

AMAZON RIVER CRUISE
A BIRDING AND NATURAL HISTORY ODYSSEY
JANUARY 23 – FEBRUARY 1, 2009

PRETRIP TO MACHU PICCHU:
BIRDS, RUINS AND HISTORY
JANUARY 18 – 23, 2009

The Amazon region conjures many images, but it is, above all, a realm of superlatives. The centerpiece of this vast region is the Amazon River itself, the largest river in the world. In fact, many of its tributaries rival or exceed the size of other great rivers of the world. The Amazonian region also boasts the highest diversity of both birds and plants anywhere in the world. The very word “Amazon” brings to mind images of broad, sinuous rivers, tree-lined banks, strange animals, bright butterflies, torrential rains, and glorious sunsets. Along the rivers one may see macaws and parrots and oropendolas flying overhead, ponderous Horned Screamers rising from stream banks and exotic wildlife that includes Hoatzins, Umbrellabirds, sloths, fresh-water dolphins, and monkeys coexisting in this untamed area.

We offer this relatively short excursion to the Amazon for those who want a full Amazonian rainforest and river experience without sacrificing comfort. We believe, in fact, that the classically-styled, triple-deck riverboat we’re using offers visitors the utmost in comfort, security and safety while still permitting us to visit remote and relatively unspoiled regions in Amazonia. The ship’s spacious cabins are individually climate-controlled, air-conditioned, and include private tiled bathrooms, hot-water showers, free laundry service, and bottled water available at all times. Visitors can also be assured of having waterproof ponchos, walking sticks, and extra thick boat cushions as needed for offbeat excursions. The ship features excellent food and an open-air upper deck for great wildlife viewing by day and stargazing by night. The list of amenities offered by the ship and its attendant crew is impressive. Additionally, stable, flat-bottomed boats powered by exceptionally quite engines permit intimate exploration of small streams and lakes with ease and comfort, and a minimum of noise intrusion.

The mobility of our ship and its excursion boats will allow us to explore different habitats and streams each morning and afternoon, and provide exceptional opportunities to see birds and wildlife. Some birds will be common, widespread Amazonian species such as Black-collared Hawk, Black-fronted Nunbird, Oriole Blackbird, Yellow-rumped Cacique, and Russet-backed Oropendola. Others will be more local species such as Hoatzin, Short-tailed Parrot, and perhaps river island and river bank specialties such as Red-and-white Spinetail and Black-and-white Antbird. During the course of the trip we’ll explore small wooded streams, lakes, seasonally flooded forest (várzea), and flooded river islands. Toward the latter part of the trip, we’ll spend some time walking in tall, high

ground forest where there is access to an elevated walkway through the forest. Here or nearby we may find a fruiting tree frequented by colorful aracaries, tanagers, and honeycreepers, or an army ant swarm with its attendant antbirds and woodcreepers.

A brilliant blue Plum-throated Cotinga perched in a treetop, a pair of Blue-and-yellow Macaws winging overhead, a swirling group of Canary-winged Parakeets along the river, or a White-eared Jacamar in the morning sun—it is hard to predict which of these or many other experiences will delight you the most. We'll also fill some spare shipboard time with discussions and explanations of Amazonian natural history, as well as recaps of daily excursions in the evenings. We are confident that at the end of this extraordinary cruise you will have a greater appreciation and understanding of the Amazon region and the myriad creatures that make it the most complex ecosystem anywhere on earth.

Traveler's note: Many people harbor misgivings about visiting the Amazon, fearing excessive heat and humidity, torrential rain, hordes of mosquitoes or other insects. While it is indeed possible to experience such things, most visitors are pleasantly surprised at how comfortable travel can be even in the heart of Amazonia. The airy, breezy ship and air-conditioned cabins mitigate the effects of even the hottest days, and visitors soon discover that insects and mosquitoes, far from being the torment they are imagined, are little or no problem at all. This trip, which is based aboard a relatively small ship, the La Amatista, offers perhaps the most comfortable and luxurious way possible to explore the Amazon while still retaining the ability to visit remote regions. Visitors can be assured of a shipboard staff and crew that will respond to your every need, exciting exploratory trips mornings, afternoons, and evenings, and some of the best birding and wildlife viewing in the Amazon.

PRETRIP TO MACHU PICCHU: BIRDS, RUINS AND HISTORY JANUARY 18 – 23, 2009

January 18, Day 1: Miami to Lima. Participants may arrive Lima, Peru any time today. Most flights from the United States arrive sometime late evening. When making your reservation, bear in mind that you may want to arrive as early as possible in the evening as we have a very early hotel departure the following morning. If time permits, we recommend arriving a day early in order to rest and to allow for flight delays that are sometimes associated with winter weather in your home areas

NIGHT: Jose Antonio, Lima

January 19, Day 2: Lima to Cuzco and visit to Laguna Huacarpay; short afternoon drive to Yucay. Our day will start early, with a transfer to the airport for our flight from Lima to Cuzco. Upon arrival in Cuzco, we will transfer to a bus for the thirty- to forty-minute drive to Laguna Huacarpay. Because we will have just come from sea level, and the Cuzco area is situated at about 11,000 feet, we will relax and take our time here. After a couple pleasant hours at this beautiful lake we will make our way by bus down the Urubamba Valley to lower elevation where we'll spend the night. Birds are usually numerous and relatively easy to see at Laguna Huacarpay (elevation of about 10,500 feet) and in the surrounding arid hills. Among the possibilities are White-tufted and Silvery grebes, Puna Ibis, Speckled and Puna teals, Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Duck, Aplomado Falcon (scarce), Cinereous Harrier (scarce), Plumbeous Rail, Common Moorhen, Andean Coot, Andean Lapwing, Andean Gull, Spot-winged Pigeon (irregular), Bare-faced Ground-Dove, Andean Flicker, Wren-like Rushbird, Spot-billed and Rufous-naped

ground-tyrants, Andean (White-winged) Negrito, White-browed Chat-Tyrant, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, Chiguanco Thrush, Yellow-winged Blackbird, Band-tailed Seedeater, and Greenish Yellow-Finch. This also is an excellent location in which to look for the spectacular Bearded Mountaineer, a hummingbird endemic to Peru. Black-tailed and Green-tailed trainbearers and Sparkling Violetear are seen here occasionally, as well. Later we will continue down the Urubamba Valley, watching for Puna Hawk, Andean Gull (along river), Andean Swift, and Giant Hummingbird and occasionally Brown-bellied Swallows en route. The drive will take us along the rushing Urubamba River. Our hotel is a charming country inn, and we should arrive in time to relax, rest, or do some birding around the hotel grounds at dusk.

NIGHT: La Posada del Inca, Yucay

January 20, Day 3: Early Morning Departure for the High Abra Malaga Pass in the Vilcanota

Mountains. We will depart relatively early today for the approximately one hour drive up into a magnificent side canyon leading to the Abra Malaga Pass. Our route takes a winding but recently paved side road and, if we make it all the way, to the top, eventually crosses the mountains at a 14,000 foot high pass. The road is spectacular for its scenery alone, with snow-capped mountains, glacier-filled valleys, golden panoramas of puna grassland, and modern-day descendants of the Incas. We will spend most of the day here, perhaps reaching the pass before turning back. Above about 11,000 feet, we will leave the scrub zone and enter puna grassland (here heavily grazed by herds of llama and alpaca). Along this route we should see llama and alpaca tended by Indians who still wear their colorful, traditional dress. Three Peruvian endemics may be found here: White-tufted Sunbeam, Creamy-crested Spinetail, and Chestnut-breasted Mountain-Finch and with any luck we should find all three of them. Additionally, all of the following species have been seen on previous visits here and are possible: Puna Snipe; Andean Ibis; Andean Goose; Andean Condor; Puna (Variable) Hawk; Gray-breasted Seedsnipe; Shining Sunbeam, Great Sapphirewing, Scaled and Tyrian metaltails; Giant Hummingbird; Olivaceous Thornbill; Puna Thistletail; Rufous-fronted, Streak-throated, and Streak-backed canasteros; Cuzco Tapaculo (local); Yellow-billed and Tufted tit-tyrants; Brown-backed, White-browed and Rufous-breasted chat-tyrants; Spot-billed, Rufous-naped, Ochre-naped, Cinereous, and perhaps Puna and White-fronted ground-tyrants; Brown-bellied Swallow; Black-throated Flowerpiercer; Greenish and Bright-rumped yellow-finches; White-winged Diuca-Finch; Peruvian Sierra-Finch; Golden-billed Saltator; Plumbeous Sierra-Finch; and Black-backed Grosbeak. Other less common possibilities, include Tawny Tit-Spinetail, and Stripe-headed Antpitta. All birding today will be along the roadside and will not involve strenuous walking, although just moving even short distances at these elevations requires effort! As we walk this road, we should be afforded magnificent views of the mountains.

We usually begin our return to the hotel by about mid-afternoon or slightly later, allowing time to stop briefly in the Inca city of Ollantaytambo on our return. Widely regarded as the most typical Inca city in Peru, it is surrounded by ruins and walls that attest to a long occupation by earlier civilizations. The city itself appears as if lifted from an earlier time, being composed mostly of ancient stone walls, open aqueducts to transport water and a population that adheres to mostly traditional dress.

Later, returning to our hotel, some participants also may enjoy a final walk around our hotel this evening, enjoying the lovely setting, crisp evening air and birds on the grounds. White-bellied Hummingbird, Green-tailed Trainbearer, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, Rusty Flowerpiercer, Black-backed Grosbeak, Chiguanco Thrush, and numerous Rufous-collared Sparrows can usually be seen in trees and shrubs around the hotel while Puna Ibis, Spot-winged Pigeon and American Kestrel may be seen flying up or down the valley.

NIGHT: La Posada del Inca, Yucay

January 21, Day 4: Yucay to Machu Picchu. Following an early breakfast (5:45 a.m.), we will depart for the Ollantaytambo train station, where we may have some time to see this remarkable city, which is one of the most traditional Inca cities remaining in Peru. Once aboard the train, we have about two hours before we reach the Machu Picchu ruins, along a route that follows the bottom of the Urubamba River valley. Torrent Ducks, White-capped Dippers, and more tremendous views of Mt. Veronica are part of this fascinating trip. Upon arrival, we will

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check into our hotel, have lunch, and then start up the famous Hiram Bingham road to the ruins, some 1,500 feet higher. Little needs to be said of the incomparable beauty of this place, one of the most famous and most spectacular archaeological ruins in the world. Located on a high ridge, the old city is surrounded on three sides by sheer cliffs that fall away to the river far below. Across the river on all sides are huge mountains covered with cloud forests. In the distance, even higher snow-capped mountain ridges can be seen. We may never know the true origins of this remarkable site, but whether ancient fortress, secret city, or elaborate agricultural project, it humbles us as we stand before such a magnificent panorama.

After the train departs for the afternoon, we will have the site almost to ourselves and enjoy the opportunity of seeing Machu Picchu in that special late-evening light. Our local guide, Doris Valencia, a Cuzco resident, who is an excellent birder and marvelous student of Inca history, will take us on a guided walking tour of the ruins and previous groups have been unanimous in their praise for her ability to bring Inca history to life, to discuss the many mysteries surrounding the ruins, and to answer questions. During her tour we will also keep an eye skyward occasionally for a few birds around the ruins. However, it is the subtropical forests far below, which we will see tomorrow, rather than the scrub vegetation around the perimeter of the ruins, that are most interesting for birds. In the vicinity of the ruins, it is possible to see White-collared and White-tipped swifts; Black-tailed Trainbearer; White-winged Black-Tyrant; White-crested, Sierran, and Highland elaenias; White-winged Black-Tyrant; Blue-and-white Swallow; Cinereous Conebill; Slaty and Black-throated flowerpiercers; Inca Wren (endemic); Blue-capped Tanager; Tricolored Brush-Finch and Black-and-white Seedeater. Andean Condors are occasionally seen above the ruins and, of course, Rufous-collared Sparrows are to be seen almost everywhere. Most groups remain at this magnificent site as long as possible, enjoying the magnificent of the setting and the history, and often catch the last bus back down the steep hill to the hotel. We will have dinner this evening at the luxurious Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel.

NIGHT: Hotel Machu Picchu Pueblo

January 22, Day 5: Morning birding around the hotel in the Urubamba Valley; afternoon train back to Cuzco. Visitors are again welcome to return to the ruins this morning. However, we will also plan a full morning of birding around the hotel. Because the hotel grounds have many hummingbird feeders and are extensively planted with orchids and other native species, the grounds are perhaps the single best place to spend the morning. A sampling of species we have seen here on previous visits includes: Torrent Duck; Fasciated Tiger-Heron (rare); Andean Guan; White-throated Quail-Dove; Plum-crowned and Red-billed parrots (irregular in occurrence); Mitred Parakeet (also irregular in occurrence); Green and Sparkling violetears; Green-and-white and Speckled hummingbirds; Bronzy and Collared incas; Chestnut-breasted Coronet; Long-tailed Sylph; White-bellied Woodstar; Andean and White-tipped swifts; Highland Motmot; Crested and Golden-headed quetzals; Spot-crowned Woodcreeper; Variable Antshrike; Masked Fruiteater; White-winged Black-Tyrant; Dusky-capped Flycatcher; Smoke-colored Pewee; Mottle-cheeked and Sclater's tyrannulets; Ochraceous-breasted, Streaked-necked, and Golden-crowned flycatchers; Torrent Tyrannulet; Glossy-black Thrush; Slate-throated and Spectacled redstarts; Dusky-green Oropendola; Capped Conebill; Rusty Flowerpiercer; Thick-billed and Orange-bellied euphonias; Golden-naped, Saffron-crowned, Beryl-spangled, Silver-backed, Bay-headed, and Black-capped tanagers; Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager; Oleaginous Hemispingus; Silver-beaked Tanager; Pale-legged and Russet-crowned warblers; and Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch. There is also a reasonably good chance that we will see an Andean Cock-of-the-rock perched or flying through the grounds this morning.

After returning to the hotel for a late lunch, we will board the train at 2:45 p.m. for a 3:00 p.m. departure and the approximately five-hour trip back to Cuzco. If attendance is high at the ruins, we may travel only part way by train and then be transferred to a bus for the remainder of the trip.

NIGHT: Novotel Hotel, Cuzco

January 23, Day 6: Cuzco to Lima. This morning there should be time for participants to take a short walk around Cuzco, visit the lovely central plaza or perhaps do some shopping. We will take a late morning flight from Cuzco, arriving around noon or early afternoon in Lima. The remainder of the afternoon will be free to relax,

rest, or perhaps arrange for a short sightseeing tour of Lima or a visit to a museum. In the past, however, we have found that by the time we make our transfer to the hotel and have a late lunch there is only limited time available for other activities. If there are any participants returning to the United States this evening they also will be provided day rooms at the hotel, a final evening meal at the hotel, and transfers to the airport in time for return flights. Most participants will overnight and prepare for our early morning flight to Iquitos tomorrow to join our Amazon Cruise.

NIGHT: Jose Antonio, Lima

AMAZON RIVER CRUISE

A BIRDING AND NATURAL HISTORY ODYSSEY

JANUARY 23 – FEBRUARY 1, 2009

January 23, Day 1: Miami to Lima. Participants may arrive Lima, Peru anytime today. After clearing immigration and customs, you will be transferred to your nearby hotel. Most flights from the United States arrive sometime late evening. When making your reservation, bear in mind that you may want to arrive as early as possible in the evening as we are offering an optional morning trip the following morning to a wetland near Lima that is sure to have many birds. If time permits, we recommend arriving a day early in order to rest and to allow for flight delays that are sometimes associated with winter weather in your home areas. Please be aware that those participants who are delayed may not be able to make the Saturday morning flight (Day 2) from Lima to Iquitos are would be at risk of being unable to reach the ship prior to its departure.

NIGHT: Jose Antonio, Lima

January 24, Day 2: Lima to Iquitos, Peru. Our flight to Iquitos is currently scheduled for an afternoon departure, so, for those that wish, we will offer a short morning birding trip south of Lima to an excellent marsh and coastal region. This small marsh, known as Pantanos de Villa, contains a remarkably rich selection of birds and we should be able to see many of them. The birds we will see this morning are completely different from the Amazon region and a sampling of marsh and coastal species we should see includes: Great and white-tufted grebe; Peruvian Pelican; Peruvian Booby; Olivaceous and Guanay cormorants; several egrets and herons; White-cheeked Pintail; Cinnamon Teal; Osprey; Black Vulture (hundreds); Plumbeous Rail; Common Moorhen; South American Stilt; Peruvian Thick-knee (now scarce and local); Kelp; Band-tailed, Gray-hooded, Gray, and Franklin's gulls; Inca Tern (perhaps a few); Pacific Dove; Croaking Ground-Dove; Amazilia Hummingbird; Wren-like Rushbird; Many-colored Rush-Tyrant; Vermilion Flycatcher (including a dusky form in Lima; normal red ones along the coast); Long-tailed Mockingbird; and Peruvian Red-breasted Blackbird.

After lunch we will board our approximately 1 ½ hour flight to Iquitos, which is located in the heart of the upper Amazonian region. Following a short orientation and tour of the city, we should be aboard ship by late afternoon, and, if time permits, we will arrange for a short excursion by small boat this evening. We should quickly begin to see the more common and more widespread birds along the river, some of these even as we leave Iquitos. These species should include Cocoli and Striated herons, Great and Snowy egrets, Turkey and Black vultures, Plumbeous Kite, Roadside Hawk, Yellow-headed Caracara, Large-billed and Yellow-billed terns, and Oriole Blackbird. Our afternoon exploration of the Amazon will begin with a short visit to a river island. All of the river islands should be flooded, or mostly so, at this time of year, which makes access to island habitats by boat relatively easy. There are more than twenty species of river island bird specialists here, almost all of which occur in one of four or five island vegetation types: tall grass (*Gynerium* spp.); willow (*Salix*) and *Tessaria*; *Cecropia* and *Heliconia* spp; and mixed *Ficus* trees. Some river island habitat bird species we could see include Short-tailed Parrot; Tui Parakeet; Olive-spotted Hummingbird; Plain-breasted Piculet; Lesser Hornero (sand bars); White-bellied, Parker's and Red-and-white spinetails; Castelnau's Antshrike (mainly older islands); Leaden Antwren; Black-and-white Antbird; Brownish Elaenia; River Tyrannulet; Lesser Wagtail-

Tyrant; Riverside Tyrant; and Pearly-breasted Conebill. Other species we could see on or in the vicinity of river islands include Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture; Wattled Jacana; Canary-winged Parakeet; Greater and Smooth-billed anis; Ringed and Amazon kingfishers; Spotted Tody-Flycatcher; Great Kiskadee; Brown-chested and Gray-breasted martins; White-winged and Southern Rough-winged swallows; Orange-headed, Blue-gray, and Silver-beaked tanagers; Grayish Saltator; Red-capped Cardinal; Russet-backed Oropendola; Yellow-rumped Cacique; Yellow-hooded blackbird; Shiny Cowbird; Lesson's, Chestnut-bellied, and Caquetá seedeaters; and any of the species mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph.

NIGHT: *La Amatista* on Rio Amazon

January 25, Day 3: Early morning birding Amazon tributaries near the junction of the Ríos Marañon and Ucayali. We will be off the ship early for exploration of river island and *várzea* (floodplain) habitat in the vicinity of the Quebrada Yarapa. A sampling of birds this morning could include most of the species mentioned yesterday as well as Wood Stork; Gray-headed and Snail kites; Black-collared and Slate-colored hawks; Pale-vented Pigeon; Dusky-headed, White-eyed, and Cobalt-winged parakeets; Greater Ani; Black-tailed Trogon; Green Kingfisher; Black-fronted Nunbird; White-eared Jacamar; Chestnut-eared Aracari; Crimson-crested Woodpecker; Pale-legged Hornero; Striped and Straight-billed woodcreepers; Barred Antshrike; White-headed Marsh-Tyrant; Short-crested Flycatcher; Masked Tityra; Bare-necked Fruitcrow; Black-capped Donacobius; Buff-breasted Wren; Black-billed Thrush; Red-eyed Vireo; Hooded and Turquoise tanagers; Thick-billed and Purple-throated euphonias; Silver-beaked and Masked Crimson tanagers; Yellow-rumped Cacique; and Russet-backed Oropendola. There is also a good possibility of seeing Pink River Dolphins and perhaps even Gray River Dolphins.

We should be back aboard ship late this morning. By mid-day we hope to reach the bifurcation of the Amazon into the Ríos Ucayali and Río Marañon. Upriver on the Rio Ucayali we will be traveling along the border of the Pacaya Samiria Reserve. We will continue to watch sand bars and river banks for new species, including such characteristic species as Pied Plover and Drab Water Tyrant. We will make our way up the Ucayali this afternoon, stopping for a late-afternoon excursion. After dinner we will be off the ship for our first (optional) night excursion by small boat on the Quebrada Supay, a tributary of the Río Ucayali. It is difficult to predict what we might see on night excursions, but Boat-billed Heron, Common and Great potoos, and Ladder-tailed Nightjar are all possible, as well as opossums or other mammals and occasionally tree boas.

NIGHT: *La Amatista* on the Río Ucayali

January 26, Day 4: Amazon River / Río Ucayali. We have two days to explore this region of the Amazon. On the first morning we'll spend a long morning birding up the Quebrada Supay by boat, taking our picnic breakfast with us. Along the relatively narrow and heavily forested Quebrada Supay, we should continue to see species typical of *várzea* forest, although the taller forest and narrower channel here may give us opportunities to add many new species this morning. A sampling could include almost any of the species mentioned previously, as well as Horned Screamer; Black Caracara; Hoatzin; Muscovy Duck; Ruddy Pigeon; Gray-fronted Dove; Mealy and Festive parrots; Sand-colored Nighthawk; Short-tailed Swift; Glittering-throated Emerald; Scarlet-crowned and Lemon-throated barbets; Spotted Puffbird; Cream-colored Woodpecker; Dark-breasted Spinetail; Long-billed Woodcreeper; Great and Black-crested antshrikes; Amazonian Streaked-Antwren; Plumbeous, Band-tailed and/or Black-chinned, and Silvered antbirds; Black-spotted Bare-eye; Plum-throated Cotinga; Greater Schiffornis; Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet; Forest Elaenia; Social Flycatcher; and Velvet-fronted Grackle.

Late this morning or early in the afternoon we will go ashore and explore, on foot, some regrowth habitats and secondary forest, or perhaps also make time for a short visit to a school in an Amerindian village. This afternoon we will reposition the ship again moving a bit further upriver. During the early afternoon, we will continue moving upstream to reposition for tomorrow morning's activities. After dinner we will again be off the ship for our second (optional) night excursion by small boat along a small tributary of the Río Ucayali.

NIGHT: *La Amatista* on the Río Ucayali

January 27, Day 5. Río Tapiche / Río Marañon. This first morning will be devoted to the exploration of the Río Tapiche, a tributary of the Ucayali. Depending upon what we have seen previously, we may use our time either inside the forest or continuing to bird and explore from small boats. Birds and mammal possibilities could be any of those mentioned on the previous day as well as many more. This is a good region for waterbirds and waders, as well as parrots and parakeets, and we may see pairs or families of Scarlet Macaws along the river and perhaps other macaws overhead. A sample of birds here might include almost any of the species mentioned on days 3 and 4, as well as Capped Heron, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Green Ibis, Great Black-Hawk, Speckled Chachalaca, Sungrebe, Sunbittern (scarce), Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Black-throated Mango, up to five species of kingfishers, Gilded Barbet, Forest and Yellow-crowned elaenias, Cinnamon and White-eyed attilas, Lesser Kiskadee, and Gray-capped Flycatcher. This also is an excellent area for primates and among the possibilities are Red Howler Monkey, Squirrel Monkey, Saddle-backed Tamarin, Black-chested Moustached Tamarin (south bank), Dusky Titi-Monkey, Brown capuchin, and perhaps even the unusual Monk Saki (scarce and retiring). Rarest of the primates here is the Red Uakari Monkey and, although it is quite scarce, it is occasionally seen by groups and we will certainly be watching for it.

Late today will find us back aboard *La Turquesa*, as we prepare to retrace our route back down the Río Ucayali. We will reposition ourselves downriver near the junction of the Marañon and weigh anchor for the evening. Time permitting we will make a short excursion by boat to a nearby river island or stream.

NIGHT: *La Amatista* on Río Marañon

January 28, Day 6. Morning exploration of river islands. We will be spending the morning exploring river islands or, depending upon where our boat is positioned at dawn, perhaps exploring slowly up one of the hundreds of small creeks and tributaries that feed the main Ucayali and Marañon rivers here. Continuing some of the activities that we began our first afternoon in the channel of the Amazon, we will be looking for a number of river island bird specialist species that live almost exclusively in the various early successional stage vegetation on islands. River islands vary enormously in size, in age, and in vegetation structure but all of them harbor interesting arrays of birds that are generally fairly easy to see. Many of the species possible this morning have already been mentioned previously under the list for day two. Because of the ever-changing nature of the islands from one flood season to another one never knows what combinations or birds to expect, or even if a particular island has survived the previous high-water seasons. Typically, on these islands we may expect, from youngest vegetation to oldest, 1) sand bars, often with low colonizing grass, as well as 2) marshes and tall grass, 3) small shrubby trees known as *Tessaria* (Asteraceae family) which attract birds that forage for insects on its leaves, 4) willows (*Salix*), 5) *Cecropia* of various ages, 6) large *Ficus* (figs) and 7) on the oldest islands a more advanced and diverse array of trees that resemble second growth habitats on the mainland. Each of the various habitats harbor an array of interesting bird species and a good many of these birds are found nowhere else. We will try to reach several of these habitats by small boat and, of course, there will always be many other more widespread species ranging from herons, egrets, vultures, hawks and caracaras to kingbirds, saltators, orioles and seedeaters on the islands. In a morning visiting river islands it is possible to see an astonishing variety of species (more actually than in the forest) because of the greater visibility of species in these semi-open habitats. This afternoon we'll begin moving up the Río Marañon River to position our ship close to our final destination where we plan to spend the last two days. Again, depending upon our schedule, we may be able to disembark en route for another late-afternoon river exploration by small boat.

NIGHT: *La Amatista* on Río Marañon

January 29, Day 7: Río Marañon; vicinity of La Suite del Marañon and the canopy walkway. We should be anchored close to La Suite del Marañon and the mid-level forest walkway which lies about thirty minutes walking distance inland in lush *terra firme* or high ground forest which will be somewhat hilly. We will be off the ship early this morning for the first of two days of land-based activities. We will spend the morning birding and exploring this upland, forest and some forest edge habitats. This site an elevated wooden walkway that spans a large ravine, a small hotel, numerous trails, a lake, and a relatively narrow, elevated walkway (eight

suspended sections) through the forest. In the past we have found the wooden walkway near the hotel to be quite productive with mixed species bird flocks, Pygmy Marmosets and other primates, and sometimes excellent close view of honeycreepers and hummingbirds visiting flowers near this walkway. Generally, this area offers a good variety of activities and the opportunity to see a good number of birds that we would not be able to see based entirely from boats. However, forest birding activities are typically more difficult and we plan to spend two full mornings here and perhaps one afternoon as well, in order to provide time for everyone to visit the boardwalk, walk trails and experience the suspended walkway.

This region of *terra firme* forest and is typically somewhat drier and better-drained than *várzea* forest although it is likely that trails may still be muddy in places. In general *terra firme* forest is biologically the most diverse ecosystem in the Amazon, with a greater diversity of birds per unit area than any other forest ecosystem on the planet. It is also one of the most challenging habitats in which to see birds, requiring our utmost concentration, but the rewards can be high. Obligate army ant-following antbirds occur here, sometimes with as many as a dozen individuals gathering and bickering as they pursue prey fleeing from the ants. Here mixed species flocks also reach their greatest diversity, with flocks forming both in the canopy and in the understory. When both groups join, as they do occasionally, one can experience an astonishing array of birds from the understory to the canopy. Birds that forage in mixed species flocks typically move rapidly through the forest, and they present an exciting if sometimes frustrating experience for human observers trying to see them. With patience and concentration, however, many species can be seen.

A sample of mostly forest-based species that we may see here could include Cinereous Tinamou; Gray-fronted Dove; Squirrel and Black-bellied cuckoos; Black-tailed, White-tailed, and Violaceous trogons; White-chinned Jacamar; Lemon-throated Barbet; Many-banded Araçari; Chestnut and Red-necked woodpeckers; Rufous-tailed Foliage-gleaner; Plain-brown, Amazonian Barred- and Buff-throated woodcreepers; Plain-winged, Cinereous, and Dusky-throated antshrikes; Plain-throated, White-flanked, Long-winged, and Gray antwrens; Warbling, Scale-backed, Bicolored, Spot-backed, and White-plumed antbirds; Rusty-belted Tapaculo; White-bearded, Golden-headed, Blue-crowned, and Striped manakins; Dwarf Tyrant Manakin; Thrush-like Schiffornis; Screaming Piha (amazing voice!); Violaceous Jay; Black-billed, Hauxwell's, and White-necked thrushes; Dusky-capped Greenlet; Fulvous Shrike-Tanager; Flame-crested, Green-and-gold, and Paradise tanagers; Buff-throated Saltator; and Slate-colored Grosbeak. Our afternoon activities may include returning to the forest or a visit to a nearby lake or small stream.

NIGHT: *La Amatista* on Río Marañón

January 30, Day 8: La Suite del Marañón and the canopy walkway. We will spend a second morning in the vicinity of La Suite del Marañón and the canopy walkway in order to take advantage of this biologically rich area and to ensure that all participants have an excellent early-morning visit to the walkway. We will leave about noon today for the approximately eight- to nine-hour trip back to Iquitos. We will tie up close to Iquitos late this evening in preparation for our departure early tomorrow morning.

NIGHT: *La Turquesa* on Río Amazon near Iquitos

January 31, Day 9: Departure from La Amatista; flight from Iquitos to Lima. We will disembark *La Amatista* early this morning and transfer to the VIP lounge at the airport in Iquitos in preparation for our flight to Lima. Because flights are sometimes delayed out of Iquitos to Lima we have not scheduled any afternoon activities. After check-in and lunch you will have the balance of the afternoon free for sight seeing in Lima, or for relaxing and preparing for your flight home. We will meet for dinner in the hotel this evening. Participants returning to the United States this evening will be provided day rooms at the hotel and transferred to the airport after dinner for return flights later tonight.

DAY ROOM: Jose Antonio, Lima (for those departing later this evening)

Please Note: Participants who require a full overnight stay, or any additional hotel nights, VENT can make these arrangements for you. Please refer to your Participant Packet's included "Optional Hotel Request Form" (Participant Packets are mailed to deposited tour participants approximately 8 months prior to sailing).

February 1, Day 10: Arrive the United States. Early morning arrival in the United States for connecting flights homeward.

Due to the nature of the expedition, weather conditions or government regulations may require changes to be made to the itinerary and/or the cancellation of certain shore excursions. Every attempt will be made to adhere to the itinerary described, within the limits of safety and time. In the event of changes, passengers have no right to any refund or other compensation. Expedition fees are based on group participation. Should you choose not to take part in any activity or make use of services provided, no refund will be made.

TOUR SIZE: This Amazon River Cruise will be limited to 28 participants. The Machu Picchu Extension will be limited in size to 12 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Steve Hilty, David Ascanio, for the cruise. Steve Hilty and Doris Valencia for the extension.

Steve Hilty is the senior author of *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*, and the recently published *Birds of Venezuela*, both by Princeton University Press. Other credits include *Birds of Tropical America, A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*, which has just been republished by the University of Texas Press. He has also written a number of scientific papers on birds and plants, and is presently preparing the text and species accounts for the tanagers for a forthcoming volume of the acclaimed *Handbook of Birds of the World*, published by Lynx Press in Barcelona. Steve holds a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Arizona and has worked at the Arid Lands Department at the University of Arizona, as a consultant to The Nature Conservancy, and as a stockbroker. He is currently a research associate at the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History. Since 1975, he has led tours throughout North and South America, and co-led trips to India, the Orient, and Australasian regions. With three decades of experience in South America and a wide range of natural history interests, he brings a unique breadth of expertise to his Neotropical tours. At night he often turns his binoculars towards the skies for stargazing. Steve lives in Kansas City with his wife, Beverly. They have two college age daughters.

David Ascanio, a young Venezuelan birder and naturalist, has spent the last 20 years guiding birding tours throughout his native country, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, northern Peru, and western Ecuador. He is especially interested in bird vocalizations, and has a private library containing sounds of more than 70% of all the birds of Venezuela, including some which are the only ones known to science. David speaks excellent English and combines superb birding skills with an astonishing command of bird vocalizations. He has published several manuscripts about the birds of the llanos (plains) and the tepui endemics for which he has become an authority. He is an excellent communicator, has a great sense of humor, and is tireless in helping others find birds and wildlife. These traits have made him the most popular naturalist/guide in his country.

Doris Valencia, a naturalist born in Cuzco, Peru, began her study of the Manu wilderness at a young age. She has served as a volunteer park ranger in Manu National Park, and has been working as a naturalist tour guide for about five years. She is an avid student of the flora and fauna of Manu and has a special preference for birds. Doris leads birding groups in Paracas National Marine Reserve, Bajuaa-Sonene National Park, Tambopata Candamo National Reserve, Pampas del Heath, Machu Picchu Historical Sanctuary, and Manu Biosphere Reserve. Doris is also an excellent avian natural history lecturer.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the Amazon River Cruise is **\$3,995** per person in double occupancy from Lima. This includes meals beginning with Breakfast on Day 2 through Dinner on Day 9; hotel and ship accommodations as stated in the itinerary; roundtrip airfare between Lima and Iquitos*; ground transportation during the tour; group transfers and baggage handling between airport, ship, and hotel; shore excursions and river cruises as described; gratuities to crew or staff of the *La Amatista*; and services of on-board leaders and lecturers.

***Please Note: Domestic airfare Lima-Iquitos-Lima is included in the tour fees above. At the time of printing the approximate cost of these air segments is \$300 but is subject to change without notice until the time of ticketing. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours reserves the right to assess a surcharge for this air ticket should costs increase before ticketing.**

The cruise fee does not include airfare from your home to Lima and return; airport departure taxes; alcoholic beverages; phone calls; laundry; excess baggage charges; international departure taxes; passport or visa fees (if applicable); accommodations, meals, and transfers prior to joining/after tour; personal and baggage insurance; and all items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for the Amazon River Cruise is **\$1,895**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

The fee for the Pre-trip to Machu Picchu is **\$2,995** in double occupancy from Lima. This includes all meals beginning with breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 6, internal Peru flights (Lima-Cuzco-Lima)*, lodging as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, entrance into Machu Picchu, and guide services provided by the tour leader. It does not include airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based on group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may be charged.

***Please Note: Domestic airfare Lima-Cuzco-Lima is included in the tour fees above. At the time of printing the approximate cost of these air segments is \$300 but is subject to change without notice until the time of ticketing. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours reserves the right to assess a surcharge for this air ticket should costs increase before ticketing.**

The single supplement for the Pre-trip to Machu Picchu is **\$425**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

REGISTRATION: To register for the Amazon River Cruise, please complete the application form and return it with a deposit of **\$1000** per person (check or money order in U.S. dollars). If you prefer to register by phone, a deposit must be made within 10 days or the space will be released. A second installment of **\$1000** is due six months prior to the departure date. A **\$500** deposit is required to register for the Machu Picchu Extension. The balance of the fees for both the Amazon River Cruise and the Machu Picchu Extension is due 120 days prior to your departure date.

The Amazon cruise is designed for persons in reasonably good health. By forwarding the expedition deposit, you certify that you do not have a physical condition or disability which would create a hazard to you or other passengers. VENT reserves the right to decline to accept or retain you or other passengers should your health, actions, or general deportment impede the operations of the expedition or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of other passengers.

CANCELLATION POLICY – Amazon River Cruise: **\$500** of your initial deposit of **\$1000** is entirely non-refundable. Cancellations occurring between 119 and 90 days prior to sailing are subject to a cancellation fee of

\$2000. Cancellations occurring within 89 days prior to sailing are non-refundable. Any refunds will be reduced by applicable airline cancellation penalties. No refunds will be made in the event of “no shows” or cancellations made on the day of sailing. We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance and/or travel insurance to protect yourself.

CANCELLATION POLICY – Machu Picchu Extension: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before departure date, the deposit less **\$75** per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. ***We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself.***

TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE: Application forms for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. We **strongly recommend** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available, as are other coverages such as terrorism protection; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details.**

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.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of VENT. Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to assist you in making air arrangements. Airline tickets carry restrictions due to the airfare used. You may find that your ticket cannot be reissued or exchanged for another air carrier or routing. Cancellation penalties and change fees may be assessed for any changes to the ticket. These charges are solely your responsibility. First- and business-class travel is available on some flights. **All requests for travel assistance (air tickets, additional hotels, etc.) must be received no later than 60 days prior to departure date. Within 60 days, arrangements must be made on your own.**

BAGGAGE: Baggage limits for most airlines is now 70 pounds for checked luggage on international flights and 50 pounds on domestic flights, in addition to one carry-on bag. However, we request participants limit their baggage to one medium-sized suitcase of no more than 50 pounds and one carry-on, as space in vehicles and on the ship may be limited. Check with your airline for specific limits, as each airline is different.

Those participants on the Machu Picchu Extension should travel with only a small to medium-sized backpack and perhaps another hand or shoulder bag, which can be carried easily. You will be able to leave any extra luggage at the hotel in Lima. This will greatly facilitate disembarking the train at the Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, checking in to the hotel, and reboarding the train for the return trip to Cuzco. The train has very limited space for luggage; also, in some cases travelers may have to board a bus at Ollantaytambo for the last half of the return trip to Cuzco, where, again, having less luggage will be more convenient. With this in mind, all travelers will be much happier with a minimum of luggage for this portion of the trip (**please do not bring any suitcases or large duffels**).

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Peru is required. Tourist visas (small white piece of paper) are issued by the international air carrier aboard your flight to Lima. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

HEALTH: For all Amazon voyages, a Yellow Fever immunization and an International Certificate of Vaccination should be carried. In addition, malaria prophylaxis is recommended. We urge you to discuss health precautions with your physician at least six (6) weeks before you depart. Please be aware that most of the time we will be aboard the riverboat or in hotels and restaurants where food preparation and sanitary conditions are excellent and exposure to insects and disease-carrying vectors is minimized. We suggest you contact your

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physician or the **Centers for Disease Control** in Atlanta (CDC), which operates a 24-hour automated travelers' health hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP for the most updated information. You may also visit their website at www.cdc.gov.

MISC: Departure Tax – about USD \$35
Electricity – 220 volts (also 110 available on board ship); 2 flat pin or 2 round pin plugs
Language – Spanish
Time – Eastern Standard Time

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on all land portions of this tour. Gratuities for the ship's crew are also **included** in your tour fee. **Note:** To avoid confusion the ship's crew generally consists of housekeeping, dining room service, maintenance workers, and deckhands. The Cruise Director, Expedition Leader, and trip lecturers are **NOT** considered part of the main crew. **If you decide to tip the Cruise Director, Expedition Leader, and lecturers, you should hand it to them directly.** Gratuities are a personal decision and the amount extended should be based on the quality and manner of the service you receive.

If you feel one or all of your VENT leaders or any local guide has provided exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

SUGGESTED READING:

Our website at www.ventbird.com offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com, or www.buteobooks.com, which specializes in ornithology books.

AMAZON CRUISE

BIRDS – ESSENTIAL:

Hilty, Steven, and William L. Brown. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton University Press, 1986. op. A classic handbook on the birds of Colombia and surrounding areas; contains excellent plates depicting virtually every species likely to be seen on this trip.

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America: a watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*. University of Texas Press. 2005. A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity. Recommended for anyone interested in the natural history of bird communities in New World tropical latitudes.

Schulenberg, T. S., D. F. Stotz, D. F. Lane, J. P. O'Neill, & T. A. Parker III. *Birds of Peru*. 2007. Princeton University Press. Long in preparation this new and up-to-date guide is now the essential field guide for all birders visiting Peru. Relatively compact (but remember, there are almost 1800 species in this book) although not as small or lightweight as field guides to North America and Europe.

GENERAL TOPICS:

Forsyth, Adrian & Miyata, Ken. *Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rain Forests of Central and South America*. Touchstone (Simon & Schuster), 1995. Easy to read, perceptive account of the chain of life in the rain forest. Seventeen lively, extremely well-written essays introduce habitats, ecology, plants, animals, and insects of the Amazonian region.

Goulding, Michael, et al. *Floods of Fortune. Ecology and Economy Along the Amazon*. Columbia University Press, 1996. The book, on the present status of the river, enables the reader to grasp the issues and understand the immense devastation the Amazon Region has undergone—and the global implications of that destruction. Beautiful photographs. Highly recommended.

Kricher, John. *Neotropical Companion*. Princeton University Press. An introduction to the animals, plants and ecosystems of the New World Tropics. Recommended as a general, broad-based introduction to plants and animals of Amazonia.

Insight Guide. *Amazon Wildlife*. (Geoffrey, E. ed.). APA Publications, 2002. An illustrated guide to the region and its wildlife. Covers biogeography, habitats, animal groups, and conservation.

Pearson, David L., L. Beletsky, and P. Barrett. *Peru: The Traveller's Wildlife Guide*. (Paperback; 1st American ed.) Interlink Books, 2004. Covers a wide range of topics from ecotourism in Amazonia to geography, habitats, parks, reserves, ecology, and natural history. Nice introductory sections (well-illustrated) on amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, insects, and other arthropods. Excellent introductory book on Amazonian with especially good illustrations of more common wildlife.

FURTHER READING ON BIRDS, MAMMALS, REPTILES, & AMPHIBIANS:

Bartlett, R. D., and P. Bartlett. *Reptiles and Amphibians of the Amazon*. 2003. Guide to 250 more commonly found snakes, lizards, turtles, frogs, and salamanders of the Amazon basin.

Castner, J. L., S. L. Timme, and J. A. Duke. *A Field Guide to Medicinal and Useful Plants of the Upper Amazon*. 1998. A photographic guide to identification of commoner plants with practical uses in the upper Amazonian basin forest.

Emmons, Louise and François Feer. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. University of Chicago Press, 1990. A color-illustrated field guide to the mammals of the Neotropics.

Gentry, Al. *A Field Guide to the Families and Genera of Woody Plants of Northwest South America*. University of Chicago Press, 1996. A keyed reference to the plant genera of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Illustrated with black-and-white sketches. The only book of its kind on plant identification of the region, but not always easy to use.

Henderson, Andrew et al. *Field Guide to the Palms of the Americas*. Princeton University Press, 1995.

Ridgely, Robert S., and P. Greenfield. *The Birds of Ecuador, Vol. II: Field Guide*. Cornell University Press, 2001. Also useful for this trip. Newer taxonomy than Colombia book but lacks a number of Amazonian river island birds which do not reach Ecuador.

Valqui, T. 2004. Where to Watch Birds in Peru. www.granperu.com/birdwatchingbook. Published in Peru.

MACHU PICCHU

BIRDS:

Schulenberg, T. S., D. F. Stotz, D. F. Lane, J. P. O'Neill, & T. A. Parker III. *Birds of Peru*. 2007. Princeton University Press. Long in preparation this new and up-to-date guide is and an essential reference for birders visiting Peru. Relatively compact (there are approximately 1800 species in this book) but not as small or lightweight as field guides to North America and Europe. Also excellent for Machu Picchu; perhaps more difficult to use than the Walker book listed below because it contains so many more birds, but this book has better illustrations and does have fine maps and a concise text.

Walker, B. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Machu Picchu*. 2001. Peruvian National Trust for Parks and Protected Areas (PROFONANPE). Lima, Peru. This is the recommended book for the Machu Picchu area but it may be difficult to find in the US. It's main advantage is its relatively small size and the fact that it covers only the subset of birds found in the Machu Picchu area (a big advantage given the enormous avifauna in Peru). It illustrates all of the birds we will see on our extension trip and has a useful text.

GENERAL:

(this is but a sample of the many books available on the Machu Picchu area and Inca History)

Beech, C. *Lonely Planet Peru*. Fifth Edition. 2004.

Bingham, Hiram. *The Lost City of the Incas*. Sterling Publications, 2002.

Thomson, H. *The White Rock. An Exploration of the Inca Heartland*. Woodstock, 2001.

Wright, R. M. and A. V. Zegarra. *The Machu Picchu Guidebook: A Self-Guided Tour*. 2004.

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT) purchase transportation, hotel accommodations, restaurant, and other services from various independent suppliers who are not affiliated with VENT in any way. Although VENT tries to choose the best suppliers available, VENT has no right to control their operations and **CANNOT, THEREFORE BE LIABLE FOR ANY PERSONAL INJURY OR PROPERTY DAMAGE** which may occur due to (1) wrongful, negligent or arbitrary acts or omissions on the part of a supplier, its employees and others not under direct control of VENT, or (2) defects or failures of any aircraft, vessel, automotive vehicle or other equipment or instrumentality under the control of independent suppliers. VENT reserves the right to cancel the itinerary or any part of it, to make alterations in the itinerary as they deem necessary or desirable, to refuse to accept or retain as a member of the tour any person at any time, and to pass on to tour members any expenditure occasioned by delays or events beyond its control. VENT reserves the right to adjust their rates. On advancement of deposit to VENT, you agree to be bound by the terms and conditions found herein. By acceptance of the vessel's "Contract of Carriage" you also agree to its terms and conditions, and you are encouraged to review these terms. A copy of these terms and conditions is available from VENT for your review. Quoted tour prices include planning, handling and operational charges, and are quoted on the current rate of exchange and tariff on March 7, 2008. In the event of a marked increase in foreign exchange or tariff rates, costs are subject to revision.