather to very pleasant weather possible. Rain is not very likely during this period. We will be visiting areas of higher elevation, like the Santa Catalina Mountains at 8,000 feet where it can be quite cool. Temperature range should be from the low 50's to near 100.

CONDITIONS: Neither the main tour or extension are physically demanding. All walks will be over even to slightly hilly terrain on established roads, paths, and trails. Most walks will short, although we may offer an outing or two of up to half a mile round-trip in length. Since Arizona stays on Mountain Standard Time we will offer some optional early morning outings on the ranch before it gets too hot, possibly starting as early as 6:00 am.

ACCOMMODATIONS: The [Tanque Verde Guest Ranch](#) is a full-service luxury guest ranch set amid the beautiful Sonoran Desert in northeast Tucson. The ranch includes several blocks of accommodations,

all offering spacious and beautifully appointed rooms set in Southwestern motif. The expansive grounds are reserved for guests of the ranch. Pathways leading through the grounds provide access to habitat (and birds!) throughout. We will enjoy nightly social hours at venues around the property, each offering a unique ambience, while dinners featuring high quality food will be held in private locations. The Dog House Saloon provides an enticing place to relax and sip a cold beverage. On the extension, we will stay at Hampton Inns in Sierra Vista and at Tucson International Airport.

INTERNET ACCESS: Free Wi-Fi is available at all accommodations on the main tour and extension.

TIME: Arizona operates on Mountain Standard Time (MST) year-round.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Given the short length of this program, we recommend packing enough clothing to get you through the trip without your having to resort to using lodge laundry service which are coin operated machines for guests.

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). 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. Note that Arizona in May can be very hot and sunny, and participants should expect a couple of days with the potential for high UV exposure.

BITING INSECTS: Biting insects will be of minimal concern on this trip. Chiggers may be present in areas of grass, but which we will avoid. Your tour leaders will have insect repellent available for group use, but likely will not be necessary. You are welcome to bring your own if you desire.

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: Each of the following resources is as an excellent option for bird identification.

Dunn, Jon L. & Jonathan Alderfer (Editors). *National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. National Geographic. 2025 (eighth edition).

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. National Audubon Society. Alfred E. Knopf Publishing, 2014 (second edition).

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Field Guide to the Birds of Western North America*. National Audubon Society. Random House, Inc., 2016 (second edition). This is the slimmed down version of the larger *Sibley* guide and features only the birds of Western North America rather than the whole continent.

Mammals:

Kays, Roland W. and Don E. Wilson. *Mammals of North America*. Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford, 2009 (second edition).

CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY APPS & ONLINE RESOURCES:

eBird: 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: Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate bird watchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions regarding 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, followed by the appropriate regional "pack." For this trip, please download the pack for US and Canada: Continental and/or US: Southwest. 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 January 8, 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.

AZCLO:20270516

01/08/2026-PS,DE