

ECUADOR: THE NORTHWESTERN ANDEAN SLOPES

FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 8, 2009

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Ecuador's spectacular Chocó-Andean bioregion offers extraordinary biodiversity and unsurpassed endemism along with the greatest hummingbird and antpitta shows on earth. This jam-packed, weeklong Northwestern Andean Slopes adventure covers a relatively tiny natural corridor that runs from high-elevation elfin Andean woodland to remnant wet lowland jungle along the Pacific coastal plain while based at a single birding lodge!

Ecuador may well be the epicenter of Neotropical bird diversity, and perhaps no other destination expresses this better than the western slopes of Volcán Pichincha. This region stretches for only some 50 miles to the west of the country's charming capital city, Quito, and holds a phenomenal array of bird species. We will base our "operations" out of Séptimo Paraíso Cloud Forest Reserve in the renowned Mindo Valley and visit a variety of nearby bird sanctuaries, nature reserves and birding hotspots in search of the local avian specialties found here.

Breathtaking dawn vistas greet our first morning as we climb over the slopes of the inter-Andean plateau and wind our way up to Yanacocha Reserve. Here—where hummingbirds represent a truly major element of this stunted, moss and epiphyte-covered wonderland—we will search for high-Andean mixed foraging flocks and marvel at the wing-whirr of up to twelve species of these feathered jewels, including the unimaginable Sword-billed! We continue birding onward and constantly down slope through temperate and subtropical mountain-forest along Ecuador's first "Ecoroute," a pioneer community-based conservation project that has converted a 54-kilometer country road into a protected sustainable bird-tourism zone, to finally arrive at our destination and "headquarters" for the week.

Nestled in a dramatic, prime montane cloud forest setting, Séptimo Paraíso not only offers comfortable accommodations, excellent cuisine and the best birding opportunities to be found in the area, but it is also strategically located to allow easy access to the key birding sites in this important bioregion. We will take good advantage of each day, working exceptional locations, including Río Silanche and Milpe Bird Sanctuaries, Angel Paz Reserve and the "Paseo del Quinde" Ecoroute.

This is the domain of Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Toucan Barbet, Moss-backed Tanager, Guayaquil Woodpecker, and over 40 hummingbirds and tanagers, among more than 500 possible Neo-tropical avian specialties, with promises of unforgettable experiences for all.

February 28, Day 1: Arrival in Quito. Participants are encouraged to fly to Quito on either American Airlines from Miami or Continental Airlines from Houston, which are both scheduled to arrive in the evening. Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel. Please note that your departure on Day 2 is

fairly early. If you feel you need time to acclimate to the time zone and altitude, you may want to arrive a day early.

NIGHT: Hotel Sebastian, Quito

March 1, Day 2: Quito to Yanacocha Reserve; Continuing Along the “Paseo del Quinde” Ecoroute to Séptimo Paraíso. This morning we will have an early breakfast and depart from Quito to wind our way over the northwestern flank of the massive Pichincha Volcano to the Yanacocha Reserve. At over 11,000 feet in altitude, Yanacocha (960 hectares) was recently purchased by the Jocotoco Foundation, whose main goal is the protection of the very rare, critically endangered, and endemic hummingbird—the Black-breasted Puffleg. This absolutely beautiful area, with its commanding views of “Guagua” Pichincha Volcano and its deep gorges covered in lush elfin forest, is a hummingbird hangout; simply buzzing with many high-elevation species. We will be looking for Mountain Velvetbreast, Great Sapphirewing, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Sapphire-vented and Golden-breasted pufflegs, Purple-backed Thornbill, Tyrian Metaltail, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, and maybe even a Sword-billed Hummingbird or two, most of which visit the series of nectar feeders that are kept up here. The views will be mind-blowing, to say the least! We will walk the flat and easy trail which is lined with mossy, entangled vegetation, five foot-wide *Gunnera* leaves, an uncanny number of distinct flowering plants, and spectacular vistas. We’ll be searching for mixed foraging species flocks including White-browed Spinetail; White-throated Tyrannulet; Crowned Chat-Tyrant; Barred Fruiteater; Red-crested Cotinga; Rufous Wren; Masked and Glossy flower-piercers; Blue-backed and Cinereous cone-bills; Superciliaried Hemispingus; Blue-and-black Tanager; and Scarlet-bellied and Black-chested mountain-tanagers. We will also be on the lookout for Andean Guan and Undulated and Rufous antpittas, and we might even find an Andean Pygmy-Owl. As the late morning fog rolls in, as it usually always does, we will continue our journey down slope along the “Paseo del Quinde” Ecoroute towards our final destination in the Mindo Valley.

This recently created Ecoroute is a 30-mile long, little-traveled country road that has been converted into a community-based, conservation-through-ecotourism pilot project designed by the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation. Three local communities that co-manage the road for bird and nature tourism are beginning a reforestation and waste-management program, and are being trained in the production of crafts and souvenirs, along with the ability to provide various tourism and environmental services that will guarantee their wellbeing and improve their economies.

We will spend the remainder of the afternoon working our way along this natural corridor through temperate, subtropical and foothill habitats as we search for a wide variety of montane species, many of them unique to the *world’s richest bird area*—often referred to as the Chocó-Andean Endemic Center. The possibilities are almost endless and we will take advantage of our introduction to this “Paseo” to look for Black-and-Chestnut Eagle; Red-billed Parrot; Scaly-naped Amazon; Crimson-mantled and Powerful woodpeckers; Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan; Montane and Tyrannine woodcreepers; Streaked Tufted-cheek; Pearled Treerunner; White-tailed Tyrannulet; Streak-necked, Cinnamon, and Golden-crowned flycatchers; Glossy-black Thrush; Plain-tailed Wren; Gray-breasted Wood-Wren; Russet-crowned Warbler; Capped Conebill; and Golden, Flame-faced, Golden-naped, Beryl-spangled, Black-capped and Grass-green tanagers, along with Blue-winged, Black-chinned and Hooded mountain-tanagers and a wide “spectrum” of hummingbird species!

NIGHT: Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo

March 2-6, Days 3-7: Séptimo Paraíso Grounds and the Mindo-Milpe-Río Silanche Area. The Mindo Valley has become extremely well known over the last decade or so for its incredibly high biodiversity. We will spend the following five days basing our “operations” out of Séptimo Paraíso, examining a wonderful selection of birding sites, exuberant roadside vegetation and forest trails, bird gardens, and forest reserves searching for many of the nearly 600 species possible here. The lush, epiphyte-covered forests with their entangled understories seem to come to life in an instant. Bursts of mixed feeding flock activity appear to come from out of the blue! We will concentrate on sorting out confusing species and revel in the colorful splendor of this spectacular Neotropical avifauna during these feeding frenzies, trying to “sift” through the gaudy euphonies and tanagers in hopes of identifying some of the more cryptic and secretive denizens. We’ll have plenty of time to check out the

hotel's spectacular hummingbird feeders for some 15 to 20 species while on the watch for raptors and parrots flying overhead. We will also witness a spectacular dawn feeding session as over a dozen species come to an area where a bright streetlight has attracted moths through the night.

We will head out very early one morning for an unforgettable visit to the Paz Antpitta Reserve. Here we will be accompanied by Angel Paz himself, a local *campesino* who has created a most spectacular birding experience—starting off with a visit to a conveniently placed blind that overlooks an Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek and continuing with what has become “the greatest show,” his feeding of three species of wild antpittas—Giant, Yellow-breasted, and Mustached (and who knows, he is working on another species)—along with a family of Dark-backed Wood-Quails! All of these species are extremely difficult to see at best, even with the greatest of luck; but here, Angel does wonders to bring these special birds ridiculously close, calling each individual by name!

We will also take separate day-trips to visit two of the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation's newly created bird sanctuaries—Río Silanche and Milpe—along with other key birding sites (everything is relatively close by) to explore prime lowland and foothill *hot-spots* that offer superb birding opportunities and some of the best conditions for great bird photography to be found anywhere! A canopy tower, nectar and fruit feeders have truly converted this area into a birder's paradise!

Just a few of the target species we will be after include Plumbeous Kite; Tiny, Bicolored, Semiplumbeous, Plumbeous and Barred hawks; Black Hawk-Eagle; Wattled and Sickle-winged guans; Sunbittern; Barred, Red-masked and Maroon-tailed parakeets; Red-billed, Blue-headed, Bronze-winged and Rose-faced parrots; Tawny-bellied, White-whiskered and Stripe-throated hermits; Purple-bibbed Whitetip; Buff-tailed and Velvet-purple coronets; Fawn-breasted, Green-crowned and Empress brilliants; Violet-tailed Sylph; Booted Racket-tail; Golden-headed and Crested quetzals; Masked Trogon; Red-headed and Toucan barbets; Chocó and Chestnut-mandibled toucans; Powerful, Guayaquil, Chocó, and Smoky-brown woodpeckers; Uniform, Fasciated, Russet and Great antshrikes; Rufous-rumped, Checker-throated, White-flanked, Slaty, Dot-winged and Moustached antwrens; Stub-tailed and Dusky antbirds, Red-faced Spinetail; Lineated and Buff-fronted foliage-gleaners; Streak-capped and Uniform treehunters; Strong-billed and Black-striped woodcreepers; Double-banded Gray-tail; Nariño and Spillmann's tapaculos; Rufous-winged, Black-capped, and Sooty-headed tyrannulets; Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant; Green-and-black, Orange-breasted and Scaled Fruiteater; Club-winged, White-bearded, Red-capped and Golden-winged manakins; Pale-eyed, Glossy-black, Pale-vented and Ecuadorian thrushes; Sepia-brown, Stripe-throated and Southern Nightingale wrens; Tropical and Slate-throated gnatcatchers; Yellow-collared Chlorophonia (seasonal); Orange-crowned Euphonia; Yellow-tufted, Scarlet-thighed, Scarlet-breasted and Blue dacnises; Glistening-green, Metallic-green, Gray-and-gold, Rufous-throated, Emerald, Silver-throated, Golden-hooded, Rufous-winged, Bay-headed and Scarlet-browed tanagers; Blue Seedeater; Tricolored Brush-Finch; and Yellow-bellied Siskin.

NIGHTS: Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo

March 7, Day 8: Birding the Ecoruta “El Paseo del Quinde” and Return to Quito. This morning we will take-off after breakfast on our return trip back to Quito, which takes us back along the “Paseo del Quinde” Eco-route, which winds up and over what was the original “old” road to Quito. We will retrace our first-day's steps for some 20-30 kms along this route into the Tandayapa Valley, today having more time to enjoy the spectacular natural conditions being protected here. We will take our time and walk various stretches so as to not miss anything. Again, the mixed foraging flocks will be of interest. We will be on the lookout in hopes of finding Sickle-winged Guan; Cloudforest Pygmy-Owl; Green-fronted Lancebill; Wedge-billed Hummingbird; Brown, Green, and Sparkling violet-ears; Western Emerald; Green-crowned Woodnymph; Andean Emerald; Speckled Hummingbird; Empress Brilliant; Brown and Collared incas; Gorgeted Sunangel; Purple-throated, White-bellied and the seasonal Little woodstars; Crested Quetzal; Rufous Spinetail; Pacific Tufted-cheek; Tyrannine Wood-creeper; Chestnut-crowned Antpitta; Ocellated Tapaculo; Barred Becard; Beautiful Jay; Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager; Grass-green Tanager; and the rare and secretive Tanager Finch. We may spend part of the afternoon at “Sachaquinde” to revel in the greatest hummingbird show in “town” (or on earth!) and as the afternoon

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falls upon us, we will head back to Quito. We may make a stop to search for the rare and threatened White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant, if time permits.

NIGHT: Hotel Sebastian, Quito

March 8, Day 9: Departure for Home. A group transfer will be provided to the Quito Airport in time for the 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. departures of American and Continental Airlines (subject to change).

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 14 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Paul Greenfield and Tony Nunnery

Paul Greenfield grew up near New York City and became interested in birds as a child. He received his B.A. from Temple University where he was an art major at the Tyler School of Art. Since 1972, he has lived in Ecuador where his fascination for birds and art has culminated with the completion of 20 years of work illustrating *The Birds of Ecuador*, which he co-authored with Robert Ridgely. Paul is very involved in saving Ecuador's avian diversity and important habitats through his involvement with various foundations, as well as working with local government and communities to encourage their involvement in the protection of "their" biodiversity and the promotion of birding tourism in Ecuador. He has been showing visitors the birds of this fascinating country for over two decades and has led many Ecuador bird tours. He and his wife, Martha, live in Quito.

Tony Nunnery grew up in Mississippi, then moved to Texas, and graduated from Stephen F. Austin University. After teaching elementary school for several years, he moved to Monteverde in Costa Rica. His fascination with birds began when a friend there showed him a Resplendent Quetzal and a Bare-necked Umbrellabird in the same tree. This experience "hooked" him on birds, and he soon learned the Costa Rican birds, ran the Tarcoles Lodge, and conducted guided tours. In 1997 he relocated to Ecuador where he bought land and built a home in the Tandayapa Valley. Since settling in that beautiful valley, Tony has played an important role in ecotourism and conservation. He has guided groups throughout Ecuador, and also guided one of the trips at VENT's "Ecuador Celebration," organized to celebrate the publication of *The Birds of Ecuador*. He received high marks from all of the participants. Tony and his wife Barbara are becoming renowned for the hummingbird show they have created in their yard where 28 hummingbird feeders regularly attract 15 to 20 species of hummingbirds – a total exceeding any other location in the world. Their yard list includes an amazing 40 species of hummingbirds, a world record. Tony is incredibly knowledgeable about birds and plants. His eagerness to share that knowledge and his relaxed, easygoing manner combine to make him a delightful traveling companion.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for Ecuador: The Northwestern Andean Slopes is **\$2570** per person in double occupancy from Quito. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to dinner on Day 8, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Quito 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 Ecuador: The Northwestern Andean Slopes is **\$235**. 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.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person for each tour part. 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.

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.

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.

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.

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; 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 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: As space in the vehicles is limited, we ask that you limit your luggage to one lockable suitcase and a carry-on bag. As a precaution, we suggest you pack a change of clothes, your binoculars, medications, basic toiletries, walking shoes, and travel documents in your carry-on.

CLIMATE: During the tour we will experience two rather different climates. In the mountains out from Quito, temperatures are generally pleasant during the day; cool in the early morning, to warm at midday (low 60s to 80s). However, at higher elevations the temperatures can be as low as the 40s on occasion, and you should be prepared to layer for warmth. There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in at least some mist or light rain, so a good umbrella or rain jacket is essential. Río Palenque and Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary are in the coastal lowlands, and at these sites you should be prepared for warm-to-hot temperatures at midday (typically low 70s to low 90s). We may also get caught out in an occasional rain shower.

CLOTHING: Dress is casual or informal throughout the tour. Lightweight field clothing is the norm for most areas visited, with a sweater or jacket for extra warmth. We suggest dark field pants and shirts for forest birding,

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and lightweight long-sleeved shirts that dry quickly (long sleeves are not essential, but offer additional protection from sun and biting insects). Please wear darker colors, not whites, and avoid startling patterns that frighten the birds. Also important are a hat and sunscreen for sun protection and a rain jacket, poncho, or umbrella. Good footwear is essential, and for this we strongly suggest sturdy mudboots or waterproof hiking boots. In any case, your footgear for the field should at the very least be rated "water-resistant," as this is a damp climate. Even the dew on the roadside grass will get your feet wet!

At higher elevations the temperatures can be as low as the low 40s on occasion, and you should be prepared to layer for warmth with a warm, long-sleeved shirt, plus a warm jacket or sweater. You can shed layers as the day warms up (or add them as it cools down). Consider bringing gloves and a warm hat if you know that you chill easily. There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in at least some mist or light rain, so a good umbrella or rain jacket is essential. Mudboots are recommended, but may not be essential here, as long as your footgear is waterproof or at the very least water-resistant. You may wish to bring a bathing suit along, as Séptimo Paraíso has a swimming pool and a Jacuzzi.

Laundry facilities are limited on this tour, so please plan to rinse out some clothing as we go along.

CURRENCY: The U.S. dollar is the currency in Ecuador. Cash is needed only for your personal expenses, such as bar bills, laundry, and souvenirs. It is strongly advised that most of your money be in U.S. traveler's checks, with a smaller amount of currency in U.S. Dollars. MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Diner's Club are widely accepted in Quito.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Ecuador is required. Visas are not required for United States citizens. You will be issued a tourist card to be completed on board your flight to Quito. You must hold onto this until your departure. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

EQUIPMENT: You will want to have a sunhat, sunscreen, and sunglasses for protection from the sun; a belt pack or day pack for carrying your field equipment and water bottle; a small flashlight or headlamp; a washcloth or small hand towel; a water bottle; and an alarm clock. Consider bringing an extra pair of binoculars, some between-meal snacks (such as trail mix, granola bars, dried fruit, nuts, etc), and Kleenex or handi-wipes. Annoying insects are possible in some areas, so you should bring repellent. We recommend Cutter's lotion (or a similar product) and a pump-style container (no cans) of OFF. Topsy gel is useful for reducing irritation from bites and stings, as is cortisone cream. Your leader will have a spotting scope; but if you wish to bring your own, that is fine. Again, as a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, basic toiletry items, medications and travel documents, and a change of clothing in your carry-on bag.

HEALTH: As in most Latin American countries, we recommend drinking only bottled water, and using no ice in beverages. Also avoid milk products which have not been pasteurized, and unpeeled fruits and vegetables. Yellow fever vaccination is recommended, as well as polio and tetanus protection. Malaria is present in Ecuador, including the chloroquine-resistant strain. 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).

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.

MISC: Departure Tax - \$40.80 USD August 2007 (subject to change without notice)
Electricity - 110 volts AC, the same as the U.S.
Language - Spanish, with Quechua or Indian dialects; some English
Time - Eastern Standard Time

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.

Birds, Basic Reference

Ridgely, Robert S. and Greenfield, Paul J. *The Birds of Ecuador*, Cornell University Press, 2001. This is the “Bible” for anyone interested in Ecuador’s birds. It consists of a two-volume set made up of the Field Guide, with 96 color plates, which include illustrations of basically all the species found in the country. The informative text, designed to help species identification, includes distribution maps for all 1600 species of Ecuador’s birds. The Status, Distribution and Taxonomy volume treats each of Ecuador’s species with detailed information not included in the Field Guide.

Greenfield, Paul and Fernando Ortiz and Juan Carlos Mateus. *Birds of Ecuador Locational Checklist with English and Spanish Common Names*. Quito: FEPROTUR, 1990. Possibly available in Ecuador, this is a complete species list with elevational zones.

Hilty, Steven L. and William L. Brown. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. An excellent complementary field guide useful for identifying many of Ecuador’s bird species, with excellent coverage of the birds in the eastern lowlands and northern mountains.

Fjeldsa, Jon and Niels Krabbe. *Birds of the High Andes*. Copenhagen: Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen; Svendborg, Denmark: Apollo Books, 1990. A good reference book for the birds of the mountains above 7500 ft, with adequate illustrations, but too large to carry and expensive. Try www.abebooks.com.

Restall, Robin; Clemencia Rodner and Miguel Lentino. *Birds of Northern South America. An Identification Guide. Volume 2: Plates and Maps*. Helms Field Guides, 2007.

Birds, Additional Reading:

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd, 1996. Subtitle: “A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity.” Highly recommended as the most readable and informative book on many different aspects of bird ecology (and birding!) in the Neotropics.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America: Volume I, the Oscine Passerines*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1989. Excellent reference volumes, with text entries for all species and fantastic illustrations of many. This volume and the next together include all of the passerines.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America: Volume II, the Suboscine Passerines*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994.

Other:

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997 (2nd edition).

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurants, porters, and drivers) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel that one or both of your VENT leaders, or any local guides and drivers, 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. When 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 on June 27, 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.