

GRAND CALIFORNIA AUGUST 13-25, 2011

MONTEREY EXTENSION AUGUST 24-28, 2011

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California is a state of incredible diversity. Within the lower 48 states, it boasts the highest mountain, the lowest desert, the oldest and biggest trees, and now that a few California Condors have been released, the largest flying bird. It can also claim some of the most beautiful coastline, most magnificent mountains, and best pelagic birding in the country. The Grand California tour and its Monterey Extension are designed to sample some of the richest birding areas of California, which are, coincidentally, some of the most beautiful ecosystems on the continent.

Emphasis is placed on seeking California specialties at a time that is also productive for Monterey pelagics. Shorebird migration will be in full swing, and there is always a chance of finding some rare Asian species. Most of the Sierra Nevada specialties will be present, and although they are harder to find late in the season, our past tours have had excellent success. Those who complete both sections may average 240 species. Participants who combine the Grand California tour with the Monterey Extension will receive a discount of \$250 per person.

August 13, Day 1: Arrival in San Francisco. Participants should make arrangements to arrive in San Francisco and transfer to our hotel today. If you fly into San Francisco International Airport (airport code SFO), call the Best Western El Rancho from the phones near the luggage carousels and they will send someone to pick you up. We will meet at the hotel lobby/check-in counter at 6:45 p.m. for a short orientation session prior to dinner.

NIGHT: Best Western El Rancho, Millbrae

August 14, Day 2: San Francisco to Bodega Bay. We will leave early this morning, driving across the Golden Gate Bridge to begin searching for Wrentit, California Towhee, California Thrasher, California Quail, and other specialties in the chaparral vegetation along the picturesque coastal highway. A brief stop will be made at the famous Muir Woods National Monument to look at the awesome coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*)—the world's tallest tree species. This shaded redwood grove is also an excellent spot to look for Winter Wren; we'll make an effort to find one of these spritely phantoms of the forest floor before leaving. We will have a picnic lunch today near Olema. By now the clown-faced Acorn Woodpeckers and Western Scrub-Jays will have been seen.

In the afternoon, we will work our way up to Bodega Bay and check in to our motel. Because this time of year is so good for vagrant shorebirds, we will detour to any nearby areas where rarities have been reported; or if none have been seen, we will search the extensive, exposed mudflats at Bodega Bay at low tide. We will also check out several nearby wooded areas for Chestnut-backed Chickadees. The rocky coastline around Bodega Head is good for Brandt's and Pelagic cormorants, American Black Oystercatcher, Western and Heermann's gulls, and Elegant Tern. One lucky group found a Horned Puffin here.

NIGHT: Bodega Coast Inn, Bodega Bay

August 15, Day 3: Bodega Bay to the Sacramento Valley. In the morning, we will search again for Snowy Plover and through the thousands of migrant shorebirds that are present here at low tide. After breakfast we will drive north to Jenner by the Sea. Here we will scope for Marbled Murrelet, a species whose nest (placed high on a mossy limb in the humid coastal forest) was finally discovered in 1974. It was the last regular breeder in North America (north of Mexico) whose nest had not been described. From here, we will head inland, searching for raptors en route. We will have lunch at the Korbel Winery Deli and then sample some of their wines--a must in this part of California. Golden Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, White-tailed Kite, and other species may be seen in the open fields. A quick stop in the salt marshes around Vallejo will give us an opportunity to scan additional mudflats, which are often covered with waders, shorebirds, gulls, and terns. We will search for Burrowing Owl near the University of California Davis or Cosumnes River College and look for Yellow-billed Magpie (a California endemic) on our way to Sacramento. Either tonight or tomorrow morning we will make a special trip to the California State University campus where Western Screech-Owl has been somewhat reliable.

NIGHT: La Quinta Inn and Suites, Rancho Cordova

August 16, Day 4: Folsom Lake Peninsula and Central Valley. An early morning departure will take us to oak-woodland, chaparral, and grasslands where we will search for Cinnamon Teal, Black-necked Stilt, White-throated Swift, Black-chinned and Anna's hummingbirds, Western Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Violet-green Swallow, Oak Titmouse, Bushtit, Western Bluebird, California Thrasher, Phainopepla, Cassin's and Hutton's vireos, Orange-crowned Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Spotted and California towhees, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and Lesser Goldfinch. Our primary targets today are Nuttall's Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Magpie, Wrentit, and if we are lucky, Hooded Oriole and Lawrence's Goldfinch. We will have a picnic lunch at Folsom Peninsula or return to Sacramento and visit the feeders at the home of our leader, Jeri Langham. In late afternoon, we will try some trails along the American River Parkway for species missed earlier in the day or visit the sewage ponds at Davis and Woodland or try the Cosumnes River Preserve.

NIGHT: La Quinta Inn and Suites, Rancho Cordova

August 17, Day 5: Sacramento to South Lake Tahoe. An early breakfast and departure will put us at the lower elevations of the Sierra Nevada while bird activity is still high. A hummer extravaganza will await us at the Wilburn's home in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Up to five species are possible among the hundreds of hummingbirds visiting their feeders. As we climb up through several conifer ecosystems, we will try for Mountain Quail, Band-tailed Pigeon, Calliope Hummingbird, Red-breasted Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Mountain Chickadee, Western Tanager, and such warblers as Nashville, Black-throated Gray, MacGillivray's and Wilson's. We will stop for lunch in a scenic picnic area at Ice House Reservoir

A special detour will be made to a picnic/camping area next to Wright's Lake. Most of the birds mentioned above are possible along this little-traveled side road. What makes this area so attractive is that the red fir-lodgepole pine ecosystem provides a great chance for Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, and other mid-elevation species. The area around the lake is quite scenic.

In mid-afternoon, we will return to the main highway and bird our way to the famous South Lake Tahoe resort. Located on the south shore of the lake, this resort provides convenient access to many casinos on the Nevada side of the state line. We will eat dinner early enough to allow time for you to visit some casinos.

NIGHT: Best Western Timber Cove Lodge, South Lake Tahoe

August 18, Day 6: South Lake Tahoe to Bishop. After an early breakfast, we will visit Grass Lake, a boggy area at high elevation. In addition to searching for birds here, we will bounce (if water level permits) on the *Sphagnum*-filled bog and see two insectivorous plants: the diminutive sundew (*Drosera*) and the fully submerged bladderwort (*Utricularia*). Golden Eagles nest in this area and may cruise over while we are here. At

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these upper elevations, we may see Clark's Nutcracker, Sooty Grouse, Pygmy Nuthatch, Mountain Bluebird, Townsend's Solitaire, Green-tailed Towhee, and Cassin's Finch.

Driving down the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada, we will see pinyon pine, Utah juniper, and high-desert sagebrush ecosystems produced by the rainshadow effect. This habitat is perfect for Juniper Titmouse. We will visit Indian Creek Reservoir, where one lucky tour had Black, White-throated, and Vaux's swifts together hawking insects over the water. Later we will walk in the aspen groves near Monitor Pass before dropping down to Highway 395. If time permits, we will check out Lake Topaz before cruising past scenic Mono Lake. Late afternoon will find us arriving in Bishop, a town known for "mule days," fishing, and rodeos.

NIGHT: Best Western Creekside Inn, Bishop

August 19, Day 7: Bishop to Lee Vining. Great scenic beauty will accompany exciting birding as we work our way over Westgard Pass and high into the White Mountains. Chukar, Juniper Titmouse and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher can sometimes be found along the arid rocky slopes, and we will watch carefully for them as we make our way to the ancient bristlecone pine (*Pinus longaeva*) forest. Botanists consider these gnarled, red-barked conifers to be the oldest living trees in North America, with many individuals dating back more than 4,500 years. Noisy Pinyon Jay flocks, sometimes totaling more than 100 birds, leapfrog through the pines, competing with Clark's Nutcracker for our attention. While unlikely, we could find Cordilleran Flycatcher and the Gray-headed race of Dark-eyed Junco. At lower elevations, amidst the fragrant sagebrush and rabbitbrush, we will encounter many Great Basin birds, among them Sage Thrasher, as well as sparrows such as Brewer's, Sage, Black-throated, and Vesper. On the way to Deep Springs College, the rocky cliffs may have Canyon and Rock wrens. The trees around Deep Springs College or Oasis Ranch may hold some early migrants including, perhaps, a western *Empidonax* or two. Continuing north we may check Black Lake for migrant waterbirds and shorebirds.

In the late afternoon, we will drive along the south shore of Mono Lake, giving us our first chance to examine the bizarre "moonscape" shoreline. Where fresh water enters the lake, calcium carbonate deposits, precipitated as a by-product of algal metabolism, have formed grotesque tufa towers, creating an otherworldly effect enhanced by the late afternoon sun. The fragrant Jeffrey pine forest that borders the lake may produce Pinyon Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, and in some years, Lewis's Woodpecker.

NIGHT: Best Western Lakeview Lodge, Lee Vining

August 20, Day 8: Mono Lake and the Great Basin desert. Much of today will be spent exploring the Great Basin desert and the shores of Mono Lake. In the cool of the morning, we will drive to the ghost town of Bodie, stopping frequently for raptors, Sage Thrashers, and flocks of sparrows that may include Sage, Lark, White-crowned, Vesper, and Brewer's. Bodie was once a thriving mining town with over 20,000 inhabitants, but it is now a state historical park. Say's Phoebes and Mountain Bluebirds nest in the abandoned buildings, and bands of Brewer's Sparrows skip through the big sagebrush that lines the main street. Greater Sage-Grouse can often be found in the vicinity, and past tours have had great success in obtaining spectacular close-up views.

Along the north end of Mono Lake, aged willows and aspens line the trickling streams that feed the lake, creating oases for migrant and resident landbirds. We will check the groves for migrants as well as for Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Black-billed Magpies, and Bullock's Oriole. Down by the lakeshore, we will stand amidst another tufa "grove" and watch the parade of birds that feed upon the brine shrimp and the non-biting, endemic Mono Lake brine fly. If conditions are favorable, the lake may be covered with thousands of Eared Grebes, Wilson's and Red-necked phalaropes, and California Gulls. Other migrant shorebirds and waterfowl are often in attendance as well, and we may see the resident Ospreys. Since Mono Lake is too saline for fish to live, these Ospreys must catch mammals in the nearby sagebrush to feed themselves and their young.

In the afternoon, we will stop by the modern Mono Lake Visitors Center, and then head for the north end of Crowley Lake. When water levels are good, the exposed mudflats will have hundreds of shorebirds. Ducks and grebes are abundant here also, with grebes often still nesting at this time of year.

NIGHT: Best Western Lakeview Lodge, Lee Vining

August 21, Day 9: Lee Vining to Yosemite Valley. From Mono Lake and the sagebrush desert, the Tioga Pass road winds up Lee Vining Canyon and the precipitous east slope of the Sierra Nevada. The high country talus slopes, accessible here from the road, are habitat for pikas, yellow-bellied marmots, and the very difficult-to-find Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch. Lodgepole pine forest yields to whitebark pine forest as we top out at an elevation of nearly 10,000 feet. From here on we have entered the wonderland that is Yosemite National Park. Descending from Tioga Pass towards Yosemite Valley, we will pass through magnificent coniferous forest. Fragrant incense cedars with their beautiful orange bark and stately sugar pines laden with massive cones (up to 24 inches long!) are just two of the more spectacular components of a diverse conifer ecosystems that include white, red, and Douglas firs; Jeffrey, lodgepole, and western white pine; and mountain hemlock. Along the way we will make select stops to sample the forest avifauna. One such stop will include a short, but steep, hike to a secluded area that frequently has Sooty Grouse. The forest is broken in spots by lush meadows, many of which are both large and interconnecting. These meadows are the hunting grounds of the majestic Great Gray Owl, one of the most mysterious and sought-after birds in North America. We will scour a choice meadow system in hopes of finding one of these elusive birds.

Yosemite Valley is surely a wonder of the world. Carved by the Merced River and its Ice Age glaciers, the valley is rimmed by sheer granite cliffs rising 3000 feet above its protected floor. So deep did the glaciers cut into the granite, they left hanging tributaries that plunge from the canyon rims in waterfalls of extraordinary height. At 4000 feet, the Valley is wooded with an incredibly beautiful forest of yellow pine, black oak, and other assorted species. As we enter the valley, now bathed in late afternoon sun, we will get our first views of Yosemite Falls, the highest in North America and rock climbers challenging the steep, sheer, rocky face of El Capitan. We'll stop for pictures.

NIGHT: Yosemite View Lodge, El Portal

August 22-23, Days 10-11: Glacier Point Road. An early start will see us on our way to Bridalveil Creek Campground. Here and driving through old fire areas on the way, we will be alert for the jackhammer drum roll that signals the presence of Black-backed Woodpecker. Other woodpeckers are about as well, with possibilities including White-headed and Hairy, as well as Williamson's and Red-breasted sapsuckers. Northern Pygmy-Owl is an ever-present possibility, although seldom seen. Roving flocks of Mountain Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Golden-crowned Kinglets may be joined by small numbers of migrating warblers (Orange-crowned, Townsend's, Hermit, Nashville, and Black-throated Gray). Finches are also well represented here. Pine Siskins and Cassin's Finches are usually much in evidence, but it will require more searching to obtain good views of Red Crossbills and Pine Grosbeaks. Later, we will drive to Glacier Point for breathtaking views of Yosemite Valley and Half Dome before returning to our lodge.

Throughout our stay in Yosemite, we will remain somewhat flexible as to scheduling. Many of the specialty birds can be exceedingly elusive, and although our track record for producing most of them is excellent, they may require second or third efforts to find. Accordingly, some of our time in the park is open and will be used as dictated by circumstances.

NIGHTS: Yosemite View Lodge, El Portal

August 24, Day 12: Yosemite Valley to Monterey Peninsula. The early morning will be spent looking for anything we might have missed. On our way out of the park, we'll check the rushing Merced River for American Dipper and make a special detour to the Mariposa Grove to stand amid the revered giant sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)--the largest species known to ever exist on our planet. The protection of this grove of giants--a thousand years older than Christianity--had much to do with the creation of Yosemite as a park in 1864. From yellow pine forest in Yosemite Valley, we slowly descend through drier foothill woodlands of blue

oak and foothill pine into the great Central Valley. Marine sediments, deposited during the Mesozoic when there was a bay in the basin between the Sierra Nevada and coast-ranges, account for the rich valley soil deposits now under intensive cultivation. We'll make few stops, but remain alert for White-tailed Kites and Yellow-billed Magpies. Tonight will be the farewell dinner for those not continuing on for the Monterey Extension.

NIGHT: Best Western Monterey Inn, Monterey

August 25, Day 13: Departure for home. Participants may make arrangements to depart for home at any time today from the Monterey airport (airport code MRY). Transportation to the airport can be arranged through the motel office. Be sure to arrange your shuttle time before going to bed.

MONTEREY EXTENSION AUGUST 24-28, 2011

This year we have made the final three full days of our traditional Grand California tour as an optional extension to allow for those participants who want a shorter California experience to end the tour early. Those continuing on the Monterey Extension will enjoy a fantastic pelagic trip, plus the possibility of seeing some specialties like Mountain Quail, Tricolored Blackbird and California Condor.

August 24, Day 1: Arrival in Monterey. Participants arriving for the Monterey Extension should plan to arrive in Monterey today and transfer to our hotel. If you fly into the Monterey Airport (airport code MRY), call the Best Western Monterey Inn from the phones near the luggage carousels and they will send someone to pick you up. We will meet at the hotel lobby/check-in counter at 6:45 p.m. for a short orientation session prior to dinner.

NIGHT: Best Western Monterey Inn, Monterey

August 25, Day 2/13: Carmel Valley, Moss Landing and Elkhorn Slough. We'll have the entire day to enjoy birding one of the richest areas in the state. Monterey enjoys many different habitats in close proximity to one another and we'll sample as many as possible. Our exact course of action will depend in large part upon what birds we have seen to this point. As the often dry Carmel River courses down from the Santa Lucias, it transects a variety of habitats which together support most of the coastal California landbird specialties. Selective stops in grassland, chaparral, riparian woodland, and oak/laurel woodland could produce California Quail, Red-shouldered Hawk, Band-tailed Pigeon, Nuttall's and Acorn woodpeckers, Black Phoebe, Wrentit, California Thrasher, Oak Titmouse, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Bushtit, Hutton's and Cassin's vireos, Spotted Towhee, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and both Lawrence's and Lesser goldfinches.

After lunch, we will drive up beautiful Highway 1 along the coast toward Santa Cruz in order to spend part of the day at Moonglow Dairy, where among other things we should find Tricolored Blackbird, another California specialty. We will check key spots for waterbirds and shorebirds including three of the best shorebird staging areas in the state: Moss Landing, Jetty Road, and Elkhorn Slough. Because these areas have produced many rarities over the years, we will be especially alert for any Eurasian vagrants.

NIGHT: Best Western Monterey Inn, Monterey

August 26, Day 3/14: Pelagic Trip out of Monterey. Because of the narrow continental shelf and hence the proximity of deep Pacific waters, Monterey is the perfect spot from which to take a pelagic trip. For variety and sheer numbers of pelagic species, August is an excellent month. It is the time when Ashy and Black storm-petrels begin to gather off Moss Landing above a submarine canyon that is deeper than the famed Grand Canyon! We could encounter, too, large flocks of Sooty Shearwater with smaller numbers of Pink-footed, Buller's, and/or Black-vented shearwaters; Common Murres; Pigeon Guillemot; Cassin's Auklet; Red and Red-

necked phalaropes; and any of the three species of jaegers, perhaps chasing an Arctic Tern or Sabine's Gull. Even Black-footed Albatross is a possibility. It should be pointed out that pelagic birding is highly unpredictable and we cannot expect to see all of the possible species on any one boat trip. Monterey, however, consistently produces the highest quality pelagic trips in North America, and our chances of seeing many of the species listed above are excellent.

Marine mammals are even less predictable than the birds. Our chances of seeing several species are great. Among the more likely ones are California sea lion, Pacific white-sided dolphin, Dall's porpoise, and Risso's dolphin. Past trips at this season have also yielded northern right whale dolphin and such whales as humpback, minke, killer and blue--the largest animal to ever live. One never knows what a Monterey pelagic trip will bring, but it could easily be the boat trip of a lifetime.

NIGHT: Best Western Monterey Inn, Monterey

August 27, Day 4/15, Monterey coastline to Big Sur. This morning we will check the Carmel River Mouth before heading south toward Andrew Molera State Park near Big Sur. The coastline on this drive is spectacular. Near one of the bridges, we will try some chaparral birding before continuing to Andrew Molera for our hike in riparian vegetation along the Big Sur River. This area will provide our best chance to see the recently released California Condor. At least one individual has been seen in each of the past five trips. After lunch we will head north to San Francisco, stopping to bird as time permits.

NIGHT: Best Western El Rancho, Millbrae

August 28, Day 5/16: Departure for home. Participants may make arrangements to depart for home at any time today. Transportation to the San Francisco International Airport (airport code SFO) can be arranged through the motel office. Be sure to arrange your shuttle time before going to bed.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

TOUR SIZE: Both the Grand California tour and the Monterey Extension will be limited to 7 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Jeri M. Langham

Jeri M. Langham has a Ph.D. in plant ecology from Washington State University, and after 38 years as a professor of biological sciences at California State University in Sacramento, retired in May 2008. He received the first Outstanding Teacher Award from the newly formed College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in 1997; the Outstanding Faculty Award from the Science Educational Equity and Minority Organization of Science Students organizations in 2005; and his University's third annual Lifetime Achievement Award for Community Service in 2006. Jeri has ardently birded all over North America, as well as Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands, Peru, Argentina, Kenya, Borneo, and Australia. Born and raised in Venezuela, he speaks fluent Spanish. Known for his enthusiasm and boundless energy, Jeri thoroughly enjoys searching for birds and sharing them with others. His passion for teaching and his natural teaching abilities soon become apparent as his tour participants enjoy learning more about the biological world around them. Jeri is a former member of the Bausch and Lomb Birding Council and the California Bird Records Committee. He is a Director for the Neotropical Grassland Conservancy.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the main tour is **\$4225** per person based on double occupancy from Millbrae, California ending in Monterey, California and includes all meals beginning with dinner on Day 1 ending with breakfast on Day 13, accommodations as stated in the itinerary and ground transportation during the tour. The fee for the Monterey Extension is **\$1590** per person based on double occupancy from Monterey ending in Millbrae and includes all meals beginning with lunch on Day 13 ending with breakfast on Day 16,

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accommodations as stated in the itinerary, pelagic trip and ground transportation during the tour. All fees include gratuities, tips, park entrance fees, and guide services provided by the tour leader. Fees do not include airfare from your home to San Francisco and return (or the return from Monterey if only on the main tour), airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the main tour is **\$925**; and the single supplement for the Monterey Extension is **\$270**. 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.

COMBINED TOUR DISCOUNTS: Due to the overlap of dates between the Grand California tour and the Monterey Extension, those participants that combine the tours will receive a discount of **\$250** taken off the Monterey Extension; singles will receive an additional **\$65** discount.

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

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposits for these tours are **\$300** per person for the main tour and an additional **\$300** per person deposit for the Monterey Extension. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$150** per person per deposit will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$50** per person. If cancellation is made between 120 and 90 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 90 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. ***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 \$150*
Between 120 and 90 days before departure	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded
Fewer than 90 days before departure date	No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$50 per person.

TRIP 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.

Medical insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation/repatriation during the trip is recommended for this tour. This coverage is included in the “Worldwide Trip Protector” plan offered by *Travel Insured International*. If you do not choose to purchase the insurance through *Travel Insured International*, you will need to do so through another insurance provider. A good website for information and acquisition of emergency evacuation/repatriation insurance is: www.insuremytrip.com.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

BAGGAGE: As space in the vehicle is tight, we ask that you limit your luggage to one medium suitcase and a carry-on bag. As a precaution, we urge you to pack a change of clothes, your binoculars, medication, toiletries, walking shoes and other essentials in your carry-on bag for your airline flight.

CLIMATE: In most of the areas we will be visiting, the mornings will be cool (50-60 degrees F). The Sierra Nevada will be cold early in the day (30-40 degrees F) but the afternoons should be warmer (60-75 degrees F). The Central Valley may exceed 100 degrees at midday.

CLOTHING: Basic field clothing is appropriate for this tour. **PLEASE AVOID BRIGHT COLORS: RED, YELLOW, WHITE, ORANGE, BABY BLUE, ETC.** Bring several pairs of pants and/or shorts, comfortable shirts, and swimming suit. One or two long-sleeved shirts and a hat are recommended for protection from insects and sun. Be sure to have a pair of comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots, and a second pair of lightweight shoes. Because of cold mornings and possibly a cold and/or wet pelagic trip, simple raingear, a sweater, and a warm jacket are essential. Jeri always brings gloves for the pelagic trip. Casual attire is acceptable for all restaurants in which we dine. If you wish to bring more formal wear, please try to keep it to a minimum (see baggage). The Best Western Lakeview Lodge (2 nights) in Lee Vining, and Yosemite View Lodge (3 nights) in El Portal have washing machines and dryers available to us. There are **NO** facilities **NOR** laundry service at the Best Western Monterey Inn (3 nights).

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, medication's and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leaders will have a LEICA spotting scope. If you have a spotting scope and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. It will be useful when we scan mudflats and coastlines.

Other items should include a flashlight, sunglasses, gloves (for chilly mornings and pelagic trip), tissue paper, alarm clock, and ear plugs (for unlikely noisy nights). For the pelagic trip, bring motion sickness pills. **Please bring a plastic coffee cup or glass which can be used to prevent excess usage of disposable cups and glasses.**

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

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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.

INSECT PROTECTION: Mosquitoes and other biting insects may be a problem, but it is unlikely. If you wish to take precautions, we suggest one bottle of Cutters and a pump-spray can of OFF or any other product with 100% DEET. There are no chiggers to worry about.

PHYSICAL EXERTION: We will move at a leisurely pace and most walks will be over short distances with some days with a longer, more difficult walk. Altitudinal changes will vary from sea level to over 10,000 feet elevation. To take advantage of the best time for bird activity, we usually begin birding during the dawn hours.

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

Field Guides

- Burt, William H. and Richard Grossheider. *A Field Guide to the Mammals*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.
- Dunn, J.L. and K.L. Garrett. *A Field Guide to the Warblers of North America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
- Farrand, John Jr. *The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding*. Vols. 1, 2 and 3. New York: Chanticleer Press, Inc., 1983.
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