

*Victor Emanuel Nature Tours*

# **CENTRAL CHILE & PATAGONIA**

October 18-30, 2008



**Magellanic Woodpecker**

*Campephilus magellanicus*

Photo: D. Ascanio

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TOUR REPORT  
CENTRAL CHILE & PATAGONIA  
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By David Ascanio

Our 2008 Central Chile and Patagonia tour combined wonderful close views of land and sea birds throughout a large number of habitats with the spectacular scenery for which this narrow country in southern South America is well-known.

Our trip started in Los Farellones, a popular ski area near Santiago, where we had our first sightings of Common Diuca-Finch and Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch. As we acclimated to these mountains, a juvenile Mountain Caracara flew across the road, while the endemic Chilean Tinamou and Moustached Turca were enjoyed by everyone. During the following days we explored a prominent Humboldt Penguin colony in Central Chile, as well as other protected areas, obtaining views of ground-tyrants, Wren-like Rushbird, Stripe-backed Bittern, and Rufous-tailed Plantcutter, the latter a member of the famous Cotingidae, an amazing family with species distributed mainly in tropical South America.

After a couple of days in Central Chile it was time to move south, to Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. A domestic flight to Punta Arenas was followed by a drive along the scenic road to Torres del Paine National Park. What a place! We added 3 species of grebes; 13 species of waterfowl; shorebirds; coots; and ovenbirds (Furnariidae) to our daily field checklist. In Torres del Paine we especially appreciated Austral Canastero, Chilean Flamingo, Andean Condor, and superb views of a pair of Magellanic Woodpeckers.

From Torres del Paine we drove into Argentina, to El Calafate, for a flight to Ushuaia, one of the southernmost populated areas in the Americas. A short visit to Tierra del Fuego National Park offered views of White-throated Treerunner and the southern race of American Kestrel. Our day finished with everyone well-dressed on the upper deck of *Via Australis*, our home for the next four days.

Our navigation across the Chilean fjords allowed us to bird around Cape Horn, the Beagle Channel, and the Magellan Strait. The most common seabirds were Black-browed Albatross, Cape Petrel, Antarctic Giant Petrel, and Southern Fulmar. Surprisingly, diving-petrels were not abundant for most of the trip until we reached Isla Magdalena, near Punta Arenas. On that morning we counted 95 Magellanic Diving-Petrels (as we approached the island) in a period of 21 minutes!

Back in Santiago, we arranged for a bus to take us to La Dormilona and Lampa the next morning to look for the endemic Dusky-tailed Canastero and Chilean Pigeon. Our morning in this region of Chile was followed by lunch and a drive to the airport for our flights home.

We want to express our gratitude to all of the participants for joining us in this part of beautiful Chile. We hope to see you again!

The Birdlist.

<b>Rheas</b>	<b>Rheidae</b>	
Lesser Rhea	<i>Rhea pennata</i>	Many in Patagonia. Groups vary from 6 to 30 individuals.
<b>Tinamous</b>	<b>Tinamidae</b>	
	<i>Nothoprocta</i>	
Chilean Tinamou	<i>perdicaria</i>	Pair scoped in Los Farallones.
<b>Penguins</b>	<b>Spheniscidae</b>	
Humboldt Penguin	<i>Spheniscus humboldti</i>	A colony of about 50 individuals near Valparaiso. Many across the Beagle channel and the Chilean Fjords. Visited a nesting colony in the Magellan strait.
	<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>	
Magellanic Penguin	<b>Podicipedidae</b>	
<b>Grebes</b>	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	Pair in Central Chile. Several pairs and small groups in Central Chile and Torres del Paine.
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Rollandia rolland</i>	Various views of single individuals.
White-tufted Grebe	<i>Podiceps major</i>	Seen only twice in Torres del Paine.
Great Grebe	<i>Podiceps occipitalis</i>	
Silvery Grebe	<b>Diomedidae</b>	
<b>Albatrosses</b>	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	Seen regularly from the ship.
Black-browed Albatross	<b>Procellariidae</b>	
<b>Shearwaters &amp; Petrels</b>	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	Seen daily from the vessel. Various sights from the vessels, from pairs to concentrations up to 46 individuals.
Antarctic Giant Petrel	<i>Fulmarus glacialisoides</i>	Another species expected to be seen well and in large numbers. We nailed only one individual near Punta Arenas.
Southern Fulmar	<i>Daption capense</i>	Few seen around Cape Horn.
Cape Petrel	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	
Sooty Shearwater	<b>Hydrobatidae</b>	
<b>Storm-Petrels</b>	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	Although widespread and expected in large numbers we were surprised to sight only one individual
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	<b>Pelecanoididae</b>	
<b>Diving-Petrels</b>	<i>Pelecanoides magellani</i>	We had to wait until the end of the trip to have the whole group enjoy this species. In our last morning we counted more than 95 individuals in less than 25 minutes! Until then, it was nicknamed "Imaginary Diving-Petrel".
Magellanic Diving-Petrel	<b>Pelecanidae</b>	
<b>Pelicans</b>	<i>Pelecanus thagus</i>	About 8 individuals near Valparaiso.
Peruvian Pelican	<b>Phalacrocoracidae</b>	
<b>Cormorants</b>	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>	Seen in Central Chile, replaced by the next species in the southern part of the country.
Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax magellanicus</i>	Scattered sights in Southern Chile.
Rock Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax bougainvillii</i>	Only one in Quintero restaurant.
Guanay Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax atriceps</i>	Many individuals flying across the Chilean Fjords and channels.
Imperial Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax gaimardi</i>	Only one north of Valparaiso.
Red-legged Cormorant	<b>Ardeidae</b>	
<b>Hérons, Egrets &amp; Bitterns</b>	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Few in Central Chile.
Great Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	Only 3 individuals in Central Chile.
Snowy Egret		

Cattle Egret Black-crowned Night- Heron <b>Ibises &amp; Spoonbills</b>	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>  <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> <b>Threskiornithidae</b>	30+ ind in Central Chile. Pair in central Chile and an additional one in Tierra del Fuego.
Black-faced Ibis <b>Flamingos</b>	<i>Theristicus melanopis</i> <b>Phoenicopteridae</b>	Small groups foraging along the road to Argentina.
Chilean Flamingo <b>Ducks, Geese &amp; Swans</b>	<i>Phoenicopterus chilensis</i>  <b>Anatidae</b>	Seen well in El Paine and along the road to El Calafate.
Black-necked Swan Coscoroba Swan Stripe-backed Bittern	<i>Cygnus melancoryphus</i> <i>Coscoroba coscoroba</i> <i>Ixobrychus involucris</i>	50+ ind in Torres del Paine. Few pairs in Patagonia. One ind flushed at El Peral wetland. Concentration of various individuals with males displaying.
Upland Goose Kelp Goose	<i>Chloephaga picta</i> <i>Chloephaga hybrida</i> <i>Chloephaga poliocephala</i>	Scattered pairs along the channels. Few individuals with concentrations of Upland Goose.
Ashy-headed Goose Flightless Steamerduck	<i>Tachyeres pteneres</i> <i>Tachyeres patachonicus</i>	Commoner than previous, fond to brackish waters. A pair in Torres del Paine, and a single individual in Tierra del Fuego national park.
Flying Steamerduck		Pair in El Yeso valley and a female in the sky area, Central Chile.
Torrent Duck	<i>Merganetta armata</i>	One of the most beautiful Anatidae of the trip. Seen almost daily but in low numbers.
Chiloe Wigeon Speckled Teal Spectacled Duck Crested Duck Yellow-billed Pintail White-cheeked Pintail Cinnamon Teal Red Shoveler	<i>Anas sibilatrix</i> <i>Anas flavirostris</i> <i>Anas specularis</i> <i>Anas specularioides</i> <i>Anas georgica</i> <i>Anas bahamensis</i> <i>Anas cyanoptera</i> <i>Anas platalea</i>	Few pairs in Patagonia. Three individuals in Patagonia. Not common. Pairs in Patagonia and from the vessels. Few seen in Patagonia. Pair in central Chile. Two pairs in Central Chile. Various small groups in most wetlands visited.
Black-headed Duck Andean Duck Lake Duck <b>New World Vultures</b>	<i>Heteronetta atricapilla</i> <i>Oxyura ferruginea</i> <i>Oxyura vittata</i> <b>Cathartidae</b>	A pair in El Peral wetland. A single sight and a pair in southern Chile. A single individual in Central Chile.
Black Vulture Turkey Vulture Andean Condor <b>Hawks, Eagles &amp; Kites</b>	<i>Coragyps atratus</i> <i>Cathartes aura</i> <i>Vultur gryphus</i>  <b>Accipitridae</b>	Pair in central Chile. Few sights in southern Chile. Many individuals seen in all regions visited.
White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	1 seen from the road in Central Chile. Various sights of individuals flying over the steppe on route to El Paine national park.
Cinereous Harrier Harris' Hawk Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle Red-backed (Variable) Hawk <b>Falcons &amp; Caracaras</b>	<i>Circus cinereus</i> <i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i> <i>Geranoaetus melanoleucus</i>  <i>Buteo polyosoma</i> <b>Falconidae</b>	One over the last morning in La Dormilona Several seen, including a pair nesting in the entrance of El Paine national park.
Mountain Caracara	<i>Phalcoboenus megalopterus</i> <i>Phalcoboenus australis</i>	Mostly seen in the mountains of central Chile.  1 juvenile flying in Los Farallones, central Chile.
Striated Caracara		Pair flying while navigating the Cockburn channel.

Southern Caracara	<i>Caracara plancus</i>	Various pairs in southern Chile. Sometimes treated as one species with Northern Crested Caracara
Chimango Caracara	<i>Milvago chimango</i>	<i>Caracara cheriwayi</i> .
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	Daily views.
<b>New World Quails</b>	<b>Odontophoridae</b>	Seen in central Chile.
California Quail ( I )	<i>Callipepla californica</i>	Heard in central Chile.
<b>Rails, Gallinules &amp; Coots</b>	<b>Rallidae</b>	
	<i>Pardirallus</i>	
Plumbeous Rail	<i>sanguinolentus</i>	A single individual in El Peral.
Spot-flanked Gallinule	<i>Gallinula melanops</i>	Four individuals in a wetland leaving El Peral.
		Scattered individuals in wetlands including the next species.
White-winged Coot	<i>Fulica leucoptera</i>	The commonest coot in central Chile.
Red-gartered Coot	<i>Fulica armillata</i>	Four individuals in central Chile.
Red-fronted Coot	<i>Fulica rufifrons</i>	
<b>Oystercatchers</b>	<b>Haematopodidae</b>	
Magellanic Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>	This species endemic of Patagonia was seen in inland grassland and along the shores.
Blackish Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ater</i>	Two pairs were seen in central Chile and in Tierra del Fuego.
American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>	6 individuals in Cachagua,
<b>Avocets &amp; Stilts</b>	<b>Recurvirostridae</b>	
	<i>Himantopus</i>	
White-backed Stilt	<i>melanurus</i>	A pair in Ventanas wetland.
<b>Plovers &amp; Lapwings</b>	<b>Charadriidae</b>	
		Daily views. Likely to be treated as a separate species in the future. East and west populations have different vocalizations.
Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>	
	<i>Charadrius</i>	
Two-banded Plover	<i>falklandicus</i>	A pair and a quartet in Patagonia.
<b>Sandpipers &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Scolopacidae</b>	
South American Snipe	<i>Gallinago paraguaiiae</i>	1 female seen well in El Paine national park.
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Mainly in Cachagua.
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	Two pairs in Ventanas wetland.
		Various individuals across the road south of Valparaiso.
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Various individuals across the road south of Valparaiso.
		About 14 individuals in Cachagua,
Surfbird	<i>Aphriza virgata</i>	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	
White-rumped Sandpiper	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>	Common and widespread in Patagonia.
		Equally common and widespread as previous species.
Baird's Sandpiper	<i>Calidris bairdii</i>	Pair seen with the scope near the Humbolt Penguin colony.
Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	
<b>Seedsnipes</b>	<b>Thinocoridae</b>	
	<i>Thinocorus</i>	
Gray-breasted Seedsnipe	<i>orbignyianus</i>	Great views in El Yeso mountains.
	<i>Thinocorus</i>	
Least Seedsnipe	<i>rumicivorus</i>	A single individual on route to El Calafate.
<b>Gulls</b>	<b>Laridae</b>	
Dolphin Gull	<i>Larus scoresbii</i>	First seen in Puerto Natales, with other views in Ushuaia.
Gray Gull	<i>Larus modestus</i>	More than 10 individuals near Valparaiso.

Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	Common and widespread.
Brown-hooded Gull	<i>Larus maculipennis</i>	Daily views. The commonest gull in the trip. Although we expected to see more of this northern migrant, we saw only one individual in Aconcagua river mouth.
Franklin's Gull	<i>Larus pipixcan</i>	
<b>Terns</b>	<b>Sternidae</b>	
Inca Tern	<i>Larosterna inca</i>	More than 20 individuals near Valparaiso. Few individuals in central Chile, and larger numbers in the fjords and in the Magellan strait. This was one of the surprise of the trip. 1 individual in the mouth of Aconcagua river. Totally unexpected!
South American Tern	<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>	
Snowy-crowned Tern	<i>Sterna trudeaui</i>	
<b>Skimmers</b>	<b>Rhynchopidae</b>	
Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>	10+ individuals in Aconcagua river mouth.
<b>Skuas &amp; Jaegers</b>	<b>Stercoraridae</b>	
Chilean Skua	<i>Stercorarius chilensis</i>	Common around Cape Horn, the Beagle channel and the Magellan strait.
<b>Doves &amp; Pigeons</b>	<b>Columbidae</b>	
Rock Pigeon ( I )	<i>Columba livia</i>	Common around Santiago.
Chilean Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas araucana</i>	A large group on route to La Dormida. Quite shy as it took a while to get one in the scope.
Eared Dove	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>	Pairs in central Chile. Common around Santiago. Also seen in route to La Dormida.
Picui Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina picui</i>	
Black-winged Ground-Dove	<i>Metriopelia melanoptera</i>	Pair in El Yeso valley.
<b>Parrots, Macaws &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Psittacidae</b>	
Austral Parakeet	<i>Enicognathus ferrugineus</i>	Great views in Torres del Paine national park.
<b>Typical Owls</b>	<b>Strigidae</b>	
Austral Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium nanum</i>	A pair seen in El Paine. Sometimes lumped with <i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i> Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. Currently recognized by the South American Classification Committee
Burrowing Owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	A single individual on route to Lampa.
<b>Hummingbirds</b>	<b>Trochilidae</b>	
White-sided Hillstar	<i>Oreotrochilus leucopleurus</i>	Great views of a male and a female in El Yeso valley. Unfortunately the male was not seen by everyone.
Giant Hummingbird	<i>Patagona gigas</i>	Superb views in Cachagua.
<b>Woodpeckers &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Picidae</b>	
Striped Woodpecker	<i>Picoides lignarius</i>	A female in Los Farallones.
Chilean Flicker	<i>Colaptes pitius</i>	Pair in El Yeso valley and in La Dormilona road.
Magellanic Woodpecker	<i>Campephilus magellanicus</i>	What a bird! Great views of a pair nesting in Torres del Paine.
<b>Ovenbirds &amp; Woodcreepers</b>	<b>Furnariidae</b>	
Short-billed Miner	<i>Geositta antarctica</i>	One individual in Torres del Paine. Various individuals in Los Farallones plus individual sights in Torres del Paine.
Rufous-banded Miner	<i>Geositta rufipennis</i>	Daily views in central Chile. This genus is currently under DNA revision by Chesser, Barker and Brunfield. They have found it to be highly polyphyletic.
Scale-throated Earthcreeper	<i>Upucerthia dumetaria</i>	
E Crag Chilia	<i>Chilia melanura</i>	Superb views in El Yeso valley. Incredible species!

Bar-winged Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes fuscus</i>	Daily views in central Chile and in Torres del Paine.
Gray-flanked Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes oustaleti</i>	Seen two races. One in los Farallones and the other (likely to be a split) in southern Chile (Fjords).
Blackish Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes antarcticus</i>	Not seen by either leader. Description of plumage provided by Bob and Cheryl was convincing to include this species in the birdlist. This may represent one of the few records in Isla Magdalena.
Dark-bellied Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes patagonicus</i>	The largest Cinclodes in the trip. Seen in central Chile as well as in Isla Magdalena, in the Magellan strait.
E Chilean Seaside Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes nigrofumosus</i>	Pair near Valparaiso.
Wren-like Rushbird	<i>Phleocryptes melanops</i>	Seen after some effort in El Peral sanctuary.
Thorn-tailed Rayadito	<i>Aphrastura spinicauda</i>	Few individuals in Patagonia. Common and widespread.
Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail	<i>Leptasthenura aegithaloides</i>	Usually skulky. This species was finally seen well in the last morning, in La Dormilona.
Cordilleran Canastero	<i>Asthenes modesta</i>	Pair in El Yeso valley.
Austral Canastero	<i>Asthenes anthoides</i>	Pair in Torres del Paine.
E Dusky-tailed Canastero	<i>Asthenes humicola</i>	Pair in La Dormilona.
White-throated Treerunner	<i>Pygarrhichas albogularis</i>	Pair in Tierra del Fuego national park, Argentina.
<b>Tapaculos</b>	<b>Rhinocryptidae</b>	
E Moustached Turca	<i>Pteroptochos megapodius</i>	Incredible views in Los Farallones. Also heard in La Dormilona.
Magellanic Tapaculo	<i>Scytalopus magellanicus</i>	Great views of a pair in El Yeso valley, Likely to be split in the future!
<b>Cotingas</b>	<b>Cotingidae</b>	
Rufous-tailed Plantcutter	<i>Phytotoma rara</i>	An odd species for being a Cotinga. We certainly enjoyed this species with the scope and paid special attention to the eyes color.
<b>Tyrant Flycatchers</b>	<b>Tyrannidae</b>	
White-crested Elaenia	<i>Elaenia albiceps</i>	Scattered views of pairs and single individuals. Common and widespread in scrubby vegetation.
Tufted Tit-Tyrant	<i>Anairetes parulus</i>	Great views in a couple of times. What a little beauty!
Many-colored Rush-Tyrant	<i>Tachuris rubrigastra</i>	Superb views of juveniles and an adult in the wetlands near the industrial zone.
Austral Negrito	<i>Lessonia rufa</i>	Common and widespread. Locally named "Colagial" referring to the similarity between the plumage and the dressing of the school kids.
Spectacled Tyrant	<i>Hymenops perspicillatus</i>	Pair on route to Valparaiso. We all enjoyed the immaculate white wings when flying!
Chocolate-vented Tyrant	<i>Neoxolmis rufiventris</i>	What a huge Tyrannidae. We learned about the diet of this species as we enjoyed throughout the scope. Seen well in the first couple of days as well as in La Dormilona road.
Fire-eyed Diucon	<i>Xolmis pyrope</i>	Four individuals where the main road ends in El Yeso valley.
Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrant	<i>Muscisaxicola flavinucha</i>	The commonest ground-tyrant in this trip. Only in El Yeso valley we saw more than 40 individuals in a single day!
White-browed Ground-Tyrant	<i>Muscisaxicola albilora</i>	

<b>Swallows</b>	<b>Hirundidae</b>	
Chilean Swallow	<i>Tachycineta meyeni</i>	common and widespread in the lowlands.
Blue-and-white Swallow	<i>Notiochelidon cyanoleuca</i>	Common in mountains. This race migrates to the caribbean coast during the austral migration. Only one individual sighted at Quintero on 21 October.
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	
<b>Wagtails &amp; Pipits</b>	<b>Motacillidae</b>	
Correndera Pipit	<i>Anthus correndera</i>	One individual in the grassland in Torres del Paine. Seen well by everyone!
<b>Wrens</b>	<b>Troglodytidae</b>	
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	Daily views. Sometimes considered a separate species, Souther House Wren. Seen twice in patagonia. Everyone enjoyed this species even throughout the scope.
Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	
<b>Mockingbirds &amp; Thrashers</b>	<b>Mimidae</b>	
E Chilean Mockingbird	<i>Mimus thenca</i>	Many pairs in central Chile.
<b>Thrushes &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Turdidae</b>	
Austral Thrush	<i>Turdus falcklandii</i>	Daily views. Very common.
<b>Old World Sparrows</b>	<b>Passeridae</b>	
House Sparrow ( I )	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Scattered sights in central Chile and Patagonia.
<b>Siskins, Crossbills &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Fringillidae</b>	
Black-chinned Siskin	<i>Carduelis barbata</i>	A rather large siskin compared to most in tropical America. Common in central Chile.
<b>Buntings, Sparrows</b>	<b>Emberizidae</b>	
Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch	<i>Phrygilus gayi</i>	Common in central Chile, and less common in Patagonia, where usually replaced by the next species.
Patagonian Sierra-Finch	<i>Phrygilus patagonicus</i>	Two pairs in Patagonia.
Mourning Sierra-Finch	<i>Phrygilus fruticeti</i>	One male singing in El Yeso valley.
Plumbeous Sierra-Finch	<i>Phrygilus unicolor</i>	More than 20 individuals along the El Yeso road. Seen singing in many locations in central Chile. Obviously in the peak of the breeding season! After much effort in Cachagua, we saw this species well on route to El Peral. Also seen in the last morning.
Common Diuca-Finch	<i>Diuca diuca</i>	
Grassland Yellow-Finch	<i>Sicalis luteola</i>	
Greater Yellow-Finch	<i>Sicalis auriventris</i>	A huge canary-looking finch, seen in the mountains. One of the most beautiful races of this andean species, found from Colombia all the way south to Tierra del Fuego.
Rufous-collared Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>	
<b>Troupials &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Icteridae</b>	
Yellow-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelasticus thilius</i>	Pairs and single individuals in central Chile and Patagonia.
Long-tailed Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella loyca</i>	Almost daily views in central Chile and Patagonia.
Shiny Cowbird	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>	Only one individual in El Yeso valley. Many seen in Central Chile, while in patagonia we saw scattered individuals. Sings more like a mountain grackle.
Austral Blackbird	<i>Curaeus curaeus</i>	