

SUMMER EASTERN VENEZUELA

JUNE 18-28, 2009

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VENT is proud to offer this refurbished itinerary to Summer Eastern Venezuela. In contrast to any other tour by any other company, we will focus primarily on the Tepui endemic species, then spend a couple of nights in the Rio Grande forestry reserve with its lowlands parrots, antbirds and possibly a Harpy Eagle, and round out our tour with a day boat trip through the Orinoco River. This combination of habitats (cloud forest, lowland rain forest, wetlands, riverine forest, river islands and tropical dry scrub) assures an amazing combination of birds that no other tour to Southeastern Venezuela can offer.

Our tour is focused in one of the richest regions of endemism in all of South America where the uniqueness of its avifauna is enhanced by the scenic grandeur and romance associated with the area. Southeastern Venezuela is especially remarkable for the tepuis (pronounced "ta-pu-e"), an Indian word for the mesa-like mountains with flat tops and vertical sandstone cliffs that dominate the landscape. Most of the more than 35 endemic birds of this ancient land occur on the forested talus slopes at the feet of the tepuis or in the wet forests on the slopes leading into this legendary land of "El Dorado."

This trip concentrates on the richly endemic avifauna of the forested slopes of this famous region. Some of the southeastern Venezuelan specialties that we hope to find include Rufous-breasted Sabrewing, Tepui Goldenthrout, Great Elaenia, Velvet-browed Brilliant, Streak-backed Antshrike, Tepui Antpitta, Red-banded Fruiteater, Rose-collared Piha, Scarlet-horned Manakin, Olive Manakin, Roraiman Antbird, Ruddy Tody-flycatcher, Black-fronted Tyrannulet, Flutist Wren, Golden-tufted Mountain-Grackle, Tepui Greenlet, Greater Flower-Piercer, Olive-backed Tanager, and Tepui Brush-Finch.

We will also visit the dry scrub north of Puerto Ordaz and El Palmar and the rainforests of Rio Grande that lie to the east of El Palmar. The birdlife of the dry scrub is strongly reminiscent of that in the llanos, and, indeed, these dry habitats and grasslands represent the very easternmost extension of the llanos avifauna. The rain forest, on the other hand, is almost pure Guianan, similar to what one would see in Guyana or Suriname. The lowland forests harbor many big and relatively conspicuous birds like guans, parrots, woodpeckers, cotingas, and oropendolas. We also have found antbirds to be easier to see in these Guianan forests than in Amazonia, and generally we have been able to find army ants and some of the professional ant-following birds easier in eastern Venezuela than in western Amazonia.

June 18, Day 1: Arrive Caracas, Venezuela. Since we will have a very early start tomorrow, participants should plan flights to arrive Caracas, Venezuela (Maiquetía International Airport, CCS) around 3:00 p.m. today. After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by our ground operator and transferred to Macuto a small town on the Caribbean coast and about 25 minutes from the airport (the city of Caracas itself is about an hour away). Transfers for flights arriving at other times can be arranged at an additional charge. A welcome dinner will be held at the hotel this evening.

NIGHT: Hotel Ole Caribe, Macuto

June 19, Day 2: Flight to Puerto Ordaz and drive to las Claritas. This morning we will transfer to the airport for our flight to the city of Puerto Ordaz (on the southern side of the Orinoco River). When we arrive, we will spend a few hours birding the remnants of dry and gallery forests along the Caroní River in the beautiful Cachamay Park. Some of the species we might encounter include Orinocoan Saltator, Capped Heron, Copper-rumped Hummingbird, Black-collared Swallow, Russet-throated Puffbird and Blue-tailed Emerald. After birding the park, we will begin our drive toward the town of Las Claritas. Given the richness of the region, we will certainly make some stops to look for birds in the wetlands, the moist forest, and farther south in the humid forest of the upper Cuyuní region (lowland rain forest). At the entrance to the humid forest, we will stop on the bridge across the Cuyuní River, a tributary of the Essequibo River in Guyana. There we will look for such birds as Green-tailed and Brown jacamars, Amazonian White-tailed Trogon, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet and Black-crested Antshrike. By the end of the afternoon, we will get into the magnificent tropical humid forest of the Cuyuní region. Here we will spend some time looking for aracaris, toucans, and parrots. Our focus, however, will be on the pigeon-sized birds perched on the tree tops, because all three cotingas—Pompador, Spangled and Purple-breasted—are located in this part of the country.

NIGHT: Anaconda Bungalows, Las Claritas

June 20-22, Days 3-5: Rainforest Lowlands and the Tepui Highlands. During this portion of the tour, we will be looking especially for birds endemic to the southeastern highlands. One morning, our route will take us gradually upward onto the forested slopes of the tepui highlands. By late morning we will have ascended several thousand feet and emerged onto the Gran Sabana (Grand Savanna), a very large and relict (old and isolated) type of grassland that extends far southward toward the Brazilian border. Some of the southeastern Venezuelan specialties we hope to find include Rufous-breasted Sabrewing, Tepui Goldenthrout, Peacock Coquette, Velvet-browed Brilliant, Streak-backed Antshrike, Tepui Antpitta, Red-banded Fruiteater, Rose-collared Piha, Scarlet-horned Manakin, Olive Manakin, Ruddy Tody-Flycatcher, Black-fronted Tyrannulet, Flutist Wren, Golden-tufted Mountain-Grackle, Tepui Greenlet, Olive-backed Tanager, and Tepui Brush-Finch. Each of these is possible. In fact, we should see at least 15 tepui endemics. In addition to those mentioned previously, we may see Fiery-shouldered Parakeet and Tepui Swift, or even the rare Roraiman Barbtail or the Greater Flowerpiercer. There are also a number of other very interesting birds in the forested tepui slopes, and we should see some of these, including Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, Paradise Tanager, Black Curassow, Sharpbill, Blue-backed Manakin, Crimson Topaz, and the rare Blue-backed Tanager. In the open country of the Gran Sabana occur Giant Snipe, Greater Elaenia, Tawny-headed Swallow, and Tepui Goldenthrout. Tepui Spinetail is frequently seen along the small forested streams that dissect the Gran Sabana.

On the days to follow, we will continue searching for endemic birds of the pan-tepui region. The scenic grandeur of southeastern Venezuela is legendary, and we will have many opportunities to appreciate its beauty. In places, sheer cliffs rise hundreds of feet above the forest or tower above the roadside. Sweeping forested landscapes are broken by characteristic mesa-like mountain tops, bluish in the distant haze. Ribbon-like waterfalls drop hundreds of feet from the tops of cliffs to the forest below. The appeal of this region—the setting for Hudson's famous book, *Green Mansions*—is strong and unforgettable. The forest is particularly distinctive. Trees are often gnarled; shrubs are woody and dense; and leaves are often rather small, shiny, and leathery.

One afternoon we might explore the northernmost section of La Gran Sabana, an ancient grassland habitat with varied shrubs. Here we will look for Greater Elaenia, Russet-crowned Crake (voice), Tawny-headed Swallow, and the secretive Bearded Tachuri. By the end of the day, we will search for cotingas perched along the treetops including Pompador, Spangled, and Purple-breasted.

We will also spend some time in the lowland rainforests near the base of the Sierra de Lema where we hope to see the Capuchinbird and other lowland species. Our stay here should bring many endemic and unusual birds some of relict distribution. It also promises intriguing forests usually offering a surprise bird species, from Masked Tanager to Ringed Woodpecker.

NIGHT: Anaconda Bungalows, Las Claritas

June 23, Day 6: From the Tropical Humid Forest to the Tropical Dry Forest and towards the town of El Palmar; Rio Grande Forest Reserve. After an early morning in the surroundings of Las Claritas, we will drive north towards Puerto Ordaz, then east towards El Palmar. As we drive north, we'll pass first through a long region of rather dry scrub, some of it partly cleared for cattle ranching. Here we will look for llanos dwellers such as Chestnut-vented Conebill (an important range extension reported first on a VENT tour), Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Greater Ani, Black-collared Hawk, Striated Heron, Ringed and Amazon kingfishers, White-headed Marsh Tyrant, Cocoi Heron, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, Buff-necked Ibis, Green Ibis, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, and possibly Aplomado Falcon. This afternoon we will arrive at the town of El Palmar, where we will be based for two days in order to search for birds of the lowland humid forest species, as well as for the secretive Harpy Eagle.

NIGHT: Parador Taguapire, El Palmar

June 24-25, Day 7-8: The Rio Grande Forest Reserve. The Rio Grande is a rather unimposing little river that slices through the heart of the Rio Grande Forest Reserve. The name "reserve" is perhaps something of a misnomer, for the region has been heavily logged. Settlers have followed, and clearings, which are enlarged each year, now reach practically to the borders of the river itself. Nevertheless, logging roads run for dozens of kilometers beyond the river, and the entire area still provides visiting birders and naturalists with access to some of the best lowland rainforest birding in Venezuela. In fact, the increased "edge" habitat makes it possible to see a number of forest species more easily here than in unbroken rainforest.

The birds of this region are distinctly Guianan, rather than Amazonian, with such species as Marail Guan; Painted and Golden-winged parakeets; Caica, Dusky and Red-fan parrots; White-throated and Channel-billed toucans; Black-necked and Green aracaris; Green-tailed and Paradise jacamars; Black Nunbird; Ferruginous-backed Antbird; Brown-bellied Antwren; Painted Tody-Flycatcher; and Buff-cheeked Greenlet. The list of birds for this area is long and includes as many as five cracids, 13 parrots, a dozen woodpeckers, 10 woodcreepers, over 30 antbirds, and more than 50 species of flycatchers. The region is renowned for big birds—raptors, parrots, toucans, woodpeckers—and enjoys a reputation for one of the highest densities of Harpy Eagles anywhere in the neotropics. While we certainly cannot guarantee a Harpy Eagle on a visit to this region, we believe the chances of seeing one here are better than almost anywhere else in the neotropics.

In the afternoon of the second day, we will drive across the Orinoco River and towards Tucupita, where we will prepare for our boat trip the next day along the Orinoco River.

NIGHTS: Parador Taguapire, El Palmar, Day 7
Hotel Saxxi, Tucupita, Day 8

June 26, Day 9: The Orinoco River. The Orinoco represents a habitat boundary for many bird species in Venezuela. Some species are restricted to the north of the Orinoco River and the llanos (plains), others to the south and the Guianan forests. This understanding of the Orinoco as a boundary between habitats is a result of many expeditions, some dating as far back as nine decades ago. In October 2004, a VENT cruise along the Orinoco demonstrated that the river itself can be considered a distinctive habitat. On that trip our leaders discovered that ranges for some species extended beyond any published descriptions, and even saw an undescribed species. Furthermore, an expedition carried out a few months later by the Phelps Ornithological Museum, and sponsored by VENT and our local operator in Venezuela, found on the opposite side of the country two other species known only from the middle Orinoco. These discoveries may well represent our first recognition of the Orinoco as a distinct habitat as yet unexplored in Venezuela.

In order to explore this majestic river, we will depart from a town near Tucupita and will spend most of the day exploring the habitats by boat. We will stop at river islands, riverine forest and even flooded savannas. A sampling of the possible species includes Riverside Tyrant, River Tyrannulet, Blue-and-yellow Macaw, Red-lobed Parrot, Silvered Antbird and Black-chinned Antbird. Other species may include Rufous-vented Chachalaca, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Trinidad Euphonia and Lessons Seedeater. During our journey we will stop in *Carrizal* bamboo, a habitat where the Phelps Museum expedition a few years ago one found one of the newest

South American species described to science: the Carrizal Blue-black Seedeater. Although the chances of seeing this bird are slim, we will certainly look for it. To close our incredible tour to southeastern Venezuela we will also make an attempt to locate three as yet undescribed species: a wagtail-tyrant, a spinetail and a softtail.

NIGHT: Hotel Saxxi, Tucupita.

June 27, Day 10: Morning in the vicinity of Tucupita; Afternoon flight to Caracas. A short outing in the surroundings of Tucupita will allow a good number of seedeaters and marshland, besides White-bearded Flycatcher, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture and Red-lored Parrot. Also waterbirds such as Large-billed Tern are visible while the pink River Dolphins swim regularly around the entrance of the town. Close to noon we will head back to Puerto Ordaz in order to take our flight back to Caracas.

NIGHT: Hotel Ole Caribe, Macuto

June 28, Day 11: International flight from Caracas. The tour ends this morning with an early transfer to the Caracas airport in time for flights departing prior to 11:00 a.m. Transfers for flights departing at other times can be arranged in advance at an additional charge.

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 date of departure. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

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

TOUR LEADER: David Ascanio

David Ascanio, a Venezuelan birder and naturalist, has spent the last 22 years guiding birding tours throughout his native country, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, northern Peru, western Ecuador, and Panama. 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.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$3055** per person in double occupancy from Caracas. This includes all meals from Dinner on Day 1 to Dinner on Day 10, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground and air transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by your leader. Tour fees do not include airfare from your home to Caracas and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or 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 this tour is **\$460**. 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.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement 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 are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is \$500 per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellation Penalties and Refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, the deposit less \$300 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.*

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$300.
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available.

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 are available, 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.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Some of the hotels are quite rustic, with minimal services available. At a few locations, you may experience electrical outages; water shortage; items in rooms difficult to use (such as locks and lamps) or in disarray; and the rooms may be noisy. Therefore, please accept the accommodations for what they are – a place to sleep, not for luxury. A certain amount of resourcefulness and ingenuity may be needed to get maximum mileage out of your accommodations, as well as hotel dining facilities. Your leader will do all he can to help with any problems you may have with your accommodation.

AIR INFORMATION: 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. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

BAGGAGE: Please hold your luggage to a minimum. Please pack in a duffel or other soft luggage rather than a suitcase. As a precaution, please pack your travel documents, binoculars, medications, basic toiletries, and a change of clothes in your carry-on bag. Check with your airline for limits and restrictions.

CLIMATE & CLOTHING: This tour runs during the rainy season with the heaviest occurring mid afternoon; therefore, rain gear and an umbrella are necessary. Rains might not last more than two hours during the day, but occasionally will last more than six hours, in which case we will bird with our umbrellas. Rather than

considering rain as a problem, rain brings life in the forest for the afternoon which is usually not present during the dry season. In general, the weather should be warm during the day and mild at night. We will utilize air conditioned lodges and vehicles, allowing for a comfortable rest during the heat of the day.

Rubber boots are essential on this trip or you will end up with wet and muddy shoes almost every day. In addition to rubber boots, you should also bring a pair of sneakers and shower flip-flops. Lightweight clothing is the rule. Long-sleeved shirts of light material are desirable, as they provide additional protection against biting insects. Clothing that you can wash yourself and that dries quickly is best. We will search a lot for skulky birds in the forest interior; therefore, it is better to bring dull-colored clothing and use perfume-free products. Laundry service is available while at Las Claritas and El Palmar. **Be sure to bring a sweater or light jacket.** We will spend some time at about 5000 feet elevation, and it can be cool at these altitudes. Layering is a good idea. You can begin the day when it is cool with a sweater or light jacket and then shed these as it warms up. Socks should be dark-colored (not white) in case we find army ants and need to tuck our pants into the socks.

CONDITIONS: The **Summer Eastern Venezuela** tour is mostly a lowland tour. Highest elevation is about 5000 feet. The dates of this tour fall into the rainy season; therefore, participants should expect mud in the Rio Grande Forestry Reserve. Also, we should expect 1-2 hours of rain per day, especially at noon, which should not affect the birding activities at all. Most of the tour occurs on paved roads, but in Rio Grande we will need to use 4-wheel drive vehicles. Expect bumpy roads on both days in Rio Grande, with drives of more than 30 miles per day. The boat on the Orinoco River will last the whole day but is not rough. We should expect some rain at one point during the journey (a roofed boat has been requested). On most days, the birding will be along the road, walking down the slopes, with the longest walk in Rio Grande about 3.5 miles. Participants can return at the middle of the trail if they so desire. There will be local guides with the group to accompany those people back. With regard to rest stops, we usually designate places along the road during birding days (especially at noon). At the Orinoco, the boat will stop at least 3 times for rest stops along the river.

DEPARTURE TAX: Departure and airport tax is Bs 90,200, about USD \$45 and included in the cost of your air ticket.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Venezuela is required. Visas are not required for entry by United States citizens. Non United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions. You will be issued a tourist card by the airline you arrive. Please hold on to the copy they return to you upon entering immigration in Venezuela as you will need it to exit the country.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medication and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. Each person should bring a one-quart plastic bottle that has a tight-fitting lid. Filtered water is available in most areas, and you can purchase bottled water if you prefer. Large ziploc bags are useful to protect cameras and binoculars from rain or humidity. It is always a good idea to bring earplugs, and everyone should have an alarm clock and a good **flashlight** suitable for use when walking outside at night.

INSECT PROTECTION: Every person should bring an adequate supply of insect repellent. We recommend a stick-type repellent for your face and hands, plus a pump-style container of OFF for your clothing.

HEALTH: If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, 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. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

No vaccinations are required to enter Venezuela. Malaria is present in some rural areas of Venezuela, including the chloroquine-resistant strain, and has been confirmed in at least one of the areas that we visit. There are several options for malaria prophylaxis: Mefloquine (Lariam), Malarone, and Doxycycline. Please consult your physician or local travel clinic for recommendations. 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. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line 877-FYI-TRIP (394-8747) or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

You should not drink the local water or use ice cubes made from local water, nor should you use the local water to brush your teeth, unless you have purified it. Filtered drinking water will usually be available, and we will have bottled water on hand in the field. You may also wish to purchase bottled water for your own personal use in your room at night.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Currency: Bolivar; Bs (strongly suggested not to exchange at airport, ask our local agent for assistance)

Electric Current: 110 Volts (same adaptor as in USA)

Time: Eastern Standard Time

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST: Please do not bring white or very light-colored shirts, pants, or hats as we will be doing much forest birding.

- **rubber boots (essential)**
- two pairs of hiking pant (dark colors)
- two long-sleeved shirts (light weight material, dark colors)
- sunscreen lotion
- a good hat (no white or light-colored hats, please)
- Cutter's stick repellent (2)
- OFF insect spray
- socks, undergarments, etc.
- hiking boots
- sneakers
- towel, washcloth (optional)
- bath soap
- earplugs toothbrush, toothpaste
- small mirror
- plastic water bottle (one quart size)
- day pack
- snacks, ziploc bags (large size)
- first aid supplies (aspirin, etc.)
- sweater, polar fleece shirt or light jacket
- good rain gear
- flashlight with spare batteries
- umbrella

SUGGESTED READING: Our website, 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 this store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You may also visit such other online stores such as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print or hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com or www.buteobooks.com which specializes in ornithology books.

Birds:

- Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Venezuela*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002. **This is the most appropriate book for this trip. It treats and illustrates all of the species you will see.**
- Dunsterville-Branch, Hilary. *Venezuela: The Bradt Travel Guide*. Fourth Edition. Globe Pequot Press, Inc., June 2003.
- Hilty, S.L. and W.L. Brown. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. This covers most of the birds found in Venezuela and has some of the same plates.
- Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Tropical America: A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005. Provides good natural history background for many aspects of tropical bird behavior.

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- Restall, Robin; Rodner, Clemencia and Miguel Lentino. *Birds of Northern South America: An Identification Guide*. Volume 2: Plates and Maps. Helms Field Guides. 2006. Good new book with interesting format but no text in volume 2 and, with over 6000 illustrations, it treats far more species than most travelers to Venezuela would want or need.
- Ridgely, R. S. and G. Tudor. *Birds of South America*. Vols. I and II. Austin: University of Texas Press. Vol. 1 (1989) is subtitled *The Oscine Passerines*. Vol. 2 (1994) *The Suboscine Passerines*. Good references and superb plates, but these volumes are too large to use when traveling or to carry in the field.

Ecology:

- Forsyth, Adrian and Michael Fogden. *Portraits of the Rainforest*. Canada: Camden House, 1990.
- Forsyth, Adrian and Ken Miyata. *Tropical Nature*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984. Excellent introductory reading on tropical natural history.
- Kricher, J.C. *A Neotropical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. Good coverage of tropical natural history.

History:

- Moron, Guillermo. *A History of Venezuela*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964. A not-quite unopinionated history of Venezuela by a Venezuelan, but nevertheless worth reading for an overview on Venezuela's interesting past.
- Vigneras, Louis-Andre. *The Discovery of South America and the Andalusian Voyages*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976. An account of the various Spanish voyages of exploration, beginning with the third voyage of Columbus, and most of those which centered on the Venezuelan coast.

Mammals:

Emmons, L.H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*. A field guide. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. Paperback. Very good.

Recording:

At present there are no CD's or cassettes of bird vocalizations specifically for Venezuela. The most useful for travelers in Venezuela is probably Krabbe, N, J.V. Moore, P. Coopmans, M. Lysinger and R.S. Ridgely, 2001, *Birds of the Ecuadorian Highlands: The upper Montane and Paramo Zones of Ecuador*. John V. Moore recordings, a four-CD publication has voices of many of the Andean species we will see in Venezuela. A DVD by P. Boesman (*Birds of Venezuela, 2003; Bird Songs International*) provides photos and songs of many Venezuelan birds but we have found information in DVD format to be less useful than a combination of a field guide and CD's and/or cassettes.

General:

Dunsterville Branchy, Hillary. 2003. *Venezuel. The Bradt Travel Guide*. 4th edition. Globe Pequot Press. Good overview of the country. Also see Lonely Plant Guide; Insight Guide; Rough Guide to Venezuela and others of general interest.

Video:

The Living Edens: The Lost World Venezuela's Ancient Tepius. PBS Video Series. 2003

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger 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 passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary

or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect August 20, 2008 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.