

**BOLIVIAN HIGHLANDS**  
**OCTOBER 10 – 25, 2009**  
**AND**  
**EASTERN LOWLANDS PRE-TRIP: THE BLUE-THROATED**  
**MACAW AND BENI GRASSLANDS**  
**OCTOBER 6-10, 2009**

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*Bolivia offers travelers a spectacular array of Andean habitats, snowy mountains, and colorful markets and villages. It is one of the least visited Andean countries and a place where birders and naturalists alike have an opportunity to explore and share in new discoveries. This land-locked nation, half of which is occupied by the Andes and its associated altiplano plains and high lagoons, boasts nearly 1400 species of birds. Much of this diversity is derived from a remarkable array of habitats found within the Andes. Among them are cactus-clad deserts, seasonal cloud forests, puna grasslands, Polylepis forests above normal tree line, high elevation alkaline lagoons, and wet forests.*

*This trip concentrates primarily on Andean habitats in Bolivia. Although Bolivia harbors fewer than twenty species of birds that are strictly endemic, at least a hundred others barely range beyond its political boundaries and most of these are found in the mountains in the western half of the country. This remarkable number of “near-endemics” is especially significant because many of these species are rare or difficult to find in their limited range outside of Bolivia.*

*Long regarded as a bastion of backwardness and frequent changes of governments, Bolivia has made great strides in the past two decades. Roads have been enormously improved, accommodations are surprisingly good—excellent in some areas—and the country has made significant progress socially and economically. Despite changes, however, traditions flourish and may be seen almost everywhere as evidenced by colorful and often strictly traditional clothes and dress, colorful and diverse markets, and pastoral landscapes. What also remains is an abundance of good habitat, often easily accessible by road, and a park system that struggles, despite shortages, to establish and protect large tracts of undisturbed land both in the Andes and the lowlands. Birders and naturalists have little trouble gaining access to fine habitat at almost any elevation and this remains one of Bolivia’s special appeals.*

*Bolivia offers travelers a fine palette of wildlife ranging from rheas, tinamous and shimmering flamingos on altiplano lakes to shy antpittas and dazzling hummingbirds in cloud forests. Because this trip focuses primarily on Andean habitats, we will be spending some time searching for some of these endemic or near-endemic species, as well as simply enjoying the land and the diversity of birdlife that this country offers.*

*Our Pre-trip offering to eastern Bolivia offers visitors a chance to see a dramatically different landscape and an opportunity to see one of the rarest macaws still in the “wilds” of South America,*

*the endangered Blue-throated Macaw, as well a rich slice of birds typical of this region of ranches, scrub, marshes and vast riverine and gallery forests.*

## **EASTERN LOWLANDS PRE-TRIP: THE BLUE-THROATED MACAW AND BENI GRASSLANDS**

**OCTOBER 6-10, 2009**

**October 6, Day 1: Flight from La Paz to Trinidad.** For your international travel, we suggest the American Airlines flight to La Paz departing Miami very late in the evening with an early morning arrival in La Paz. Following our international arrival into La Paz, we will pass through immigration and remain at the airport for our flight to the City of Trinidad, which lies in the eastern lowlands. This exciting region, which has a very small human population, is mostly grassland mixed with gallery forest and seasonally inundated woodland in low-lying areas. Depending upon the arrival time of our flight, we may have some time for an introduction to the birds of this area late this afternoon. This is “ranch country,” and large numbers of wading and raptorial birds can be found congregating around water holes and in areas of damp grass in fields. Many birds, in fact, can be seen right at the edge of the town of Trinidad, where there is a combination of scrub vegetation and seasonal lagoons. A sampling of species we might see this afternoon includes: Wood Stork, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Green Ibis, Snail Kite, Long-winged Harrier, Savanna Hawk, Limpkin, Picazuro Pigeon, Pale-vented Pigeon, Ruddy and Picui ground-doves, Golden-collared Macaw, Dusky-headed Parakeet, Campo Flicker, Rufous Hornero, Greater Thornbird, Great Antshrike, Mato Grosso Antbird, Black-backed Water-Tyrant, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Vermilion Flycatcher, Cattle Tyrant, Sayaca Tanager, Red-capped Cardinal, Crested Oropendola, Unicolored Blackbird, Blue-black Grassquit, and Rusty-collared Seedeater.

NIGHT: Hotel Aguai, Trinidad

**October 7-9, Days 2-4: Search for the Blue-throated Macaw.** The discovery of the Blue-throated Macaw in 1992 by Dr. Charles Munn, a scientist with the New York Zoological Society, made major headlines within conservation circles. This rare macaw occasionally turned up in international pet trade circles; but the whereabouts of its breeding grounds remained unknown, and it had not been seen in the wild by scientists or laymen for years. Through some clever backtracking, Munn located a ranch where a few pairs of this bird were known to breed, and in 1992, became the first modern scientist to see and initiate studies of these birds. Thanks to his efforts and willingness to share his information, we now have the opportunity to see the Blue-throated Macaw. These macaws are, of course, the primary reason for our visit to this area, but you will see many other birds here as well. In fact, this region of grassland and seasonally flooded woodland is very reminiscent of the more open parts of the famous Pantanal in Brazil, and we are likely to be treated to a spectacular array of birds here.

In addition to the opportunity to search for the Blue-throated Macaw (we have a very good chance of finding it), this region now lays claim to another record. In 1995 our group saw 213 species in a single day on the drive from the city of Trinidad to a ranch (near where we stay) and in a few afternoon hours near the ranch headquarters. This is the VENT record for the highest number of birds seen in a single day on any VENT tour. Furthermore, one participant saw 210 of the 213, and practically everyone in the group saw in excess of 150 that day. Such high numbers tell much about the region. It is extraordinarily rich in bird diversity. Because the habitats are mostly open, lightly wooded or marshlands, birds are mostly very easy to see. Additionally, because a majority of the wooded habitats are dry, woodland or moist forest, birds tend to remain active throughout the day. We may not equal or exceed the 1995 number again, but we do believe that you will be absolutely amazed at the diversity of birds in this north central region of Bolivia. (It exceeds that of the northern llanos or the Brazilian Pantanal.)

During our three days at this ranch we should see most of the following: Greater Rhea; Maguari Stork; Wood Stork; Jabiru; Plumbeous, Buff-necked, and Green ibis; Southern Screamer; Whistling Heron; Orinoco Goose (listed by Red Data Book as threatened status); Snail Kite; Long-winged Harrier; Savanna Hawk; Great Black-Hawk; Limpkin; Picazuro Pigeon; up to five species of macaws, including the Blue-throated, Blue-and-gold, Red-and-green, Golden-collared, and Chestnut-fronted; Peach-fronted Parakeet; Campo Flicker; Blue-crowned and Black-tailed trogons; Chestnut-eared Aracari; Toco Toucan; Great Rufous, Straight-billed, Buff-throated, and Narrow-billed woodcreepers; Red-billed Scythebill; Rufous Cacholote; Greater Thornbird; Plain Softtail; Great Antshrike; Rusty-backed Antwren; Band-tailed and Mato Grosso antbirds; Hudson's Black-Tyrant; Fuscous and Euler's flycatcher; Fawn-breasted Wren; Creamy-bellied Thrush; Purplish and Plush-crested jay; Gray, White and White-rumped monjita; Velvet-fronted Grackle; and Unicolored and Scarlet-headed blackbird.

Common ranch species found in open areas and woodlands between Trinidad and the Hacienda El Cielo include Black-bellied Whistling-Duck; Rufescent Tiger-Heron; Black-crowned Night-Heron; Capped Heron; Green Ibis; Limpkin; Savanna Hawk; Pale-vented and Scaled pigeons; Ruddy and Picui ground-doves; White-tailed Goldenthrout; Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Rufous Hornero; Black-backed Water-Tyrant; White-headed Marsh-Tyrant; Streaked and Vermilion flycatchers; Cattle Tyrant; Gray, White-rumped and White monjitas; White-winged becards; Black-capped Donacobius; Sayaca Tanager (abundant); Black-faced Tanager; Red-capped Cardinal; Crested Oropendola; Epaulet Oriole; and Orange-backed Troupial. In marshes and reed-beds we also may see such exciting and less numerous species as Scarlet-headed Blackbird and Long-tailed Reed-Finch.

Before our 1993 group, this area had never received eco-visitors. Almost timeless in its isolation, the estancias here blend a bit of the modern world with a great deal of the traditional lifestyle that has remained little changed since the first settlers entered this part of Bolivia with cattle herds in the 1660s. Everyone agrees that the ambiance of the old estancias, the mingled sounds of children, dogs, chickens, and the soft hum of a Swallow-tailed Hummingbird at a hibiscus, provides a glimpse into another era. A short drive away, Howler and Capuchin monkeys roam the forests. Antshrikes and chattering groups of Velvet-fronted Grackles enliven the dim forest understory. Sunbitterns daintily patrol the creek banks, Cabanis' Spinetails chuckle in tall grass, and Purplish Jays call from mango trees.

NIGHTS: Hotel Aguai, Trinidad (October 7)  
Buenos Aires Ranch (October 8-9)

**October 10, Day 5: Santa Cruz.** We will leave early this morning, birding near a large marsh en-route back to the city of Trinidad. This will be followed by a mid-day or afternoon flight to Santa Cruz.

Night: Hotel Cortez, Santa Cruz

## **BOLIVIAN HIGHLANDS**

**OCTOBER 10 – 25, 2009**

**October 10-11, Days 1-2: International Air Flight Arrives in Santa Cruz.** Upon your morning arrival on October 11 at Viru Viru International Airport in Santa Cruz, you will be transferred to your hotel for breakfast and a rest. In the afternoon we will venture out for birding near Santa Cruz. A half century ago Santa Cruz was a sleepy village with sandy streets, few conveniences, and an uncertain future. Today it is a modern, bustling town, and an economic hub for all of eastern Bolivia. Mining, lumber, agriculture and gas and oil all feed its booming economy but there are plenty of areas nearby with good habitat for birds and wildlife. We'll visit some woodland and aquatic habitats in or near Santa Cruz this afternoon. A sampling of species we could see includes Limpkin; Whistling Heron; Long-winged Harrier; Speckled Chachalaca; Wattled Jacana; Gray-necked Wood-Rail; Collared Plover; Comb Duck (rare or seasonal); Ringed Teal (rare); Fulvous Whistling-Duck; Southern Lapwing; Picazuro and Pale-vented pigeon; Dusky-headed Parakeet; Turquoise-fronted Parrot; Striped and

## ***Bolivian Highlands, Page 4***

Guira cuckoos; Campo Flicker; Rufous Hornero; Yellow-throated Spinetail; Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant; Spectacled Tyrant (austral migrant); Great Kiskadee; Chalk-browed Mockingbird; Masked Gnatcatcher; Tropical Parula; Blue-and-yellow and Sayaca tanagers; Grayish Saltator; Chestnut-capped Blackbird (irregular); and Red Pileated-Finch.

NIGHT: Hotel Cortez, Santa Cruz

**October 12, Day 3: Full Day of Excursions in Vicinity of Santa Cruz.** The Santa Cruz region is something of a crossroads with several major habitats and avifaunas juxtaposed, including humid Amazonian forests to the north, grassland and dry forest to the east, arid chaco scrub to the south, and Andean foothills not far to the west. We will continue our exploration of the Santa Cruz area today with a visit to the nearby botanical gardens this morning and areas further outside of town in the afternoon. The botanical gardens are, for the most part, undeveloped and contain some disturbed and semi open woodland, a sizable block of tall moist forest and extensive scrub typical of the chaco region. The gardens harbor a long list of birds, including quite a few that we are unlikely to see elsewhere. Birds we could see here or elsewhere around Santa Cruz include Tataupa Tinamou (voice); Blue-crowned and Canary-winged parakeets; Blue-winged Parrotlet; Picuí Ground-Dove; Guira Cuckoo; Gilded Sapphire; Blue-tufted Starfrontlet; Blue-crowned Trogon; Blue-crowned Motmot; Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Little and White woodpeckers; Olivaceous, Straight-billed and Buff-throated woodcreepers; Great Antshrike; Bolivian Slaty-Antshrike; Stripe-backed Antbird; Rusty-backed Antwren; Mato Grosso Antbird; White-crested and Plain tyrannulets; Suiriri Flycatcher; Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant; Purplish and Plush-crested jays; Fawn-breasted Wren; White-banded Mockingbird (austral migrant); Hudson's Black-Tyrant (austral migrant); Creamy-bellied Thrush (many are austral migrants); Chopi Blackbird; Gray-headed Tanager; Saffron Finch; and Double-collared Seedeater. Species listed as austral migrants may or may not be present, depending upon the time of our visit.

In grasslands and open areas around Santa Cruz possibilities include Great Rhea; Red-winged Tinamou; White-bellied Nothura; Red-legged Seriema (more often hd. than seen); White-tailed Kite; Peach-fronted and Blue-crowned parakeets; Burrowing Owl; Short-tailed Swift; White-eared Puffbird; Campo Flicker; Black-faced Tanager; White-browed and Chopi blackbirds; Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch; Grassland Sparrow; White-bellied Seedeater (seasonally several other Sporophila seedeaters); and Grassland (Misto) Yellow-Finch.

NIGHT: Hotel Cortez, Santa Cruz

**October 13, Day 4: Santa Cruz, the Andean Foothills, and Comarapa.** Leaving Santa Cruz quite early this morning, we'll drive westward for about an hour and a half to reach the foothills of the Andes. Our first stop will be a dry to moist wooded ravine and stream in the foothills at an elevation of about 3000 feet. Although the habitat is not imposing in appearance, a number of interesting birds occur here, including several that are relatively restricted in distribution. Among these are the Large-tailed Dove (distinctive 4-noted call); Buff-bellied Hermit (very restricted distribution); Ochre-cheeked Spinetail; Slaty Gnatcatcher; and Two-banded Warbler. Other commoner species of the dry to moist woodland and streamside vegetation are Mitred Parakeet (often seasonal here); Green-cheeked Parakeet; Scaly-headed and Red-billed parrots; Ocellated Piculet; Spot-backed Puffbird; Chestnut-backed Antshrike; Black-capped Antwren; Purplish and Plush-crested jays; Moustached Wren; Rufous-bellied Thrush; Black-goggled and Orange-headed tanagers; and Dusky-green Oropendola. We may hear Tataupa Tinamou here but would be very lucky to see it. Slender-tailed Woodstar is also possible.

By late morning we'll continue westward, stopping for a picnic lunch perhaps in the Mariana Valley or near an entrance to Amboro National Park at about 1400-1500 m (4500-5300 feet). Few roads penetrate this large park which is, at present, accessible mainly to backpackers and others willing to spend considerable time and effort. It is drier here and we could find such species as Picuí Ground-Dove; Brown-crested Flycatcher; Ultramarine Grosbeak; Golden-billed Saltator; Black-capped Warbling-Finch; and Red Pileated-Finch. Following lunch we'll continue driving westward, weaving gradually through a long river valley and over several passes, each a bit higher than the previous. We will also watch the terrain become progressively drier. Finally we'll emerge

into a large interior valley where rain clouds are almost completely blocked and the region is arid and desert like. Cactus and thorny vegetation predominates and, as might be imagined, the birdlife changes dramatically. If time permits we will make stops this afternoon, but it is a considerable distance to our destination tonight so time may be limited. A portion of the road this afternoon will likely be dusty and unpaved so progress may be slower at times.

NIGHT: Hotel Paraiso, Comarapa

**October 14, Day 5: Morning and Afternoon in the Arid Mizque Valley.** Elevations today range from about 1400-1800 m (4500-6000 feet). We will spend the entire day in the desert scrub and open yungas woodland. Some of the terrain, especially in river floodplains, has been converted to agriculture but birds abound almost everywhere and we have a lot of species to search for today. Among the desert species are Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle; Andean Condor; Picuí Ground-Dove; White-tipped Dove; Blue-crowned and Gray-hooded parakeets; Glittering-throated Emerald; White-bellied Hummingbird; Narrow-billed Woodcreeper; White-fronted Woodpecker; Stripe-crowned and Sooty-fronted spinetails; Streak-fronted Thornbird; Bolivian Earthcreeper (endemic); Rufous-capped Antshrike; Cliff Flycatcher; Suiriri Flycatcher; Greater Wagtail-Tyrant; White-bellied Tyrannulet; White-winged Black-Tyrant; Masked Gnatcatcher; White-tipped Plantcutter; Chiguanco and Cream-bellied thrushes; Masked Gnatcatcher; Purple-throated Euphonia; Sayaca and Blue-and-yellow tanagers; Highland Hepatic-Tanager; Black-backed Grosbeak; Black-and-chestnut, Ringed, and Black-capped warbling-finches; Golden-billed Saltator; Ultramarine Grosbeak; Saffron-billed Sparrow; Gray-crowned Finch; Bay-winged Cowbird; and Hooded Siskin.

Of all the birds today, and there will be many, it is the Red-fronted Macaw, a species endemic to some of the dry valleys on the eastern slope of the Bolivian Andes, that will hold our greatest interest. This species, which nests in holes in river banks, including locally along the Río Mizque, is becoming increasingly uncommon but with luck we may see a flock in flight or see them perched or feeding. At somewhat higher elevations desert scrub gives way to an open and more mesic woodland. This afternoon we hope to have time to visit this nearby habitat as well, which can also harbor Red-fronted Macaws, as well as Turquoise-fronted Parrot, Dusky-legged Guan (uncommon), Striped Woodpecker, and even Cream-backed Woodpecker. Either tonight or tomorrow night we will try to find a Scissor-tailed Nightjar. Males of this spectacular species have a scissor-like tail measuring more than a foot in length.

NIGHT: Hotel Paraiso, Comarapa

**October 15, Day 6: Day Trip to Cloud Forest in the Sierra de Siberia.** A little over an hour away and at considerably higher elevation, the desert scrub of the Río Mizque valley gives way to mossy cloud forest at elevations of about 2500-2700m (8250 to 8900 feet). Although the region is often enveloped in clouds by mid or late morning, we plan to arrive early and remain as long as we can in this exciting area. Human settlement has encroached upon this zone of forest from above and below but almost twenty kilometers of relatively undisturbed forest remains alongside the roadside, providing birders and naturalists with an unparalleled opportunity to visit one of the most southerly cloud forests that is accessible in the Andes. Many of the species that occur here also can be found at similar elevations a bit northward in the departments of Cochabamba and La Paz. Examples of species possible today include Black-winged and Scaly-naped parrots; Violet-throated Starfrontlet; Bar-bellied Woodpecker; Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner; Pearled Treerunner; Trilling Tapaculo; Highland and Sierran elaenias; Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant; White-throated and Tawny-rumped tyrannulets; Red-crested Cotinga; Spectacled and Brown-capped whitestarts; Pale-legged Warbler; White-browed Conebill; Blue-winged and Chestnut-bellied mountain-tanagers; Dark-faced (Bolivian) Brush-Finch; Masked Flowerpiercer; Gray-bellied Flowerpiercer (endemic); and up to four species of warbling-finches (Bolivian; Rufous-sided; Rusty-browed; and Ringed). We will be making a special effort to find the remarkable Giant Antshrike, the largest of all antbirds, as well as the endemic Light-crowned Spinetail (orange-crowned subsp. here and nearly endemic) and Rufous-faced Antpitta (endemic). Among the rarer species that also have been found here are Blue-capped Puffleg; Crested Quetzal; Hazel-fronted Pygmy-Tyrant (endemic); Rufous-bellied Bush-Tyrant; Crested Becard; Plumbeous Tyrant; Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant; Band-tailed and Barred fruit-eaters; and Moustached Flowerpiercer.

## ***Bolivian Highlands, Page 6***

On our return back to the desert this afternoon, we will pass through grassy slopes and patches of scrub woodland where several species occur including Darwin's Tinamou, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Hellmayr's Pipit and Great Pampa-Finch, among others. This region, however, is often quite windy and dusty and we may not stop if weather conditions are unfavorable.

NIGHT: El Prado, Comarapa

**October 16, Day 7: Drive from Comarapa to Cochabamba.** We will get an early start this morning for what promises to be a long day with much to do. Our first stop will probably be the uppermost reaches of the Siberia Cloud forest, or perhaps even beyond near a pass at about 3000 m (almost 10,000 feet). The vegetation is drier, somewhat scrubbier, and lower in stature than the forests near Siberia, but nevertheless quite dense. We will be watching for hummers here, especially the endemic Black-hooded Sunbeam, as well as Black-tailed Trainbearer, Red-tailed Comet, Blue-capped Puffleg, Sparkling Violetear, and Giant Hummingbird. We will make several other stops at selected locations as we continue the long drive westward toward Cochabamba. Among other possibilities today are Spot-winged Pigeon; Bare-faced Ground-Dove; Gray-hooded Parakeet; Golden-breasted Woodpecker (Flicker); Striped Woodpecker; Bar-winged Cinclodes; Rock and Plain-breasted earthcreepers; Spot-breasted and Streak-fronted thornbird; Maquis(Iquico) Canastero (endemic); Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail; Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant; Rufous-webbed Tyrant (local); White-browed Chat-Tyrant; Tufted Tit-Tyrant; Páramo Pipit; Ash-breasted and Black-hooded sierra-finches; Greenish Yellow-Finch; Band-tailed Seedeater; and Fulvous-headed Brush-Finch.

NIGHT: El Prado, Cochabamba

**October 17-18, Day 8-9: Day Trips from Cochabamba to the Chapare Region Near Villa Tunari.** The road to Villa Tunari, now almost fully paved, climbs out of the Cochabamba valley and up over a high pass at 3550 m (about 11,700 ft.) before gradually descending through mile after mile of lush wet montane forest, eventually entering a region known as the Chapare. The road continues on to the lowland town of Villa Tunari (el. 330m or about 1100 ft.) situated at the base of the foothills. Once notorious as a center for illicit drug activities, Villa Tunari and the Chapare region are tranquil today (coca growing has long ceased in this area) and it now serves as a popular resort. This road is unusual in that it passes through miles of beautiful montane forest extending from treeline down to as low as about 1400 m (4500 ft.). We'll spend one day in the higher elevations from about 2200-2800m (7250-9250 ft.), another at mid-elevations, perhaps getting as low as 4500-5000 feet. Rain and dense fog is frequent throughout this area and our activities will doubtless be determined to some extent by the weather here. A sampling of species we could find in the upper elevation cloud forests include Andean Guan; Band-tailed Pigeon; Black-eared and Plum-crowned parrots; Speckled Hummingbird; Booted Racket-tail; Long-tailed Sylph; Tyrian Metaltail; Blue-banded Toucanet; Hooded Mountain-Toucan (one of the best known areas for this localized sp.); Bar-bellied Woodpecker; Olive-backed Woodcreeper; Pearled Treerunner; Red-crested and Chestnut-crested cotingas; Band-tailed Fruiteater; Crested and Golden-crested quetzal; Azara's Spinetail; Black-throated Thistletail (endemic); Crowned Chat-Tyrant; Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant; White-crested Elaenia; Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher; White-banded Tyrannulet; Spectacled Whitestart; Blue-backed Conebill; Scarlet-bellied, Blue-winged, and Hooded mountain-tanagers; Blue-and-black, Blue-capped and Rust-and-yellow tanagers; Common Bush-Tanager; and Three-striped Hemispingus. In the mid-elevation zone a number of different species occur, among them Sickie-winged Guan; Ruddy Pigeon; Masked Trogon; Versicolored Barbet; Golden-olive Woodpecker; Montane Foliage-gleaner; Upland Antshrike (rare); White-throated Antpitta; Bolivian, Sclater's and Buff-banded tyrannulets; Yungas Tody-Tyrant (endemic and rare); Unadorned Flycatcher; Yungas Manakin; Slaty, Saffron-crowned and Straw-backed tanagers; and Dusky-green Oropendola.

NIGHTS: El Prado, Cochabamba

**October 19, Day 10: Cochabamba to Cerro Tunari.** Following several days at intermediate to high elevations in and around Cochabamba, we'll make a short trip this morning up to the vicinity of snow-capped Cerro Tunari. Although close to Cochabamba, elevations here are slightly higher than most we've previously visited

and we may reach 3700-3800m (12,200-12,500ft.). Early in the morning the area is alive with birds and we have a good chance of seeing some very special birds this morning, most notably the endemic Cochabamba Mountain-Finch, the rare and local Rufous-bellied Saltator, and the Giant Conebill, all of them in or in the vicinity of extensive Polylepis forest. Among other species possible this morning are Andean Condor; Variable Hawk; Mountain Caracara; Black-winged Ground-Dove; Gray-hooded and Andean parakeet; Giant Hummingbird; Red-tailed Comet; Andean Hillstar; Rock and Plain-breasted earthcreeper; Bar-winged Cinclodes; Streak-fronted Thornbird; Brown-capped and tawny tit-spinetails; Cordilleran Canastero; Cinereous and Plain-capped ground-tyrant; Tufted Tit-Tyrant; Rufous-webbed Tyrant; White-browed Chat-Tyrant; Brown-capped Whitestart; Golden-billed Saltator; Gray-bellied Flowerpiercer; Cinereous Conebill; Blue-and-yellow Tanager; Black-hooded, Ash-breasted, and Plumbeous sierra-finch; Band-tailed Seedeater; and Ringed and Rufous-sided warbling-finches. Less common possibilities include Short-tailed Finch, Bolivian Warbling-Finch, and Black Siskin.

At some point during our days in and around Cochabamba, we will visit nearby Laguna Alalay which lies at the edge of the city. This should be our first acquaintance with some waders and waterfowl typical of the high Andes. Among bird possibilities here are White-tufted and Silvery grebes; Black-crowned Night-Heron; Puna Ibis; White-cheeked Pintail; Speckled, Cinnamon and Puna teal; Andean Ruddy Duck; Plumbeous Rail; Andean Coot; Black-necked Stilt; Andean Lapwing; Wilson's Phalarope; Andean Gull; Andean Negrito; Many-colored Rush-Tyrant; Wren-like Rushbird; and Blue-and-white Swallow. From time to time Andean and Chilean flamingos are also found at the lake as well as numerous other migrants and vagrants.

NIGHT: El Prado, Cochabamba

**October 20, Day 11: Early Morning Departure from Cochabamba with Stops en route to La Paz.** We will get another fairly early start this morning because we have several important destinations today. First will be a few short stops just outside of Cochabamba as we begin the long steady climb up to the altiplano. Here at elevations of about 2500-3000m (8250-10,000 ft.) the vegetation is arid and sparse and river valleys are mostly under cultivation. At the bottoms of valleys tall eucalyptus lines stream borders, and large patches of pampas grass, willow, mesquite, acacia, and pepper trees are interspersed with cultivated fields and settlements. At higher elevations much of this gives way to sparse low scrub on steep rocky cliffs and gravelly slopes. It is in these regions that we hope to locate the endemic Bolivian Blackbird, as well as Brown-backed Mockingbird and several other species typical of high arid zones. Among the possibilities are Darwin's Nothura, Rufous-banded Miner, D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant, Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail, and perhaps Black Siskin. Above about 4000 m (13,200 ft.) the terrain is barren, dry and overgrazed and there is little to be seen, although we will watch for Andean Swallows in some of the high stream valleys. Other possibilities here include Andean Gull; Golden-spotted Ground-Dove; Mountain Parakeet; Burrowing Owl; Andean Flicker; Common Miner; Andean (White-winged) Negrito; Short-billed Pipit; and various sierra-finches and yellow-finches. We should arrive in La Paz by late afternoon. If skies are clear, snow-capped Mt. Illimani to the east should provide a striking background to our entrance into the city. La Paz itself is a large natural depression formed by the Río Choqueyapu and just off the eastern lip of the altiplano. The uppermost reaches of La Paz spill onto the altiplano at about 4100 m (13,500 ft.) but we will stay somewhat lower and in the center of this bustling and busy—if a bit congested—city. Our hotel is located at about 3500 m (11,500 ft.). La Paz is a colorful and exciting city and by this time we will have spent a week at high elevations, some nearly as high as La Paz, so sleeping and moving around here should not be a problem.

Option: For many years Lago Uru-Uru just outside of the city of Oruru, and more or less along the route from Cochabamba to La Paz, provided an opportunity to see flamingos and other highland waterfowl. Oruru also is something of a folk center of Bolivia. It lies on the flat, wind-swept altiplano at about 3650m (12,000 ft.) and is altogether a rather sprawling, dusty, and unattractive town. The lake, however, when it contains water, is (or can be) splendid to behold, attracting enormous numbers of flamingos, ducks, coots and high elevation waders. Water levels in these high lagoons are always unpredictable and in recent years water levels have declined dramatically. In September of 2001 it was completely dry and has remained so to the present; so we do not know what future years will bring but we do know that these wet-dry cycles on the altiplano often last for

decades before they reverse. If conditions change and there is some refilling, and the flamingos and waterfowl return, we may try to change the itinerary to include this interesting site, or even incorporate a brief visit into today's route although it would be a very long day. We hope that one or more other small lagoons in the vicinity of Oruru and en route to La Paz contain water and, if they do, they will have some of the same altiplano species including White-tufted and Silvery grebes; Black-crowned Night-Heron; Puna Ibis; Crested Duck; Speckled, Puna and Cinnamon teals; Yellow-billed Pintail; Andean Ruddy Duck; Andean Coot; Andean Lapwing; Puna Plover; Andean Avocet; Greater and Lesser yellowlegs; Baird's Sandpiper; and Gray-breasted and Least seedsnipe.

NIGHT: Hotel Plaza, La Paz

**October 21, Day 12: Day Trip from La Paz to Cororico.** The route today will take us over a very high pass at about 4600m (15,200 ft.) immediately east of La Paz and from there we will gradually descend toward the Amazon basin drainage for the rest of the day. We will avoid the two very highest elevation habitats today and focus our activities somewhat lower on the stunted high montane forests, saving the highest elevations for our very last day. The road leaving La Paz is excellent and there are tremendous views of high mountains, precipitous slopes and steep-walled canyons throughout the drive. We will begin making stops at about treeline (around 3300 m, 11,000 ft.) or a little lower this morning and in the early hours, the air is likely to be crisp and cold. We will spend much of the morning on a trail through dense bamboo-laden mountain forest. Among high elevation possibilities here and at somewhat lower elevations are Band-tailed Pigeon; Great Sapphirewing; Scaled and Tyrian metaltails; Amethyst-throated Sunangel; Violet-throated Starfrontlet; Rufous-capped Thornbill; Sword-billed Hummingbird; Crimson-mantled Woodpecker; Black-throated Thistletail; Light-crowned Spinetail (white-crested race); Streaked Tuftedcheek; Rufous Antpitta; Diademed Tapaculo (sp. recently described from this site); Sierran Elaenia; Ochraceous-breasted Flycatcher; Crowned and Rufous-breasted chat-tyrants; Rufous-bellied Bush-Tyrant; Fulvous Wren; Great Thrush; Citrine Warbler; Spectacled Whitestart; Blue-backed Conebill; Superciliaried, Three-striped, Orange-browed, and Southern Black-capped hemispingus; Blue-and-black, Golden-collared, Blue-capped, and Rust-and-yellow tanagers; Chestnut-bellied and Hooded mountain-tanagers; Plushcap; Dark-faced (Bolivian) Brush-Finch; Moustached Flowerpiercer; and Southern Mountain-Cacique.

Below the little village of Chuspipata, the old road to Cororico winds along spectacular cliffs with great scenic views of forest extending almost as far as the eye can see in all directions. Here in the upper section the road is quite narrow and consists of a single track with frequent pull outs for vehicles to pass. In places the road is cut into the sides of cliffs, with waterfalls splashing into the roadbed, hanging gardens of ferns and mosses covering sheer cliffs. Most traffic now, however, uses the newly opened road from Chuspipata to Cororico and beyond, so there should be little traffic on this old road, which is a terrific birding site. Descending through forest from about 3000 m (10,000 ft.) at Chuspipata, it is about 35 km. down to Cororico, located at an elevation of 1850 m (6100 ft.). The forest is very wet and mossy at higher elevations but becomes noticeably drier and typical of yungas forest near Cororico. Who knows what we may see along this remarkable stretch of road? Some species that have been seen in this zone between about 2000-2900 m (6600-9600 ft.) include Andean Guan; Bronzy and Gould's Incas; Versicolored Barbet; Buff-browed and Montane foliage-gleaners; Striped Treehunter; Variable Antshrike; Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher; Golden-crowned Flycatcher; Yungas Manakin; and Fawn-breasted, Saffron-crowned, and Beryl-spangled tanagers (and see additional species mentioned on Day 13).

We will spend the night in a small but new hotel located just outside the picturesque little town of Cororico. A couple of short trails enter the forest surrounding this delightful country hotel. Around the hotel Speckled Chachalaca; Red-billed Parrot; Large-tailed Dove; Streaked and Piratic flycatcher; Purplish Jay; Rufous-browed Peppershrike; Moustached Wren; Slate-throated Whitestart; Sayaca Tanager; Black-backed Grosbeak; and Yellow-bellied Siskin have all been seen.

NIGHT: Hotel Los Jasmines, Cororico

**October 22, Day 13: Return to La Paz.** Following some early morning birding around the hotel, we will retrace our route back to La Paz today, again spending at least some time in the mid zone or subtropical yungas forests this morning. Roadside birding here can be very rewarding and may overlap somewhat with the days we spent on the Cochabamba – Villa Tunari road, as well as the areas we visited yesterday. Species this morning could include almost any of the species mentioned on Days 8-9 as well as many of the species mentioned on Day 12, including Sickle-winged Guan; Booted Racquet-tail; Smoky-brown Woodpecker; Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper; Barred Antthrush (voice); Rufous-faced Antpitta (voice); White-throated and Torrent tyrannulets; Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant; Streak-necked, Cinnamon, and Golden-crowned flycatchers; Scimitar-winged Piha (rare); Chestnut-crested Cotinga (rare); Barred Fruiteater; Barred Becard; Blue-and-white and Pale-footed swallows; Great Thrush; Andean and White-cheeked solitaires; Mountain Wren; Common Bush-Tanager; Chestnut-bellied, Scarlet-bellied, Blue-winged, and mountain-tanagers; Grass-green and Golden-collared tanagers; and Masked Flowerpiercer. Depending upon time available, we may make one or more stops at higher elevations as well. Birds of the two highest zones (puna grasslands and treeline shrubbery) are discussed under Day 15. We should arrive back in La Paz by mid- to late afternoon.

NIGHT: Hotel Plaza, La Paz

**October 23, Day 14: Morning Trip to Lake Titicaca.** Mid-afternoon and evening free in La Paz. Today we will drive northward to the shores of Lake Titicaca. We plan to arrive fairly early while the air is clear and crisp and the winds are calm. The endemic Short-winged Grebe is usually fairly numerous here and we also should see one of Titicaca's most famous sights, the Aymara Indians poling their reed boats along the lake shore. There is extensive development around some parts of the lake which restricts birding activities to some extent but we also could see Silvery Grebe; Puna Ibis; Yellow-billed Pintail; Andean Ruddy Duck; Common Gallinule; Plumbeous Rail; Andean Lapwing; Andean Gull; Wren-like Rushbird (common); Andean Swallow; and Yellow-winged Blackbird. In damp fields near the lake we'll watch for various altiplano species including Mountain Caracara; Puna Snipe; Slender-billed Miner; Black-winged Ground-Dove; Andean Flicker; Correndera Pipit; and Peruvian, Plumbeous, Ash-breasted, and Band-tailed sierra-finches. We should be back by early afternoon, with some free time available for shopping, exploring La Paz, or resting.

NIGHT: Hotel Plaza, La Paz

**October 24, Day 15: Day at High Elevations Near La Paz.** Following more than a week of acclimatization at high elevations, we should be in good shape for our trip today. We'll spend most of our time in the puna grasslands, in treeline shrubbery, and in and around a high elevation lagoon. Elevations today will range from about 3300 m to perhaps as high as 5000 m (11,000 to 16,500 ft). These are pretty extreme elevations and even with our long acclimatization, we'll be taking it slow. There are a lot of interesting birds in this region, many of them true high elevation specialists, and some of them also rather restricted in range. We will begin in the treeline shrubbery and rocky talus slopes in the vicinity of the village of Pongo, where rocky slopes and various flowering shrubs provide good habitat for the four families—furnariids, tyrannids, emberizids and hummers—that comprise a dominate proportion of the avifauna at these high elevations. Possibilities include Andean Condor; Andean Hillstar; Great Sapphirewing; Blue-mantled Thornbill; Tawny Tit-Spinetail; Plain-breasted Earthcreeper; Tawny and Andean tit-spinetails; Streak-throated, Scribble-tailed, and Line-fronted canasteros; Stripe-headed Antpitta; Puna Tapaculo; Tufted Tit-Tyrant; Brown-backed and D'Orbigny's chat-tyrants; Plain-capped and Cinereous ground-tyrants; Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant; Brown-bellied Swallow; White-browed Conebill; Peruvian Sierra-Finch; Band-tailed and Plain-colored seedeaters; Gray-bellied flowerpiercer; and Short-tailed Finch.

Some of the rarest and less numerous species occur in bogs and lake shores of puna grassland near the high pass, known locally as La Cumbre, but these are difficult to find or, in some cases, also unpredictable in occurrence. Among this select group of possibilities are Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, a lovely but very rare and unpredictable shorebird, as well as Rufous-bellied and Gray-breasted seedsnipe and Andean Snipe. Other species that occur here are Andean Goose; Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle; Puna Snipe; Common Miner; Slender-billed Miner; Puna and Streak-throated canastero; Puna, Rufous-naped, and white-fronted ground-tyrant; White-

## ***Bolivian Highlands, Page 10***

winged Diuca-Finch; Peruvian Sierra-Finch; and Bright-rumped Yellow-Finch. We will conclude the trip this evening with our final dinner in La Paz.

NIGHT: Hotel Plaza, La Paz

**October 25, Day 16: Morning Departure for International Flights Home.** For those returning home, we suggest the American Airlines flight departing La Paz early this morning and arriving in Miami mid-afternoon.

**TOUR SIZE:** The tour will be limited to 14 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Steve Hilty and David Wolf

**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 Wolf** is a senior member of the VENT staff and one of our most experienced tour leaders. After birding the U.S. and Mexico for over a decade, an interest in the wildlife of Africa led him to Kenya in 1975, where he spent over a year studying the birds and other wildlife of the African continent. Soon after his return to Texas he began leading Rockport Wildlife Weekends for VENT, at that time a new company, and he hasn't looked back since. In addition to Africa, David has extensive birding and tour-leading experience in North America and the Neotropics, and has birded widely on all of the continents. He unites great birding skills with a wide-ranging interest in all aspects of natural history, which he shares readily with tour participants. David and his wife, Mimi, live on a small farm in Nacogdoches, Texas, with assorted horses, cats, and dogs. They have two grown children, Matt and Elena, and are now happy grandparents.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the **Eastern Lowlands Pre-trip** is **\$2035** per person in double occupancy from La Paz. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 5, 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 La Paz, the internal flight from La Paz to Trinidad, the internal flight from Trinidad to Santa Cruz and return to your home from La Paz. At the time of publication of this itinerary, the cost of the flight from La Paz to Trinidad, and Trinidad to Santa Cruz priced at \$312 USD. However, this price is subject to change and cannot be guaranteed. Other items not included are 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 the **Pre-trip** is **\$115**. 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 **Bolivian Highlands** main tour is **\$3,875** per person in double occupancy from Santa Cruz. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 16, 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 Santa Cruz and return from La Paz, 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 the **main tour** is **\$225**. 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 per 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 & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE:** A brochure and application form 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 as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. VENT recommends Travel Insured International as our preferred insurance provider.** 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.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. **Contact Travel Insured International prior to registration for details.** Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than Travel Insured International, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

**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. Airfares are subject to change until ticketed.

**DOCUMENTS:** from the U.S. Department of State web site: <http://travel.state.gov/index.html>

Effective December 1, 2007, U.S. citizens seeking to enter Bolivia as tourists must have an entry visa. Bolivian tourist visas can be applied for by mail or in person at Bolivian consulates in the U.S., as well as at Bolivian ports of entry, such as at Bolivia's international airports and at land border crossings. Bolivian tourist visas are valid for five years from the date of issuance and allow the bearer to enter the country three times in a year for a cumulative stay of not more than ninety days. The cost of the tourist visa is \$100 U.S. dollars. The \$100 fee can be paid in cash, by deposit to the Bolivian Consulate's bank account or by money order. Tourists applying for their visa upon arrival to Bolivia must pay this fee in cash to immigration authorities. In addition to the \$100 fee, the applicant must present a visa application form with a 4x4 centimeters color photograph, a passport with a validity of not less than 6 months, evidence of a hotel reservation or a letter of invitation in Spanish, proof of economic solvency (credit card, cash or a current bank statement), and an International Vaccination Certificate for yellow fever.

Please visit the Embassy of Bolivia web site at <http://www.bolivia-usa.org> for details on how to apply or contact the nearest Bolivian Embassy or Consulate. Bolivian consulates in the United States are located in Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Oklahoma City, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC. For further information, you may wish to contact Pinnacle Travel Document Systems ([www.traveldocs.com](http://www.traveldocs.com) on the web or 888-838-4867 by phone), a company which handles visa procurement. Non-United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

**BAGGAGE:** Please pack all of your belongings in **duffels or similar soft-sided bags**. Soft-sided bags pack more easily in the trucks that we will be using on our visit to the ranch.

**CLIMATE:** This tour is scheduled for the late dry season, but we may encounter some rain. The weather is generally warm and humid in the eastern lowlands. Daytime high temperatures average 81 to 90° F; night temperatures average 68 to 79° F. Unexpected Antarctic cold fronts can occur in almost any month but mainly June through August. If one of these occurs (unlikely in October), one or more days of rain and cold temperatures are possible with temperatures dropping to the 50 to 60° F range during the day and 38 to 50° F at night. Combined with damp conditions, these temperatures can be very chilling.

**CLOTHING:** Lightweight, loose-fitting, field clothing is the rule, but please avoid white or brightly colored clothes (including hats). Our movement in such clothing makes us conspicuous and may frighten birds and animals. Bring long pants and long sleeved shirts, as we may encounter some mosquitoes. Short-sleeved shirts and/or T-shirts do not provide sufficient insect or sun protection. Everyone should bring a jacket or sweater or fleece in case of a cold front. A fleece vest and lighter weight jacket should be sufficient. Bring a good hat for sun and rain protection and a rain jacket or poncho (a small umbrella is also useful). Wear sturdy walking shoes or sneakers; rubber boots are not essential but some people wear them for chigger protection, although there are not many chiggers here. Thongs or Tevas may be useful for showers and when relaxing inside your room. A pair of light gloves offer protection against black flies but they are not prevalent here. Regular laundry facilities are available in Santa Cruz.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, small notebook, insect repellent etc.). It is highly recommended that you pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag (check for current airline security carry-on restrictions; see [www.tsa.gov/travelers](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers) for more information). Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. You may also want to bring a few between meal snacks such as nuts, dried fruits, granola bars, etc.

Checklist of essential items:

1. Two small LED flashlights (extra batteries) or a headlamp (and spare pocket-sized light)
2. Insect repellent
3. Water bottle - 1 quart refillable plastic bottle
4. Sunscreen lotion and good hat
5. Supply of plastic bags
6. Walking shoes (boots) and a pair of sneakers (also thongs/flip-flops for showers)
7. All personal medications, including first aid items; extra eyeglasses
8. Checklist, small pocket notebook, and pens
9. Binoculars
10. Day pack
11. Passport
12. Poncho or umbrella
13. A few meters of nylon cord suitable for use in hanging up wet cloths in room
14. Earplugs

Useful but *optional* items: pocket knife

**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.

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](http://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](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on travel health).

Malaria is present, including the chloroquine-resistant strain. There are several options for malaria prophylaxis including Mefloquine (Lariam), Malarone, and Doxycycline. These medications are available by prescription only. Please consult your physician or local travel clinic for recommendations. The CDC recommends a current yellow fever inoculation (good for ten years). Update your tetanus, polio, and typhoid. These recommendations come from the CDC, but you should discuss any medications and preventative medicines with your doctor.

Leishmaniasis may possibly be present. It is transmitted by a small fly that is active mainly at dusk or after dark in forested areas. It is not common (unlikely here because this area is not heavily forested) and only a few flies are carriers. Your best protection for this disease is proper clothing, insect repellent, and reduced exposure to particular areas within the forest (between tree buttresses, heliconia thickets, etc.) where the fly vectors occur.

**INSECTS:** Ticks, mosquitoes and chiggers can occasionally be a problem. Your best options are spraying with DEET or using pre-treated clothing. Rubber boots provide excellent protection against ticks and chiggers but are hot and bulky and otherwise not necessary for this pre-trip.

**MISC:** Departure Tax - \$20 USD approximate (paid in USD currency)

Electricity - 110 volts

Language - Spanish

Time – same as Eastern Standard Time

**SUGGESTED READING:**

Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://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](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com), or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com), which specializes in ornithology books.

***Birds:*** The two best choices for birders (a field guide; and background natural history) are shown in boldface below.

Narosky, T. and D. Yzurieta, *A Guide to the Identification of Birds of Argentina and Uruguay*. Buenos Aires: 1987. (English edition available 1991.) Useful for the chaco and adjacent areas of southeastern Bolivia.

Remsen, J.V. and M.A. Taylor, *An Annotated List of the Birds of Bolivia*. Buteo Books, 1989. Good list, region by region; taxonomy somewhat dated; no illustrations.

**Schulenberg, T. A., D. F. Stotz, D. F. Lane, J. P. O'Neill, and T. A. Parker, III. *Birds of Peru*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 2007. Your single best book, by far, for this trip. Species accounts treat almost everything we will encounter.**

***Butterflies:***

D'Abrera, B., *Butterflies of South America*. Australia: Hill House, 1984. Good pocket guide, covers many genera, nice pictures.

***Mammals:***

Emmons, L., *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990. Paperback with good pictures and excellent text.

***General:***

Forsyth, A. and K. Miyata, *Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rainforests of Central and South America*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984. Excellent introduction to tropical ecosystems in highly readable style; now in paperback.

Kricher, J.C., *A Neotropical Companion. An Introduction to Birds, Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics*. 1989. Another good introduction to tropical ecosystems. Encompasses far more than birds but an excellent overall text.

**Hilty, S.L., *Birds of Tropical America: A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*. Univ. of Texas Press. (reprinted and updated). 2005. Provides excellent natural history background on many interesting topics that birders and naturalists visiting the tropics are sure to encounter. Easy, readable style that deals with a number of complex topics in layman's language. Highly recommended.**

**TIPPING:** As noted in our itineraries, tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your tour 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.

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**BOLIVIAN HIGHLANDS**  
**OCTOBER 10 – 25, 2009**  
**AND**  
**EASTERN LOWLANDS PRE-TRIP: THE BLUE-THROATED**  
**MACAW AND BENI GRASSLANDS**  
**OCTOBER 6-10, 2009**

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*Bolivia offers travelers a spectacular array of Andean habitats, snowy mountains, and colorful markets and villages. It is one of the least visited Andean countries and a place where birders and naturalists alike have an opportunity to explore and share in new discoveries. This land-locked nation, half of which is occupied by the Andes and its associated altiplano plains and high lagoons, boasts nearly 1400 species of birds. Much of this diversity is derived from a remarkable array of habitats found within the Andes. Among them are cactus-clad deserts, seasonal cloud forests, puna grasslands, Polylepis forests above normal tree line, high elevation alkaline lagoons, and wet forests.*

*This trip concentrates primarily on Andean habitats in Bolivia. Although Bolivia harbors fewer than twenty species of birds that are strictly endemic, at least a hundred others barely range beyond its political boundaries and most of these are found in the mountains in the western half of the country. This remarkable number of “near-endemics” is especially significant because many of these species are rare or difficult to find in their limited range outside of Bolivia.*

*Long regarded as a bastion of backwardness and frequent changes of governments, Bolivia has made great strides in the past two decades. Roads have been enormously improved, accommodations are surprisingly good—excellent in some areas—and the country has made significant progress socially and economically. Despite changes, however, traditions flourish and may be seen almost everywhere as evidenced by colorful and often strictly traditional clothes and dress, colorful and diverse markets, and pastoral landscapes. What also remains is an abundance of good habitat, often easily accessible by road, and a park system that struggles, despite shortages, to establish and protect large tracts of undisturbed land both in the Andes and the lowlands. Birders and naturalists have little trouble gaining access to fine habitat at almost any elevation and this remains one of Bolivia’s special appeals.*

*Bolivia offers travelers a fine palette of wildlife ranging from rheas, tinamous and shimmering flamingos on altiplano lakes to shy antpittas and dazzling hummingbirds in cloud forests. Because this trip focuses primarily on Andean habitats, we will be spending some time searching for some of these endemic or near-endemic species, as well as simply enjoying the land and the diversity of birdlife that this country offers.*

*Our Pre-trip offering to eastern Bolivia offers visitors a chance to see a dramatically different landscape and an opportunity to see one of the rarest macaws still in the “wilds” of South America,*

*the endangered Blue-throated Macaw, as well a rich slice of birds typical of this region of ranches, scrub, marshes and vast riverine and gallery forests.*

## **EASTERN LOWLANDS PRE-TRIP: THE BLUE-THROATED MACAW AND BENI GRASSLANDS**

**OCTOBER 6-10, 2009**

**October 6, Day 1: Flight from La Paz to Trinidad.** For your international travel, we suggest the American Airlines flight to La Paz departing Miami very late in the evening with an early morning arrival in La Paz. Following our international arrival into La Paz, we will pass through immigration and remain at the airport for our flight to the City of Trinidad, which lies in the eastern lowlands. This exciting region, which has a very small human population, is mostly grassland mixed with gallery forest and seasonally inundated woodland in low-lying areas. Depending upon the arrival time of our flight, we may have some time for an introduction to the birds of this area late this afternoon. This is “ranch country,” and large numbers of wading and raptorial birds can be found congregating around water holes and in areas of damp grass in fields. Many birds, in fact, can be seen right at the edge of the town of Trinidad, where there is a combination of scrub vegetation and seasonal lagoons. A sampling of species we might see this afternoon includes: Wood Stork, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Green Ibis, Snail Kite, Long-winged Harrier, Savanna Hawk, Limpkin, Picazuro Pigeon, Pale-vented Pigeon, Ruddy and Picui ground-doves, Golden-collared Macaw, Dusky-headed Parakeet, Campo Flicker, Rufous Hornero, Greater Thornbird, Great Antshrike, Mato Grosso Antbird, Black-backed Water-Tyrant, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Vermilion Flycatcher, Cattle Tyrant, Sayaca Tanager, Red-capped Cardinal, Crested Oropendola, Unicolored Blackbird, Blue-black Grassquit, and Rusty-collared Seedeater.

NIGHT: Hotel Aguai, Trinidad

**October 7-9, Days 2-4: Search for the Blue-throated Macaw.** The discovery of the Blue-throated Macaw in 1992 by Dr. Charles Munn, a scientist with the New York Zoological Society, made major headlines within conservation circles. This rare macaw occasionally turned up in international pet trade circles; but the whereabouts of its breeding grounds remained unknown, and it had not been seen in the wild by scientists or laymen for years. Through some clever backtracking, Munn located a ranch where a few pairs of this bird were known to breed, and in 1992, became the first modern scientist to see and initiate studies of these birds. Thanks to his efforts and willingness to share his information, we now have the opportunity to see the Blue-throated Macaw. These macaws are, of course, the primary reason for our visit to this area, but you will see many other birds here as well. In fact, this region of grassland and seasonally flooded woodland is very reminiscent of the more open parts of the famous Pantanal in Brazil, and we are likely to be treated to a spectacular array of birds here.

In addition to the opportunity to search for the Blue-throated Macaw (we have a very good chance of finding it), this region now lays claim to another record. In 1995 our group saw 213 species in a single day on the drive from the city of Trinidad to a ranch (near where we stay) and in a few afternoon hours near the ranch headquarters. This is the VENT record for the highest number of birds seen in a single day on any VENT tour. Furthermore, one participant saw 210 of the 213, and practically everyone in the group saw in excess of 150 that day. Such high numbers tell much about the region. It is extraordinarily rich in bird diversity. Because the habitats are mostly open, lightly wooded or marshlands, birds are mostly very easy to see. Additionally, because a majority of the wooded habitats are dry, woodland or moist forest, birds tend to remain active throughout the day. We may not equal or exceed the 1995 number again, but we do believe that you will be absolutely amazed at the diversity of birds in this north central region of Bolivia. (It exceeds that of the northern llanos or the Brazilian Pantanal.)

During our three days at this ranch we should see most of the following: Greater Rhea; Maguari Stork; Wood Stork; Jabiru; Plumbeous, Buff-necked, and Green ibis; Southern Screamer; Whistling Heron; Orinoco Goose (listed by Red Data Book as threatened status); Snail Kite; Long-winged Harrier; Savanna Hawk; Great Black-Hawk; Limpkin; Picazuro Pigeon; up to five species of macaws, including the Blue-throated, Blue-and-gold, Red-and-green, Golden-collared, and Chestnut-fronted; Peach-fronted Parakeet; Campo Flicker; Blue-crowned and Black-tailed trogons; Chestnut-eared Aracari; Toco Toucan; Great Rufous, Straight-billed, Buff-throated, and Narrow-billed woodcreepers; Red-billed Scythebill; Rufous Cacholote; Greater Thornbird; Plain Softtail; Great Antshrike; Rusty-backed Antwren; Band-tailed and Mato Grosso antbirds; Hudson's Black-Tyrant; Fuscous and Euler's flycatcher; Fawn-breasted Wren; Creamy-bellied Thrush; Purplish and Plush-crested jay; Gray, White and White-rumped monjita; Velvet-fronted Grackle; and Unicolored and Scarlet-headed blackbird.

Common ranch species found in open areas and woodlands between Trinidad and the Hacienda El Cielo include Black-bellied Whistling-Duck; Rufescent Tiger-Heron; Black-crowned Night-Heron; Capped Heron; Green Ibis; Limpkin; Savanna Hawk; Pale-vented and Scaled pigeons; Ruddy and Picui ground-doves; White-tailed Goldenthrout; Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Rufous Hornero; Black-backed Water-Tyrant; White-headed Marsh-Tyrant; Streaked and Vermilion flycatchers; Cattle Tyrant; Gray, White-rumped and White monjitas; White-winged becards; Black-capped Donacobius; Sayaca Tanager (abundant); Black-faced Tanager; Red-capped Cardinal; Crested Oropendola; Epaulet Oriole; and Orange-backed Troupial. In marshes and reed-beds we also may see such exciting and less numerous species as Scarlet-headed Blackbird and Long-tailed Reed-Finch.

Before our 1993 group, this area had never received eco-visitors. Almost timeless in its isolation, the estancias here blend a bit of the modern world with a great deal of the traditional lifestyle that has remained little changed since the first settlers entered this part of Bolivia with cattle herds in the 1660s. Everyone agrees that the ambiance of the old estancias, the mingled sounds of children, dogs, chickens, and the soft hum of a Swallow-tailed Hummingbird at a hibiscus, provides a glimpse into another era. A short drive away, Howler and Capuchin monkeys roam the forests. Antshrikes and chattering groups of Velvet-fronted Grackles enliven the dim forest understory. Sunbitterns daintily patrol the creek banks, Cabanis' Spinetails chuckle in tall grass, and Purplish Jays call from mango trees.

NIGHTS: Hotel Aguai, Trinidad (October 7)  
Buenos Aires Ranch (October 8-9)

**October 10, Day 5: Santa Cruz.** We will leave early this morning, birding near a large marsh en-route back to the city of Trinidad. This will be followed by a mid-day or afternoon flight to Santa Cruz.

Night: Hotel Cortez, Santa Cruz

## **BOLIVIAN HIGHLANDS**

**OCTOBER 10 – 25, 2009**

**October 10-11, Days 1-2: International Air Flight Arrives in Santa Cruz.** Upon your morning arrival on October 11 at Viru Viru International Airport in Santa Cruz, you will be transferred to your hotel for breakfast and a rest. In the afternoon we will venture out for birding near Santa Cruz. A half century ago Santa Cruz was a sleepy village with sandy streets, few conveniences, and an uncertain future. Today it is a modern, bustling town, and an economic hub for all of eastern Bolivia. Mining, lumber, agriculture and gas and oil all feed its booming economy but there are plenty of areas nearby with good habitat for birds and wildlife. We'll visit some woodland and aquatic habitats in or near Santa Cruz this afternoon. A sampling of species we could see includes Limpkin; Whistling Heron; Long-winged Harrier; Speckled Chachalaca; Wattled Jacana; Gray-necked Wood-Rail; Collared Plover; Comb Duck (rare or seasonal); Ringed Teal (rare); Fulvous Whistling-Duck; Southern Lapwing; Picazuro and Pale-vented pigeon; Dusky-headed Parakeet; Turquoise-fronted Parrot; Striped and

## ***Bolivian Highlands, Page 4***

Guira cuckoos; Campo Flicker; Rufous Hornero; Yellow-throated Spinetail; Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant; Spectacled Tyrant (austral migrant); Great Kiskadee; Chalk-browed Mockingbird; Masked Gnatcatcher; Tropical Parula; Blue-and-yellow and Sayaca tanagers; Grayish Saltator; Chestnut-capped Blackbird (irregular); and Red Pileated-Finch.

NIGHT: Hotel Cortez, Santa Cruz

**October 12, Day 3: Full Day of Excursions in Vicinity of Santa Cruz.** The Santa Cruz region is something of a crossroads with several major habitats and avifaunas juxtaposed, including humid Amazonian forests to the north, grassland and dry forest to the east, arid chaco scrub to the south, and Andean foothills not far to the west. We will continue our exploration of the Santa Cruz area today with a visit to the nearby botanical gardens this morning and areas further outside of town in the afternoon. The botanical gardens are, for the most part, undeveloped and contain some disturbed and semi open woodland, a sizable block of tall moist forest and extensive scrub typical of the chaco region. The gardens harbor a long list of birds, including quite a few that we are unlikely to see elsewhere. Birds we could see here or elsewhere around Santa Cruz include Tataupa Tinamou (voice); Blue-crowned and Canary-winged parakeets; Blue-winged Parrotlet; Picuí Ground-Dove; Guira Cuckoo; Gilded Sapphire; Blue-tufted Starfrontlet; Blue-crowned Trogon; Blue-crowned Motmot; Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Little and White woodpeckers; Olivaceous, Straight-billed and Buff-throated woodcreepers; Great Antshrike; Bolivian Slaty-Antshrike; Stripe-backed Antbird; Rusty-backed Antwren; Mato Grosso Antbird; White-crested and Plain tyrannulets; Suiriri Flycatcher; Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant; Purplish and Plush-crested jays; Fawn-breasted Wren; White-banded Mockingbird (austral migrant); Hudson's Black-Tyrant (austral migrant); Creamy-bellied Thrush (many are austral migrants); Chopi Blackbird; Gray-headed Tanager; Saffron Finch; and Double-collared Seedeater. Species listed as austral migrants may or may not be present, depending upon the time of our visit.

In grasslands and open areas around Santa Cruz possibilities include Great Rhea; Red-winged Tinamou; White-bellied Nothura; Red-legged Seriema (more often hd. than seen); White-tailed Kite; Peach-fronted and Blue-crowned parakeets; Burrowing Owl; Short-tailed Swift; White-eared Puffbird; Campo Flicker; Black-faced Tanager; White-browed and Chopi blackbirds; Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch; Grassland Sparrow; White-bellied Seedeater (seasonally several other Sporophila seedeaters); and Grassland (Misto) Yellow-Finch.

NIGHT: Hotel Cortez, Santa Cruz

**October 13, Day 4: Santa Cruz, the Andean Foothills, and Comarapa.** Leaving Santa Cruz quite early this morning, we'll drive westward for about an hour and a half to reach the foothills of the Andes. Our first stop will be a dry to moist wooded ravine and stream in the foothills at an elevation of about 3000 feet. Although the habitat is not imposing in appearance, a number of interesting birds occur here, including several that are relatively restricted in distribution. Among these are the Large-tailed Dove (distinctive 4-noted call); Buff-bellied Hermit (very restricted distribution); Ochre-cheeked Spinetail; Slaty Gnatcatcher; and Two-banded Warbler. Other commoner species of the dry to moist woodland and streamside vegetation are Mitred Parakeet (often seasonal here); Green-cheeked Parakeet; Scaly-headed and Red-billed parrots; Ocellated Piculet; Spot-backed Puffbird; Chestnut-backed Antshrike; Black-capped Antwren; Purplish and Plush-crested jays; Moustached Wren; Rufous-bellied Thrush; Black-goggled and Orange-headed tanagers; and Dusky-green Oropendola. We may hear Tataupa Tinamou here but would be very lucky to see it. Slender-tailed Woodstar is also possible.

By late morning we'll continue westward, stopping for a picnic lunch perhaps in the Mariana Valley or near an entrance to Amboro National Park at about 1400-1500 m (4500-5300 feet). Few roads penetrate this large park which is, at present, accessible mainly to backpackers and others willing to spend considerable time and effort. It is drier here and we could find such species as Picuí Ground-Dove; Brown-crested Flycatcher; Ultramarine Grosbeak; Golden-billed Saltator; Black-capped Warbling-Finch; and Red Pileated-Finch. Following lunch we'll continue driving westward, weaving gradually through a long river valley and over several passes, each a bit higher than the previous. We will also watch the terrain become progressively drier. Finally we'll emerge

into a large interior valley where rain clouds are almost completely blocked and the region is arid and desert like. Cactus and thorny vegetation predominates and, as might be imagined, the birdlife changes dramatically. If time permits we will make stops this afternoon, but it is a considerable distance to our destination tonight so time may be limited. A portion of the road this afternoon will likely be dusty and unpaved so progress may be slower at times.

NIGHT: Hotel Paraiso, Comarapa

**October 14, Day 5: Morning and Afternoon in the Arid Mizque Valley.** Elevations today range from about 1400-1800 m (4500-6000 feet). We will spend the entire day in the desert scrub and open yungas woodland. Some of the terrain, especially in river floodplains, has been converted to agriculture but birds abound almost everywhere and we have a lot of species to search for today. Among the desert species are Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle; Andean Condor; Picuí Ground-Dove; White-tipped Dove; Blue-crowned and Gray-hooded parakeets; Glittering-throated Emerald; White-bellied Hummingbird; Narrow-billed Woodcreeper; White-fronted Woodpecker; Stripe-crowned and Sooty-fronted spinetails; Streak-fronted Thornbird; Bolivian Earthcreeper (endemic); Rufous-capped Antshrike; Cliff Flycatcher; Suiriri Flycatcher; Greater Wagtail-Tyrant; White-bellied Tyrannulet; White-winged Black-Tyrant; Masked Gnatcatcher; White-tipped Plantcutter; Chiguanco and Cream-bellied thrushes; Masked Gnatcatcher; Purple-throated Euphonia; Sayaca and Blue-and-yellow tanagers; Highland Hepatic-Tanager; Black-backed Grosbeak; Black-and-chestnut, Ringed, and Black-capped warbling-finches; Golden-billed Saltator; Ultramarine Grosbeak; Saffron-billed Sparrow; Gray-crowned Finch; Bay-winged Cowbird; and Hooded Siskin.

Of all the birds today, and there will be many, it is the Red-fronted Macaw, a species endemic to some of the dry valleys on the eastern slope of the Bolivian Andes, that will hold our greatest interest. This species, which nests in holes in river banks, including locally along the Río Mizque, is becoming increasingly uncommon but with luck we may see a flock in flight or see them perched or feeding. At somewhat higher elevations desert scrub gives way to an open and more mesic woodland. This afternoon we hope to have time to visit this nearby habitat as well, which can also harbor Red-fronted Macaws, as well as Turquoise-fronted Parrot, Dusky-legged Guan (uncommon), Striped Woodpecker, and even Cream-backed Woodpecker. Either tonight or tomorrow night we will try to find a Scissor-tailed Nightjar. Males of this spectacular species have a scissor-like tail measuring more than a foot in length.

NIGHT: Hotel Paraiso, Comarapa

**October 15, Day 6: Day Trip to Cloud Forest in the Sierra de Siberia.** A little over an hour away and at considerably higher elevation, the desert scrub of the Río Mizque valley gives way to mossy cloud forest at elevations of about 2500-2700m (8250 to 8900 feet). Although the region is often enveloped in clouds by mid or late morning, we plan to arrive early and remain as long as we can in this exciting area. Human settlement has encroached upon this zone of forest from above and below but almost twenty kilometers of relatively undisturbed forest remains alongside the roadside, providing birders and naturalists with an unparalleled opportunity to visit one of the most southerly cloud forests that is accessible in the Andes. Many of the species that occur here also can be found at similar elevations a bit northward in the departments of Cochabamba and La Paz. Examples of species possible today include Black-winged and Scaly-naped parrots; Violet-throated Starfrontlet; Bar-bellied Woodpecker; Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner; Pearled Treerunner; Trilling Tapaculo; Highland and Sierran elaenias; Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant; White-throated and Tawny-rumped tyrannulets; Red-crested Cotinga; Spectacled and Brown-capped whitestarts; Pale-legged Warbler; White-browed Conebill; Blue-winged and Chestnut-bellied mountain-tanagers; Dark-faced (Bolivian) Brush-Finch; Masked Flowerpiercer; Gray-bellied Flowerpiercer (endemic); and up to four species of warbling-finches (Bolivian; Rufous-sided; Rusty-browed; and Ringed). We will be making a special effort to find the remarkable Giant Antshrike, the largest of all antbirds, as well as the endemic Light-crowned Spinetail (orange-crowned subsp. here and nearly endemic) and Rufous-faced Antpitta (endemic). Among the rarer species that also have been found here are Blue-capped Puffleg; Crested Quetzal; Hazel-fronted Pygmy-Tyrant (endemic); Rufous-bellied Bush-Tyrant; Crested Becard; Plumbeous Tyrant; Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant; Band-tailed and Barred fruit-eaters; and Moustached Flowerpiercer.

## ***Bolivian Highlands, Page 6***

On our return back to the desert this afternoon, we will pass through grassy slopes and patches of scrub woodland where several species occur including Darwin's Tinamou, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Hellmayr's Pipit and Great Pampa-Finch, among others. This region, however, is often quite windy and dusty and we may not stop if weather conditions are unfavorable.

NIGHT: El Prado, Comarapa

**October 16, Day 7: Drive from Comarapa to Cochabamba.** We will get an early start this morning for what promises to be a long day with much to do. Our first stop will probably be the uppermost reaches of the Siberia Cloud forest, or perhaps even beyond near a pass at about 3000 m (almost 10,000 feet). The vegetation is drier, somewhat scrubbier, and lower in stature than the forests near Siberia, but nevertheless quite dense. We will be watching for hummers here, especially the endemic Black-hooded Sunbeam, as well as Black-tailed Trainbearer, Red-tailed Comet, Blue-capped Puffleg, Sparkling Violetear, and Giant Hummingbird. We will make several other stops at selected locations as we continue the long drive westward toward Cochabamba. Among other possibilities today are Spot-winged Pigeon; Bare-faced Ground-Dove; Gray-hooded Parakeet; Golden-breasted Woodpecker (Flicker); Striped Woodpecker; Bar-winged Cinclodes; Rock and Plain-breasted earthcreepers; Spot-breasted and Streak-fronted thornbird; Maquis(Iquico) Canastero (endemic); Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail; Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant; Rufous-webbed Tyrant (local); White-browed Chat-Tyrant; Tufted Tit-Tyrant; Páramo Pipit; Ash-breasted and Black-hooded sierra-finches; Greenish Yellow-Finch; Band-tailed Seedeater; and Fulvous-headed Brush-Finch.

NIGHT: El Prado, Cochabamba

**October 17-18, Day 8-9: Day Trips from Cochabamba to the Chapare Region Near Villa Tunari.** The road to Villa Tunari, now almost fully paved, climbs out of the Cochabamba valley and up over a high pass at 3550 m (about 11,700 ft.) before gradually descending through mile after mile of lush wet montane forest, eventually entering a region known as the Chapare. The road continues on to the lowland town of Villa Tunari (el. 330m or about 1100 ft.) situated at the base of the foothills. Once notorious as a center for illicit drug activities, Villa Tunari and the Chapare region are tranquil today (coca growing has long ceased in this area) and it now serves as a popular resort. This road is unusual in that it passes through miles of beautiful montane forest extending from treeline down to as low as about 1400 m (4500 ft.). We'll spend one day in the higher elevations from about 2200-2800m (7250-9250 ft.), another at mid-elevations, perhaps getting as low as 4500-5000 feet. Rain and dense fog is frequent throughout this area and our activities will doubtless be determined to some extent by the weather here. A sampling of species we could find in the upper elevation cloud forests include Andean Guan; Band-tailed Pigeon; Black-eared and Plum-crowned parrots; Speckled Hummingbird; Booted Racket-tail; Long-tailed Sylph; Tyrian Metaltail; Blue-banded Toucanet; Hooded Mountain-Toucan (one of the best known areas for this localized sp.); Bar-bellied Woodpecker; Olive-backed Woodcreeper; Pearled Treerunner; Red-crested and Chestnut-crested cotingas; Band-tailed Fruiteater; Crested and Golden-crested quetzal; Azara's Spinetail; Black-throated Thistletail (endemic); Crowned Chat-Tyrant; Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant; White-crested Elaenia; Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher; White-banded Tyrannulet; Spectacled Whitestart; Blue-backed Conebill; Scarlet-bellied, Blue-winged, and Hooded mountain-tanagers; Blue-and-black, Blue-capped and Rust-and-yellow tanagers; Common Bush-Tanager; and Three-striped Hemispingus. In the mid-elevation zone a number of different species occur, among them Sickie-winged Guan; Ruddy Pigeon; Masked Trogon; Versicolored Barbet; Golden-olive Woodpecker; Montane Foliage-gleaner; Upland Antshrike (rare); White-throated Antpitta; Bolivian, Sclater's and Buff-banded tyrannulets; Yungas Tody-Tyrant (endemic and rare); Unadorned Flycatcher; Yungas Manakin; Slaty, Saffron-crowned and Straw-backed tanagers; and Dusky-green Oropendola.

NIGHTS: El Prado, Cochabamba

**October 19, Day 10: Cochabamba to Cerro Tunari.** Following several days at intermediate to high elevations in and around Cochabamba, we'll make a short trip this morning up to the vicinity of snow-capped Cerro Tunari. Although close to Cochabamba, elevations here are slightly higher than most we've previously visited

and we may reach 3700-3800m (12,200-12,500ft.). Early in the morning the area is alive with birds and we have a good chance of seeing some very special birds this morning, most notably the endemic Cochabamba Mountain-Finch, the rare and local Rufous-bellied Saltator, and the Giant Conebill, all of them in or in the vicinity of extensive Polylepis forest. Among other species possible this morning are Andean Condor; Variable Hawk; Mountain Caracara; Black-winged Ground-Dove; Gray-hooded and Andean parakeet; Giant Hummingbird; Red-tailed Comet; Andean Hillstar; Rock and Plain-breasted earthcreeper; Bar-winged Cinclodes; Streak-fronted Thornbird; Brown-capped and tawny tit-spinetails; Cordilleran Canastero; Cinereous and Plain-capped ground-tyrant; Tufted Tit-Tyrant; Rufous-webbed Tyrant; White-browed Chat-Tyrant; Brown-capped Whitestart; Golden-billed Saltator; Gray-bellied Flowerpiercer; Cinereous Conebill; Blue-and-yellow Tanager; Black-hooded, Ash-breasted, and Plumbeous sierra-finch; Band-tailed Seedeater; and Ringed and Rufous-sided warbling-finches. Less common possibilities include Short-tailed Finch, Bolivian Warbling-Finch, and Black Siskin.

At some point during our days in and around Cochabamba, we will visit nearby Laguna Alalay which lies at the edge of the city. This should be our first acquaintance with some waders and waterfowl typical of the high Andes. Among bird possibilities here are White-tufted and Silvery grebes; Black-crowned Night-Heron; Puna Ibis; White-cheeked Pintail; Speckled, Cinnamon and Puna teal; Andean Ruddy Duck; Plumbeous Rail; Andean Coot; Black-necked Stilt; Andean Lapwing; Wilson's Phalarope; Andean Gull; Andean Negrito; Many-colored Rush-Tyrant; Wren-like Rushbird; and Blue-and-white Swallow. From time to time Andean and Chilean flamingos are also found at the lake as well as numerous other migrants and vagrants.

NIGHT: El Prado, Cochabamba

**October 20, Day 11: Early Morning Departure from Cochabamba with Stops en route to La Paz.** We will get another fairly early start this morning because we have several important destinations today. First will be a few short stops just outside of Cochabamba as we begin the long steady climb up to the altiplano. Here at elevations of about 2500-3000m (8250-10,000 ft.) the vegetation is arid and sparse and river valleys are mostly under cultivation. At the bottoms of valleys tall eucalyptus lines stream borders, and large patches of pampas grass, willow, mesquite, acacia, and pepper trees are interspersed with cultivated fields and settlements. At higher elevations much of this gives way to sparse low scrub on steep rocky cliffs and gravelly slopes. It is in these regions that we hope to locate the endemic Bolivian Blackbird, as well as Brown-backed Mockingbird and several other species typical of high arid zones. Among the possibilities are Darwin's Nothura, Rufous-banded Miner, D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant, Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail, and perhaps Black Siskin. Above about 4000 m (13,200 ft.) the terrain is barren, dry and overgrazed and there is little to be seen, although we will watch for Andean Swallows in some of the high stream valleys. Other possibilities here include Andean Gull; Golden-spotted Ground-Dove; Mountain Parakeet; Burrowing Owl; Andean Flicker; Common Miner; Andean (White-winged) Negrito; Short-billed Pipit; and various sierra-finches and yellow-finches. We should arrive in La Paz by late afternoon. If skies are clear, snow-capped Mt. Illimani to the east should provide a striking background to our entrance into the city. La Paz itself is a large natural depression formed by the Río Choqueyapu and just off the eastern lip of the altiplano. The uppermost reaches of La Paz spill onto the altiplano at about 4100 m (13,500 ft.) but we will stay somewhat lower and in the center of this bustling and busy—if a bit congested—city. Our hotel is located at about 3500 m (11,500 ft.). La Paz is a colorful and exciting city and by this time we will have spent a week at high elevations, some nearly as high as La Paz, so sleeping and moving around here should not be a problem.

Option: For many years Lago Uru-Uru just outside of the city of Oruru, and more or less along the route from Cochabamba to La Paz, provided an opportunity to see flamingos and other highland waterfowl. Oruru also is something of a folk center of Bolivia. It lies on the flat, wind-swept altiplano at about 3650m (12,000 ft.) and is altogether a rather sprawling, dusty, and unattractive town. The lake, however, when it contains water, is (or can be) splendid to behold, attracting enormous numbers of flamingos, ducks, coots and high elevation waders. Water levels in these high lagoons are always unpredictable and in recent years water levels have declined dramatically. In September of 2001 it was completely dry and has remained so to the present; so we do not know what future years will bring but we do know that these wet-dry cycles on the altiplano often last for

decades before they reverse. If conditions change and there is some refilling, and the flamingos and waterfowl return, we may try to change the itinerary to include this interesting site, or even incorporate a brief visit into today's route although it would be a very long day. We hope that one or more other small lagoons in the vicinity of Oruru and en route to La Paz contain water and, if they do, they will have some of the same altiplano species including White-tufted and Silvery grebes; Black-crowned Night-Heron; Puna Ibis; Crested Duck; Speckled, Puna and Cinnamon teals; Yellow-billed Pintail; Andean Ruddy Duck; Andean Coot; Andean Lapwing; Puna Plover; Andean Avocet; Greater and Lesser yellowlegs; Baird's Sandpiper; and Gray-breasted and Least seedsnipe.

NIGHT: Hotel Plaza, La Paz

**October 21, Day 12: Day Trip from La Paz to Cororico.** The route today will take us over a very high pass at about 4600m (15,200 ft.) immediately east of La Paz and from there we will gradually descend toward the Amazon basin drainage for the rest of the day. We will avoid the two very highest elevation habitats today and focus our activities somewhat lower on the stunted high montane forests, saving the highest elevations for our very last day. The road leaving La Paz is excellent and there are tremendous views of high mountains, precipitous slopes and steep-walled canyons throughout the drive. We will begin making stops at about treeline (around 3300 m, 11,000 ft.) or a little lower this morning and in the early hours, the air is likely to be crisp and cold. We will spend much of the morning on a trail through dense bamboo-laden mountain forest. Among high elevation possibilities here and at somewhat lower elevations are Band-tailed Pigeon; Great Sapphirewing; Scaled and Tyrian metaltails; Amethyst-throated Sunangel; Violet-throated Starfrontlet; Rufous-capped Thornbill; Sword-billed Hummingbird; Crimson-mantled Woodpecker; Black-throated Thistletail; Light-crowned Spinetail (white-crested race); Streaked Tuftedcheek; Rufous Antpitta; Diademed Tapaculo (sp. recently described from this site); Sierran Elaenia; Ochraceous-breasted Flycatcher; Crowned and Rufous-breasted chat-tyrants; Rufous-bellied Bush-Tyrant; Fulvous Wren; Great Thrush; Citrine Warbler; Spectacled Whitestart; Blue-backed Conebill; Superciliaried, Three-striped, Orange-browed, and Southern Black-capped hemispingus; Blue-and-black, Golden-collared, Blue-capped, and Rust-and-yellow tanagers; Chestnut-bellied and Hooded mountain-tanagers; Plushcap; Dark-faced (Bolivian) Brush-Finch; Moustached Flowerpiercer; and Southern Mountain-Cacique.

Below the little village of Chuspipata, the old road to Cororico winds along spectacular cliffs with great scenic views of forest extending almost as far as the eye can see in all directions. Here in the upper section the road is quite narrow and consists of a single track with frequent pull outs for vehicles to pass. In places the road is cut into the sides of cliffs, with waterfalls splashing into the roadbed, hanging gardens of ferns and mosses covering sheer cliffs. Most traffic now, however, uses the newly opened road from Chuspipata to Cororico and beyond, so there should be little traffic on this old road, which is a terrific birding site. Descending through forest from about 3000 m (10,000 ft.) at Chuspipata, it is about 35 km. down to Cororico, located at an elevation of 1850 m (6100 ft.). The forest is very wet and mossy at higher elevations but becomes noticeably drier and typical of yungas forest near Cororico. Who knows what we may see along this remarkable stretch of road? Some species that have been seen in this zone between about 2000-2900 m (6600-9600 ft.) include Andean Guan; Bronzy and Gould's Incas; Versicolored Barbet; Buff-browed and Montane foliage-gleaners; Striped Treehunter; Variable Antshrike; Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher; Golden-crowned Flycatcher; Yungas Manakin; and Fawn-breasted, Saffron-crowned, and Beryl-spangled tanagers (and see additional species mentioned on Day 13).

We will spend the night in a small but new hotel located just outside the picturesque little town of Cororico. A couple of short trails enter the forest surrounding this delightful country hotel. Around the hotel Speckled Chachalaca; Red-billed Parrot; Large-tailed Dove; Streaked and Piratic flycatcher; Purplish Jay; Rufous-browed Peppershrike; Moustached Wren; Slate-throated Whitestart; Sayaca Tanager; Black-backed Grosbeak; and Yellow-bellied Siskin have all been seen.

NIGHT: Hotel Los Jasmines, Cororico

**October 22, Day 13: Return to La Paz.** Following some early morning birding around the hotel, we will retrace our route back to La Paz today, again spending at least some time in the mid zone or subtropical yungas forests this morning. Roadside birding here can be very rewarding and may overlap somewhat with the days we spent on the Cochabamba – Villa Tunari road, as well as the areas we visited yesterday. Species this morning could include almost any of the species mentioned on Days 8-9 as well as many of the species mentioned on Day 12, including Sickle-winged Guan; Booted Racquet-tail; Smoky-brown Woodpecker; Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper; Barred Antthrush (voice); Rufous-faced Antpitta (voice); White-throated and Torrent tyrannulets; Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant; Streak-necked, Cinnamon, and Golden-crowned flycatchers; Scimitar-winged Piha (rare); Chestnut-crested Cotinga (rare); Barred Fruiteater; Barred Becard; Blue-and-white and Pale-footed swallows; Great Thrush; Andean and White-cheeked solitaires; Mountain Wren; Common Bush-Tanager; Chestnut-bellied, Scarlet-bellied, Blue-winged, and mountain-tanagers; Grass-green and Golden-collared tanagers; and Masked Flowerpiercer. Depending upon time available, we may make one or more stops at higher elevations as well. Birds of the two highest zones (puna grasslands and treeline shrubbery) are discussed under Day 15. We should arrive back in La Paz by mid- to late afternoon.

NIGHT: Hotel Plaza, La Paz

**October 23, Day 14: Morning Trip to Lake Titicaca.** Mid-afternoon and evening free in La Paz. Today we will drive northward to the shores of Lake Titicaca. We plan to arrive fairly early while the air is clear and crisp and the winds are calm. The endemic Short-winged Grebe is usually fairly numerous here and we also should see one of Titicaca's most famous sights, the Aymara Indians poling their reed boats along the lake shore. There is extensive development around some parts of the lake which restricts birding activities to some extent but we also could see Silvery Grebe; Puna Ibis; Yellow-billed Pintail; Andean Ruddy Duck; Common Gallinule; Plumbeous Rail; Andean Lapwing; Andean Gull; Wren-like Rushbird (common); Andean Swallow; and Yellow-winged Blackbird. In damp fields near the lake we'll watch for various altiplano species including Mountain Caracara; Puna Snipe; Slender-billed Miner; Black-winged Ground-Dove; Andean Flicker; Correndera Pipit; and Peruvian, Plumbeous, Ash-breasted, and Band-tailed sierra-finches. We should be back by early afternoon, with some free time available for shopping, exploring La Paz, or resting.

NIGHT: Hotel Plaza, La Paz

**October 24, Day 15: Day at High Elevations Near La Paz.** Following more than a week of acclimatization at high elevations, we should be in good shape for our trip today. We'll spend most of our time in the puna grasslands, in treeline shrubbery, and in and around a high elevation lagoon. Elevations today will range from about 3300 m to perhaps as high as 5000 m (11,000 to 16,500 ft). These are pretty extreme elevations and even with our long acclimatization, we'll be taking it slow. There are a lot of interesting birds in this region, many of them true high elevation specialists, and some of them also rather restricted in range. We will begin in the treeline shrubbery and rocky talus slopes in the vicinity of the village of Pongo, where rocky slopes and various flowering shrubs provide good habitat for the four families—furnariids, tyrannids, emberizids and hummers—that comprise a dominate proportion of the avifauna at these high elevations. Possibilities include Andean Condor; Andean Hillstar; Great Sapphirewing; Blue-mantled Thornbill; Tawny Tit-Spinetail; Plain-breasted Earthcreeper; Tawny and Andean tit-spinetails; Streak-throated, Scribble-tailed, and Line-fronted canasteros; Stripe-headed Antpitta; Puna Tapaculo; Tufted Tit-Tyrant; Brown-backed and D'Orbigny's chat-tyrants; Plain-capped and Cinereous ground-tyrants; Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant; Brown-bellied Swallow; White-browed Conebill; Peruvian Sierra-Finch; Band-tailed and Plain-colored seedeaters; Gray-bellied flowerpiercer; and Short-tailed Finch.

Some of the rarest and less numerous species occur in bogs and lake shores of puna grassland near the high pass, known locally as La Cumbre, but these are difficult to find or, in some cases, also unpredictable in occurrence. Among this select group of possibilities are Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, a lovely but very rare and unpredictable shorebird, as well as Rufous-bellied and Gray-breasted seedsnipe and Andean Snipe. Other species that occur here are Andean Goose; Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle; Puna Snipe; Common Miner; Slender-billed Miner; Puna and Streak-throated canastero; Puna, Rufous-naped, and white-fronted ground-tyrant; White-

## ***Bolivian Highlands, Page 10***

winged Diuca-Finch; Peruvian Sierra-Finch; and Bright-rumped Yellow-Finch. We will conclude the trip this evening with our final dinner in La Paz.

NIGHT: Hotel Plaza, La Paz

**October 25, Day 16: Morning Departure for International Flights Home.** For those returning home, we suggest the American Airlines flight departing La Paz early this morning and arriving in Miami mid-afternoon.

**TOUR SIZE:** The tour will be limited to 14 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Steve Hilty and David Wolf

**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 Wolf** is a senior member of the VENT staff and one of our most experienced tour leaders. After birding the U.S. and Mexico for over a decade, an interest in the wildlife of Africa led him to Kenya in 1975, where he spent over a year studying the birds and other wildlife of the African continent. Soon after his return to Texas he began leading Rockport Wildlife Weekends for VENT, at that time a new company, and he hasn't looked back since. In addition to Africa, David has extensive birding and tour-leading experience in North America and the Neotropics, and has birded widely on all of the continents. He unites great birding skills with a wide-ranging interest in all aspects of natural history, which he shares readily with tour participants. David and his wife, Mimi, live on a small farm in Nacogdoches, Texas, with assorted horses, cats, and dogs. They have two grown children, Matt and Elena, and are now happy grandparents.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the **Eastern Lowlands Pre-trip** is **\$2035** per person in double occupancy from La Paz. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 5, 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 La Paz, the internal flight from La Paz to Trinidad, the internal flight from Trinidad to Santa Cruz and return to your home from La Paz. At the time of publication of this itinerary, the cost of the flight from La Paz to Trinidad, and Trinidad to Santa Cruz priced at \$312 USD. However, this price is subject to change and cannot be guaranteed. Other items not included are 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 the **Pre-trip** is **\$115**. 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 **Bolivian Highlands** main tour is **\$3,875** per person in double occupancy from Santa Cruz. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 16, 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 Santa Cruz and return from La Paz, 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 the **main tour** is **\$225**. 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 per 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 & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE:** A brochure and application form 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 as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. VENT recommends Travel Insured International as our preferred insurance provider.** 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.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. **Contact Travel Insured International prior to registration for details.** Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than Travel Insured International, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

**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. Airfares are subject to change until ticketed.

**DOCUMENTS:** from the U.S. Department of State web site: <http://travel.state.gov/index.html>

Effective December 1, 2007, U.S. citizens seeking to enter Bolivia as tourists must have an entry visa. Bolivian tourist visas can be applied for by mail or in person at Bolivian consulates in the U.S., as well as at Bolivian ports of entry, such as at Bolivia's international airports and at land border crossings. Bolivian tourist visas are valid for five years from the date of issuance and allow the bearer to enter the country three times in a year for a cumulative stay of not more than ninety days. The cost of the tourist visa is \$100 U.S. dollars. The \$100 fee can be paid in cash, by deposit to the Bolivian Consulate's bank account or by money order. Tourists applying for their visa upon arrival to Bolivia must pay this fee in cash to immigration authorities. In addition to the \$100 fee, the applicant must present a visa application form with a 4x4 centimeters color photograph, a passport with a validity of not less than 6 months, evidence of a hotel reservation or a letter of invitation in Spanish, proof of economic solvency (credit card, cash or a current bank statement), and an International Vaccination Certificate for yellow fever.

Please visit the Embassy of Bolivia web site at <http://www.bolivia-usa.org> for details on how to apply or contact the nearest Bolivian Embassy or Consulate. Bolivian consulates in the United States are located in Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Oklahoma City, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC. For further information, you may wish to contact Pinnacle Travel Document Systems ([www.traveldocs.com](http://www.traveldocs.com) on the web or 888-838-4867 by phone), a company which handles visa procurement. Non-United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

**BAGGAGE:** Please pack all of your belongings in **duffels or similar soft-sided bags**. Soft-sided bags pack more easily in the trucks that we will be using on our visit to the ranch.

**CLIMATE:** This tour is scheduled for the late dry season, but we may encounter some rain. The weather is generally warm and humid in the eastern lowlands. Daytime high temperatures average 81 to 90° F; night temperatures average 68 to 79° F. Unexpected Antarctic cold fronts can occur in almost any month but mainly June through August. If one of these occurs (unlikely in October), one or more days of rain and cold temperatures are possible with temperatures dropping to the 50 to 60° F range during the day and 38 to 50° F at night. Combined with damp conditions, these temperatures can be very chilling.

**CLOTHING:** Lightweight, loose-fitting, field clothing is the rule, but please avoid white or brightly colored clothes (including hats). Our movement in such clothing makes us conspicuous and may frighten birds and animals. Bring long pants and long sleeved shirts, as we may encounter some mosquitoes. Short-sleeved shirts and/or T-shirts do not provide sufficient insect or sun protection. Everyone should bring a jacket or sweater or fleece in case of a cold front. A fleece vest and lighter weight jacket should be sufficient. Bring a good hat for sun and rain protection and a rain jacket or poncho (a small umbrella is also useful). Wear sturdy walking shoes or sneakers; rubber boots are not essential but some people wear them for chigger protection, although there are not many chiggers here. Thongs or Tevas may be useful for showers and when relaxing inside your room. A pair of light gloves offer protection against black flies but they are not prevalent here. Regular laundry facilities are available in Santa Cruz.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, small notebook, insect repellent etc.). It is highly recommended that you pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag (check for current airline security carry-on restrictions; see [www.tsa.gov/travelers](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers) for more information). Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. You may also want to bring a few between meal snacks such as nuts, dried fruits, granola bars, etc.

Checklist of essential items:

1. Two small LED flashlights (extra batteries) or a headlamp (and spare pocket-sized light)
2. Insect repellent
3. Water bottle - 1 quart refillable plastic bottle
4. Sunscreen lotion and good hat
5. Supply of plastic bags
6. Walking shoes (boots) and a pair of sneakers (also thongs/flip-flops for showers)
7. All personal medications, including first aid items; extra eyeglasses
8. Checklist, small pocket notebook, and pens
9. Binoculars
10. Day pack
11. Passport
12. Poncho or umbrella
13. A few meters of nylon cord suitable for use in hanging up wet cloths in room
14. Earplugs

Useful but *optional* items: pocket knife

**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.

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](http://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](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on travel health).

Malaria is present, including the chloroquine-resistant strain. There are several options for malaria prophylaxis including Mefloquine (Lariam), Malarone, and Doxycycline. These medications are available by prescription only. Please consult your physician or local travel clinic for recommendations. The CDC recommends a current yellow fever inoculation (good for ten years). Update your tetanus, polio, and typhoid. These recommendations come from the CDC, but you should discuss any medications and preventative medicines with your doctor.

Leishmaniasis may possibly be present. It is transmitted by a small fly that is active mainly at dusk or after dark in forested areas. It is not common (unlikely here because this area is not heavily forested) and only a few flies are carriers. Your best protection for this disease is proper clothing, insect repellent, and reduced exposure to particular areas within the forest (between tree buttresses, heliconia thickets, etc.) where the fly vectors occur.

**INSECTS:** Ticks, mosquitoes and chiggers can occasionally be a problem. Your best options are spraying with DEET or using pre-treated clothing. Rubber boots provide excellent protection against ticks and chiggers but are hot and bulky and otherwise not necessary for this pre-trip.

**MISC:** Departure Tax - **\$20** USD approximate (paid in USD currency)

Electricity - 110 volts

Language - Spanish

Time – same as Eastern Standard Time

**SUGGESTED READING:**

Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://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](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com), or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com), which specializes in ornithology books.

***Birds:*** The two best choices for birders (a field guide; and background natural history) are shown in boldface below.

Narosky, T. and D. Yzurieta, *A Guide to the Identification of Birds of Argentina and Uruguay*. Buenos Aires: 1987. (English edition available 1991.) Useful for the chaco and adjacent areas of southeastern Bolivia.

Remsen, J.V. and M.A. Taylor, *An Annotated List of the Birds of Bolivia*. Buteo Books, 1989. Good list, region by region; taxonomy somewhat dated; no illustrations.

**Schulenberg, T. A., D. F. Stotz, D. F. Lane, J. P. O'Neill, and T. A. Parker, III. *Birds of Peru*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 2007. Your single best book, by far, for this trip. Species accounts treat almost everything we will encounter.**

***Butterflies:***

D'Abrera, B., *Butterflies of South America*. Australia: Hill House, 1984. Good pocket guide, covers many genera, nice pictures.

***Mammals:***

Emmons, L., *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990. Paperback with good pictures and excellent text.

***General:***

Forsyth, A. and K. Miyata, *Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rainforests of Central and South America*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984. Excellent introduction to tropical ecosystems in highly readable style; now in paperback.

Kricher, J.C., *A Neotropical Companion. An Introduction to Birds, Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics*. 1989. Another good introduction to tropical ecosystems. Encompasses far more than birds but an excellent overall text.

**Hilty, S.L., *Birds of Tropical America: A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*. Univ. of Texas Press. (reprinted and updated). 2005. Provides excellent natural history background on many interesting topics that birders and naturalists visiting the tropics are sure to encounter. Easy, readable style that deals with a number of complex topics in layman's language. Highly recommended.**

**TIPPING:** As noted in our itineraries, tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your tour 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.

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