INDONESIA

West Papua

July 19 – August 7, 2027

Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise © Scott Baker

Exceptional tropical forest birding with large numbers of endemics in one of the world's least known and exotic birding destinations. We will explore areas of lowland, hill, and montane forest teeming with birdlife. We expect to see a large variety of birds-of-paradise, fabulous kingfishers, pigeons, parrots, bowerbirds, and many handsome forest skulkers. West Papua is the jewel in the crown of Indonesia's eastern archipelago. Here, large tracts of lowland rainforest remain, and the isolated highlands of the Arfak Mountains are home to a bounty of wonderful birds-of-paradise. Close to the mainland, the well-serviced islands of Waigeo and Biak are teeming with tantalizing endemics set against a backdrop of

coastal forests and tropical seas home to some of the world's best coral reefs. This tour complements our already popular offering to Papua New Guinea by focusing on the specialties of the Vogelkop "Bird's Head" Peninsula, where we'll access several fantastic birding locales in a concise time frame, with minimal travel days.

Our exploration will begin on the small but endemic-rich island of Biak before we cross to the mainland and venture up to a homestay in the famous Arfak Mountains for several nights. Here, there are multiple established hides and stakeouts for an array of mind-blowing species. We have the chance to watch male Western Parotia and Vogelkop Lophorina perform displays that epitomize the extremes of sexual selection in birds. Here also, the Vogelkop Bowerbird constructs his bower, or "maypole," and displays his assorted collections of items taken from the forest; it is truly a bucket-list experience. After our time in the highlands, we will return to the birdy lowlands near Sorong before a ferry trip out to wonderful Waigeo, where the mesmerizing display of Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise will be front of mind. In addition to the fantastic birds-of-paradise on offer, West Papua is home to a huge variety of specialties and families unique to the Papuan landmass. Owlet-nightjars, imperial pigeons, tiger-parrots, melampitta, jewel-babblers, paradise-kingfishers, monarchs, peltops, boatbills, and many more exotic species are all possible.

For this journey to the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago, we will be joined by an experienced and capable local guide and crew who will ensure our trip is as comfortable and smooth as possible. We will stay in good hotels and one excellent resort for most of this tour, however our time in the Arfaks will be spent at a very basic homestay with shared facilities. Travel will be via minibus and four-wheel drives, with mostly short drives, and a return ferry trip on a "fast boat" which adds the bonus of some pelagic birding. This is sure to be a great adventure to one of the last remaining areas of wilderness in South-East Asia.

July 19-21, Days 1-3: Travel to Makassar

Participants should arrange to depart the USA on or before July 19 and arrive at the Sultan Hasanuddin International Airport (Makassar) no later than July 21. Please note that travel to Indonesia from the USA will involve crossing the International Dateline, resulting in the loss of one day in transit.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider arriving in Makassar on or before July 21 and spend the night. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements.

Upon arrival in Makassar, you will be met by a representative of our ground agent and transferred to our comfortable hotel. Makassar is the largest city of Eastern Indonesia located on the south-east coast of Sulawesi. That evening (July 21) we can gather as a group for dinner, some introductions and a tour briefing, before retiring in preparation for an early start the following day.

NIGHTS (July 19 & 20): In transit to Makassar

NIGHT (July 21): HARPER Perintis Makassar Hotel, Makassar

July 22, Day 4: Fly to Biak

We have a very early flight to Biak this morning. There are limited alternative options in this regard and our 3:00 a.m. departure from Makassar will be challenging! The three-hour flight, thankfully, will be an opportunity to catch up on some rest.

Assuming there are no delays, we should arrive on Biak Island around 7:00 a.m. Our first stop will be the Swiss-Belhotel Cendrawasih, a relatively modern and well-appointed lodging. There will, of course, be time to freshen up and enjoy breakfast before our first day of birding.

Biak is a low-lying, coral fringed island located within Cavendish Bay, around 60 miles off the north-west coast of West Papua. It is in fact a wonderful place to begin our West Papuan journey given this is the most populous and developed of the Geelvink archipelago. It features good roads and nice hotels, allowing us to explore the island in some comfort. It also (importantly) hosts an impressive array of endemics and a supporting cast of quality extras. This will be our first encounter with some of the distinctive Australasian bird families. Megapodes, pigeons, old-world parrots, trillers, whistlers and Australasian warblers are well represented with several stand-out endemics. The dazzling Biak Paradise-Kingfisher, Geelvink Fruit-Dove, and the more recently split Biak Hooded Pitta are high on the target list of any visiting birder.

We will focus our efforts on the more easily accessed forest sites today – including some roadside birding and forest trails. Despite extensive and ongoing clearing of forest for agriculture most of the local endemic birds are reasonably widespread. Others, such as the Biak Monarch, Biak Coucal, Biak Myzomela (very rare) and the Biak Scops Owl will require some additional effort.

NIGHT: Swiss-Belhotel Cendrawasih, Biak

Biak Hooded Pitta © Scott Baker

July 23-24, Days 5-6: Biak

We have 2 full days to explore this fascinating island. A long list of target birds (all endemics) that include the Biak Megapode, Geelvink Imperial-Pigeon, Geelvink Pygmy Parrot, Biak Lorikeet, Black-winged Lory, Biak Whistler, Biak Monarch, Biak Flycatcher, Biak Leaf Warbler, Biak Gerygone, Biak White-eye and Long-tailed Starling, are sure to keep us occupied. Most of these, thankfully, are in the 'quite plausible' category. Also, a very good chance of Biak Paradise-Kingfisher and Geelvink Fruit-Dove. Getting decent views of Biak Hooded Pitta can be a challenge but a newly established hide has greatly improved our prospects in this regard. In addition to the endemics, we could expect Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove, Moustached Treeswift, Emperor Fairywren, Hooded Butcherbird, Red-capped Flowerpecker and the local subspecies of Golden Monarch.

NIGHTS: Swiss-Belhotel Cendrawasih, Biak

July 25, Day 7: Fly to Jayapura

This morning (7:45 a.m.), we depart Biak and head for the mainland. Our flight schedule requires a stopover and an overnight stay in Jayapura, an historic city on the northern coast overlooking Yos Sudarso Bay, close to the border with PNG. Jayapura is the most populous city in Indonesia's Papua province, and for us, an opportunity to explore some new territory.

Our itinerary will include a visit to Lake Sentani—a shallow, tropical open wetland. It lies within the Cyclops Strict Nature Reserve, recognized for both its cultural and ecological values. The area is also a birdwatching hotspot and should offer our best chance to observe wetland species such as the Spotted Whistling-Duck and the Black Bittern, with the Pale-vented Bush-hen another possibility. Several seed-eating estrildids (waxbills), including Crimson Finch, Grand Munia, Hooded Munia, and Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, are also known to frequent the nearby grasslands, along with King Quail, Brown Quail, Pheasant Coucal, White-shouldered Fairywren, and the Papuan Harrier (endemic).

NIGHT: Suni Hotel, Sentani

July 26, Day 8: Fly to Manokwari; Drive to Arfak Mountains

After breakfast we will fly from Jayapura to the regional capital of Manokwari. Upon arrival in Manokwari we will have lunch and purchase supplies in preparation for our stay in the 'Arfaks'. The Arfak Mountain Range, situated on the Birds Head or (the Dutch) 'Vogelkop' Peninsula is a distinctive geographical formation in the far north-west of West Papua that somewhat resembles a bird head.

The range itself rises steeply and dramatically from the north coast to its highest point – Mount Arfak at a regionally impressive 9,700 feet. Being densely forested and effectively isolated from the central range of the New Guinea Highlands to the east, this montane system supports an exceptional array of endemics and forms part of the Vogelkop montane rainforests ecoregion.

It is approximately a two-hour drive from Manokwari to the Minggre Birdwatching Homestay - our base for the next four nights. To be clear, facilities here (and throughout the Arfaks) are basic – there are no fancy hotels. That means there is no Wi-Fi, TV, or air conditioning, and the bedrooms and bathrooms are very simple, with a traditional Indonesian-style design. Hot water is, at best, unreliable. Over the course of this four-night, five-day stay, we forgo some modern comforts in exchange for the opportunity to explore West Papua's premier birdwatching destination.

NIGHT: Minggre Birdwatching Homestay, Arfaks

July 27-29, Days 9-11: Arfak Mountains

Minggre is a mid-elevation site ideally positioned to access a range of highland forest communities, including tropical mountain rainforest, lower mountain forest, and foothill forest. It is a remarkably diverse ecosystem and home to some of the world's finest avian treasures.

It is worth noting that the Arfaks, in particular, feature some challenging terrain. Some birding will take place along level dirt roads and tracks, however, we may also (likely) encounter steeper, slippery sections on more demanding routes to reach some of the hides or lek sites. These excursions are always optional.

We will of course prioritize several Bird-of-Paradise (BoP) species - four of which are true Vogelkop endemics, each with its own unique and transformative courtship rituals. From the surreal electro-ballet of the Western Parotia to the dramatic, kabuki-like performance of the Vogelkop Lophorina - both famously captured in David Attenborough's Our Planet – this is nature at its absolute finest.

Another standout endemic is the Vogelkop Bowerbird - widely regarded as the world's greatest avian architect. The rather unassuming, plain-plumaged male builds a remarkable roofed "maypole" bower, beautifully decorated with collections of colorful berries, beetle wings, flowers (and plastic!) to impress the females - every bower is different.

Vogelkop Bowerbird – tending the bower © Scott Baker

The list of forest gems is extensive. The Minggre and greater Arfak region include a dizzying array of pigeons, parrots, cuckoos, fairywrens, honeyeaters, scrubwrens, mouse-warblers, jewel-babblers, berrypeckers, whistlers and robins. Keeping in mind, however, that rainforest birding is tough, and that many of these are elusive and skulking varieties that will reveal themselves infrequently.

White-breasted fruit-dove, Papuan Mountain-Pigeon, Mountain Swiftlet, Vogelkop & Mountain Owlet-Nightjar, West Papuan lorikeet, Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo, White-striped Forest Rail, Goldenface, Red-collared Myzomela, Ornate & Vogelkop Melidectes, Hooded Pitohui, Black-eared Catbird, Masked Bowerbird, Mountain Peltops, Spectacled Longbill, Fan-tailed Monarch and Lesser Ground-Robin, all count amongst the regulars.

During our stay we will be relying on local guides with their exceptional bush skills and knowledge of the area and behavior of these birds (in particular, the BoP's) to maximize our chance of an encounter. Visiting known lekking sites, hides and feed tables will enhance opportunities for observation, and often at very close range.

NIGHTS: Minggre Birdwatching Homestay, Arfaks

Vogelkop Owlet-Nightjar © Scott Baker

July 30, Day 12: Arfak Mountains; Drive to Manokwari

We will have a final morning of birding in the Arfaks before descending to the humid lowlands and relative civilization of Manokwari. We can look forward to an evening at a quality establishment with all the modern amenities (including of course hot showers!) and some fine dining – a well-deserved reward after some surely memorable birding in the highlands of West Papua.

NIGHT: Swiss-Belhotel, Manokwari

July 31, Day 13: Fly to Sorong

Today we have a morning flight to the city of Sorong on the far western tip of the Vogelkop Peninsula – the largest and most developed city in West Papua, and capital of the Southwest Papuan Province.

After lunch we will check into our hotel and have the afternoon to bird an area of mangrove and swamp forest south of the city. A colorful (although somewhat neglected) boardwalk and a viewing tower will, hopefully, enable some access. Importantly this is a hotspot for the beautiful and range-restricted Blue-black Kingfisher. Other species we may encounter here include Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Collared Imperial-Pigeon, Lesser Black Coucal, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Glossy and Uniform swiftlets, Moustached Treeswift, Barred Rail, Nankeen Night-Heron, Striated Heron, Little Kingfisher, Blue-fronted Fig-Parrot, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Emperor Fairywren, Helmeted Friarbird, Large-billed Gerygone, Black Butcherbird, the reclusive Black Thicket-Fantail, and Shining Flycatcher.

NIGHT: Aston Sorong Hotel & Conference Center, Sorong

Blue-black Kingfisher © Scott Baker

Aug 1-2, Days 14-15: Sorong area

We have two full days to explore the Sorong district and its surrounding lowland forests, targeting a very different suite of birds. Several local villages, including Malasigi, Malayau,

Klabili, and Malagafuk, provide access to traditional forest reserves and offer excellent birding opportunities. Special attention will be given to the remarkable diversity of pigeons, parrots, pittas, and kingfishers found in these lowland habitats. Other sought-after species include the secretive Forest Bittern (rare), Rusty Mouse-Warbler, Papuan Babbler, Blue Jewel-Babbler, Hooded and Frilled Monarchs, Black-sided Robin, and Golden Myna.

Our itinerary will, in part, be determined by the latest information on active BoP lek sites. The Sorong lowlands support several outstanding species, including the striking and utterly unique Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise, whose courtship display takes place at dawn on an exposed perch protruding above the forest canopy. In contrast, the diminutive King Bird-of-Paradise, although widespread, prefers a more discreet, mid-story setting, and is easily overlooked. Additional BoP highlights may include Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise, Lesser Bird-of-Paradise, Magnificent Riflebird, and both Trumpet and Glossy-mantled Manucodes.

NIGHTS: Aston Sorong Hotel & Conference Center, Sorong

Aug 3, Day 16: Ferry to Waigeo

After breakfast this morning, we will transfer to Sorong Harbour for the 9:00 a.m. ferry crossing of the Dampier Strait, arriving in Waisai on the island of Waigeo around midday. The journey itself can be rewarding, and we will keep a watchful eye out for seabirds such as tropical terns, shearwaters, frigatebirds, and boobies. Matsudaira's Storm-Petrel and Bulwer's Petrel are also possible at this time of year, while several species of cetacean may be encountered along the way.

Waigeo is the largest island in the Raja Ampat archipelago, a world-renowned destination best known for its spectacular diving and some of the most biologically diverse marine ecosystems on the planet. Beyond the reefs, however, the island's densely forested mountains harbor an exceptional array of wildlife, including two endemic Birds-of-Paradise.

Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise strikes a pose © Scott Baker

The extraordinary Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise, regarded by many as one of the world's best birds, is a major target of our visit, as is the equally stunning Red Bird-of-Paradise. A series of well-positioned hides provides excellent opportunities to observe both species at close range and appreciate their remarkable courtship displays.

Upon arrival, we will check in to the delightful Waiwo Dive Resort before enjoying a relaxed afternoon. Guests may choose to unwind after the journey or explore the resort grounds and surrounding habitats, where birding can be surprisingly productive. Spice, Pinon's, and Pied Imperial-Pigeons are regularly encountered, while Lesser Frigatebird, Blyth's Hornbill, Beach Kingfisher, and Papuan Eclectus are also possible. Other birds worth watching include Mimic Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, and Brown-headed Crow.

NIGHT: Waiwo Dive Resort, Waigeo

Red Bird-of-Paradise. 1 of 2 endemic BoP's on the Raja Ampat © Scott Baker

Aug 4-5, Days 17-18: Waigeo

Whilst most visitors to Raja Ampat come for its renowned beaches and world-class diving, we should have the forests largely to ourselves. Over the next two days, we will have several opportunities to search for the island's star attractions.

Foremost among these is Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise. Often described as one of the world's most beautiful birds, it is certainly one of the strangest. The adult male combines an electric-blue crown with a deep crimson and black mantle, complemented by a pair of curiously curled, antenna-like tail plumes. We stand an excellent chance of observing this remarkable species at close range as it performs its intricate courtship display, viewed at eye level from the comfort of a specially constructed hide.

We will also try our luck at the 'dancing tree' of the magnificent Red Bird-of-Paradise and explore several different forest habitats in search of the island's rich birdlife. Two endemic species high on our target list are the recently split (and re-lumped) Waigeo Shrikethrush and Waigeo Pitohui. Considerably more challenging is the near-mythical Waigeo Brushturkey, long thought extinct until its dramatic rediscovery in 2002 following an absence of more than 120

years. Today, a small population survives in remote montane forest on Mount Danai in eastern Waigeo.

Other realistic possibilities include Dusky Megapode, Beautiful and Claret-breasted Fruit-Doves, Pinon's Imperial-Pigeon, Blyth's Hornbill, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Hook-billed, Yellow-billed and Common Paradise-Kingfishers, Papuan Eclectus, Red-cheeked Parrot and South Papuan Pitta. The forests also support an attractive array of passerines, including Puff-backed, Mimic, Tawny-breasted and Spotted Honeyeaters, Rusty Mouse-Warbler, Green-backed Gerygone, Brown Oriole, Glossy-mantled Manucode, the beautiful Golden and Frilled Monarchs, Black-sided Robin, Yellow-faced Myna and Olive-crowned Flowerpecker.

After dark, a spotlighting excursion may produce both Papuan Frogmouth and Papuan Boobook. There is also the possibility of encountering the Waigeo Cuscus, a beautifully patterned endemic marsupial that remains reasonably common in the village and surrounding forests.

This relaxed finale promises to be a fitting conclusion to the tour. Surrounded by one of the most idyllic island settings imaginable, we will have the opportunity to enjoy an outstanding diversity of birds and wildlife while also enjoying the excellent cuisine, spectacular sunsets, and the comforts of our well-appointed beachfront resort.

NIGHTS: Waiwo Dive Resort, Waigeo

Waigeo Cuscus © Scott Baker

Aug 6, Day 19: Ferry to Sorong

This morning, we can have one final birding session on Waigeo before returning to Sorong at midday by ferry. There may also be an optional afternoon bird walk in the nearby mangrove forest in Sorong, if time allows. Tonight, we will have a farewell dinner and relive a very memorable journey through this beautiful and remote part of Indonesia.

NIGHT: Aston Sorong Hotel & Conference Center, Sorong

Aug 7, Day 20: International departures

Tour ends this morning with departures from Sorong.

Essential Tour Information

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

TOUR LEADER: Scott Baker with the assistance of a local guide.

Scott Baker's interest in wildlife began early on while growing up in the leafy, outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne which, although a highly urbanized environment, retained significant tracts of remnant natural woodland. It was here at the age of 11 that he got his first pair of binoculars and began what was to become a lifetime quest to identify all the birds in an ever-expanding neighborhood. By the age of 15 he was running weekly bird walks and talks and became a founding member of the very successful Yarran Dheran Junior Field Naturalists Club. In 1988 he was named the Nunawading Young Citizen of the Year in recognition of his contribution to natural history and conservation. Pursuing mutual interests in life science and fine art, Scott went on to hold various roles in business, education, and environmental consultancy. This has facilitated opportunities to explore the wild places and wildlife of Australia and beyond. In 30 plus years he has traveled

extensively throughout the continent with a major focus on birds. He loves the rare and sometimes challenging, cryptic varieties but also shorebirds and seabirds, having spent many days at sea. To date he has recorded (and photographed) almost all of the regular and resident land birds and pelagic species likely in the country. Scott has a passion for wildlife, not just birds, and conducts studies and regular surveys for mammals, reptiles, and frogs. His fieldwork will often involve additional nocturnal spotlighting sessions, requiring late nights and early mornings to maximize the "tetrapod" options, when possible. Scott is a well-regarded member of the Australian birding community, a moderator on several birdwatching forums and rare bird committees, and, since 2017, has run birdwatching and nature tours within Australia and parts of southeast Asia. He currently resides in Victoria but is frequently interstate or abroad.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: $____** per person based on double occupancy or **$___ for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from _____on Day 1 through _____ on Day 8, 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.

When comparing trip costs with other tour companies, please consider that our tour fees include **all** internal air within West Papua. This represents considerable savings as it includes several flights.

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

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (March 21, 2027) 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 on 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

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE/PROTECTION REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may not be available. **For this reason, travel insurance/travel protection which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour**. This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Alternatively, comparable service can be obtained through **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist** plan. If you choose not to purchase insurance/travel protection through Ripcord or Medjet, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Please read the remainder of this section for additional information.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive **Ripcord** plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit**.** With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For

travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan

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

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

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

refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

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

About Medjet's MedjetAssist Plan

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

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

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

GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIR TRAVEL: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: $50 domestic; $75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to

your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

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

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

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

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

PASSPORTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Indonesia and a valid return airline ticket are required for United States citizens to enter Indonesia for up to 30 days. Longer stays will require a visa. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate or embassy for instructions.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: Lightweight field clothing is recommended for the lowlands, preferably in muted, drab colors, **NOT bright white, yellow or red.** Dark, muted colors help prevent startling the birds, especially when we are in the forests. This includes several pairs of pants and cool,

comfortable shirts. Long-sleeved shirts, a hat, and sunglasses are recommended for protection from the sun and mosquitoes. Long socks are very useful, so that you can tuck your pants in and further avoid biting insects. A warm sweater, warm hat and thin gloves are essential for the highlands. **Raingear and an umbrella** are also essential, including waterproof pants which are very useful in case we encounter rain while in a boat. Dress will be casual.

Although there will be few, if any, rigorous walks, we may encounter some mud, slippery surfaces, uphill and uneven terrain and tree roots. Add to that the fact that you are on your feet for much of the day and it is **most important** that you provide suitable protection and support for your feet and ankles. Lightweight (Gore-Tex or some similar material) but strong boots (hiking boots) that come up to the ankle and have a good lug-sole are ideal. Many people are apprehensive that these will be too heavy; this is not true. The protection, grip, and day-long comfort such boots afford is far superior to the seemingly comfortable sneakers/training shoes. If you like using a walking stick you should always bring it along every day.

EQUIPMENT: Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable.

You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition, along with a belt or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, camera, etc.). Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have a spotting scope and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. We will be birding from roadsides or open trails for much of the time, and a scope can be very useful for seeing such treetop birds as the birds-of-paradise. Other items to bring include a flashlight or headlamp, camera, extra batteries, water bottle, alarm clock, handy wipes, wash cloth, insect repellent, towel and umbrella (the latter is very useful and should be always carried). You should also have a supply of personal medication such as aspirin, a good cortisone cream, etc. As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.

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.

CLIMATE & WEATHER: During the tour you will experience a wide range of temperatures and climate, from the 70s and high 80s in the lowlands (where it is also humid), to the 40s and 50s at higher elevations. We will almost certainly encounter some rain, possibly heavy.

CONDITIONS: This would be regarded as a more challenging tour. It should be noted that West Papua, and in particular many of the highland sites in the Arfak Range are characterized by steep and sometimes muddy terrain. A reasonable level of fitness and good balance is recommended. For the most part we intend to stick to the established roads and trails and preference the gentler (downhill) options – where possible. Be aware the surface conditions can vary, and it is always possible we may encounter mud, slippery surfaces, and stony ground. We will be on our feet for most of the time we are birding in the mornings and afternoons, for this reason it is MOST IMPORTANT that you provide suitable protection and support for your feet and ankles. A collapsible portable seat and a walking stick can be useful in this regard.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Generally good, modern hotels for the great majority of the trip, including one resort-style hotel on Waigeo. The homestay accommodation at Minggre in the Arfak Mountains is very basic. Participants will have private rooms, with suitable bedding and lighting, however bathroom facilities will be shared. Hot water and power are intermittent, but certainly available.

CURRENCY: Indonesian Rupiah (IDR); exchange facilities are available through trade banks and at all international airports. It is recommended to change any money at Jakarta or Makassar. Visa/MasterCard are the most widely accepted credit cards. Our leaders typically change their money at the airport in Jakarta as it is time-consuming to do on the ground in West Papua.

INTERNET ACCESS: Wi-Fi will be available at all hotels, except for the Minggre Home Stay in the Arfaks. Local SIM cards are available at major airports, or for those with newer mobile phones, E-SIMs are the best way to access the internet readily overseas.

LANGUAGE: Bahasa Indonesia, Melanesian, Pidgin, English and various local languages.

TIME: West Papua is 14 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time and 13 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time.

LAUNDRY: Laundry service available at all the main hotels on this tour, except for Minggre Homestay in the Arfak Mountains.

PHOTOGRAPHY: As with anywhere in the tropics, especially inside the forest, photography, especially of birds, is never easy. However, there will be some very worthwhile opportunities when birding along roadsides or at any of the hides or feeders.

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.

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 Permethrin 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.

A Note About Chiggers: This tour visits areas where chiggers are known to occur. Chiggers are tiny parasitic mites found in most warm weather areas of the southern United States and the world's tropics. They are especially numerous in grassy areas, where, in the immature stage, they attach themselves to other animals or humans who contact the grass as they pass by. Chiggers do not suck blood, and the majority of species do not carry disease. They do feed on bodily fluids through a process in which a digestive enzyme is produced by the chigger which essentially liquefies the skin around the area where the chigger is attached. The chigger is not usually attached to the skin for more than a few hours before it either falls off or is knocked off. Our bodies respond by producing a hardened area as a defence against the chigger's digestive enzyme. Though the chigger may be long gone, it is the presence of the hardened area, and the body's natural process of reabsorbing it that typically causes intense itching, often lasting for a week or more. Chiggers like to attach themselves to areas of thin skin, like around the ankles, beltline, undergarment lines, knees, and elbows.

Chiggers can be avoided by following these procedures:

- Avoid walking or standing in areas dominated by grass. These areas are where one is most likely to encounter chiggers.
- Tuck your pants into your socks to avoid direct skin-to-grass contact. Chiggers can find their way through clothing, but this is a standard and effective prevention technique.
- Apply insect repellent to your skin and clothing. Please refer to the Insect Repellent section that follows for important information about selecting and applying repellent.
- Powdered sulfur applied to waist, bottoms of pants, sock and boots is also effective at repelling chiggers. However, be warned that clothes will retain the sulfur odor for several washings. If using sulfur, never touch your eyes, nose, or mouth before washing your hands first.
- Shower at the end of each day in the field. Use a washcloth to vigorously rub your legs, feet, and ankles.

By following these methods, you should be able to avoid all chigger bites, as well as tick bites. If, however, you are bitten by chiggers anyway, you can reduce or eliminate the symptoms by applying benzocaine or hydrocortisone creams, calamine lotion, After Bite, or any number of anti-itch products.

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.

Coates, B.J. & W. Peckover. Alderley, Brisbane: Dove Publications, 2001. *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of New Guinea.*

Cooper, W.T. & J.M. Forshaw. *The Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds.* Boston: Godine, 1972. A marvelous over-sized volume that effectively brings together what is known of each species, accompanied by indescribably beautiful illustrations. Out-of-print.

Eaton, J.A., van Balen, B., Brickle, N.W. & Rheindt, F.E. *Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago. Greater Sundas and Wallacea.* Barcelona: Lynx Edicions, 2016. An excellent field guide (with some quirky taxonomy at times) for the vast majority of Indonesia. Does not specifically cover West Papua however.

Flannery, T. *Mammals of New Guinea.* Rev. ed. Cornell University Press, 1995. Update of the 1990 edition from Robert Brown & Associates; Queensland, Australia.

Frith, C. & B.M. Beehler. *The Birds of Paradise: Paradisaeidae (Bird Families of the World Series, Vol. 6)*. Oxford University Press, 1998. A spectacularly detailed account of everything that is known about the bird-of-paradise; one of the finest bird books of its genre.

Gregory, P. *Birds of New Guinea (including Bismarck Archipelago and Bougainville).* Barcelona: Lynx Edicions, 2017.

Paijimans, K. *New Guinea Vegetation.* Australia: C.S.I.R.O. in association with the Australian National University Press, 1976. An excellent introduction to the vegetation communities of Papua New Guinea.

Pratt, T.K. & B.M. Beehler. *Birds of New Guinea-Second Edition.* Princeton Field Guides 2014. A completely revised and re-illustrated edition. The recommended book to get for this tour covering the entire New Guinea landmass. E-book available at Google Play.

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."

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 October 4, 2025 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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