

ECUADOR: SOUTHWESTERN ANDES & LOWLANDS

APRIL 3-13, 2009

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The extraordinary richness of Ecuador's biodiversity is due, in part, to the existence of the Andes Cordillera and the cold waters of the southern-born Humboldt Current, which brings cooler, dry air to this otherwise hot and wet equatorial location. Furthermore, it is this country's southwestern sector that gives testimony to the combination of these two factors, creating what is called the Tumbes Endemic Center—the second richest endemic area on earth—a unique biogeographical zone shared exclusively with northwestern Peru that is home to an exceptional number of plant and animal species known only to this bioregion. At the same time, because of—to some extent—the generally wet/dry seasonal weather pattern that prevails here, much of Ecuador's Tumbesian region has suffered from centuries of unsustainable land-use methods (slash-and-burn, over-grazing, etc.) and thus deforestation has been rampant and unrelenting overall, up until only a few years ago when mostly private conservation initiatives began protecting the remnant forests and woodlands and their unparalleled ecosystems.

Thanks to the creation of these new nature reserves, this area has now become definitely more accessible and "bird-able," although by no means does it boast the excellent tourism infrastructure of other parts of this tiny country. As is characteristic throughout Ecuador though, habitats, general climatic conditions, and bird species change rapidly and within very short distances. During these nine field days, we will visit coastal marshland, humid foothill, and montane forest where we will see Chocó (the world's richest endemic area) endemic species, high elevation tundra-like paramo grassland and Polylepis woodland, stunted temperate shrub-forest, tangled deciduous scrub, and impressive Bombax forest. In total, this is a species-rich area with many specialties that can be found nowhere else!

Our journey begins southward along the coastal lowlands where we will look for Horned Screamer and other wetland species, continues high into the Andes to the tundra-like paramo zone to find Tit-like Dacnis, Violet-throated Metaltail and Giant Conebill, and then takes us down into a quiet inter-andean valley to visit the relatively small Yunguilla Reserve, just south of the city of Cuenca, to search out the extremely rare and critically threatened Pale-headed Brush-Finch. After a morning of birding at this site, we continue south through a highland agricultural zone and more paramo-like grass and shrub land to later stop in temperate woodland and forest to look for Bearded Guan and Golden-plumed Parakeet, among other species, before dropping into a pleasant valley dominated by sugar cane plantations and a relatively mild climate for the night. Here, in the Catamayo Valley, we will begin to find our first Tumbesian bird species—Pacific Parrotlet, Elegant Crescentchest, and Tumbes Sparrow among them. Later, as we continue southward, we will come to more stunted high Andean temperate forest at Utuana, where we will search out several specialties

found only here—including Black-crested Tit-Tyrant and Piura Hemispingus—before we continue birding downslope to the lowlands at Macará.

Three nights at Macará will give us ample time to explore the newly created Jorupe Reserve and its surroundings. In this area, dominated by Bombax forest and deciduous scrub, we will bird a series of wooded trails with entangled understory, and shrubby roadside vegetation in and around the reserve in search of a large number of Tumbesian specialties. Among them are Gray-backed Hawk, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Blackish-headed Spinetail, Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, White-tailed Jay, Black-and-white Tanager, and White-edged Oriole.

Our journey then continues to the north to an area where in 1980 a species new to science was discovered—the El Oro Parakeet. Buenaventura Reserve is definitely one of the birdiest sites in Ecuador and promises to be memorable indeed. We will stay at Umbrellabird Lodge for three nights and the birding will be fantastic! Spectacular hummingbird feeders adorn the dining area filled with Chocó endemic species along with the true Ecuadorian endemic—Emerald-bellied Woodnymph. Our cabins overlook the forest, roadside vegetation is lush, and forest trails hold hidden treasures. We certainly will make an effort to see the lodge’s namesake—the Long-wattled Umbrellabird—at its lek site! We will constantly be watching for mixed foraging flocks to sift through the gaudy euphonias, tanagers, dacnises and honeycreepers to pick out the more cryptically clad furnariids, woodcreepers, flycatchers and antbirds. At the upper end of the reserve, we will look for another Ecuadorian endemic—the El Oro Parakeet—along with other special species such as Ochre-bellied Dove, Pacific Tuftedcheek, El Oro Tapaculo, Scaled Fruiteater, Club-winged Manakin, Golden-winged Manakin, Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, and Rufous-throated Tanager among many others.

Finally we head back to Guayaquil, stopping to bird coastal marshland en route and capping off our circuit at Cerro Blanco Reserve, just west of the port city of Guayaquil, where we will try to clean up on anything we may have missed elsewhere. This tour is designed to explore ecosystems that hold the world’s highest degrees of endemism, inhabited by many rare, range-restricted and threatened species of both flora and fauna—and that translates into some fine birding!

April 3, Day 1: Arrival in Guayaquil. Participants are encouraged to fly to Guayaquil on the American Airlines flight from Miami which is scheduled to arrive in the evening. Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel. Please note that your departure on Day 2 is fairly early. If you feel you need time to acclimate to the time zone or to avoid complications in case baggage does not arrive, you may want to arrive a day early.

NIGHT: Hotel Sheraton, Guayaquil

April 4, Day 2: Early Departure and Drive to the Yunguilla Valley, with Stops at Manglares-Churute and El Cajas National Recreation Area. This morning we will have an early breakfast and depart Guayaquil towards the southeast. We will break up this road-trip with a few specific stops *en route* to sample some very different habitats. One brief stop will be made at Reserva Manglares-Churute, where we will be on the lookout for several coastal lowland and wetland species on the edge of the reserve. With a little luck, we could see Cocoli Heron, Horned Screamer, Fulvous and Black-bellied whistling-ducks, Muscovy Duck, Comb Duck, and Neotropic Cormorant among other species. We will continue southward through varied agricultural lowland habitats (dominated by huge banana plantations), perhaps stopping at a cocoa or coffee plantation, depending on how we are doing time-wise. Additional species we will look for include Hook-billed Kite, Pearl Kite, Snail Kite, Savanna Hawk, Harris’ Hawk, Northern Crested-Caracara, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Wattled Jacana, Pacific Parrotlet, Gray-cheeked Parakeet, Bronze-winged Parrot, Red-lored Amazon, Tumbes Swift, Baron’s Hermit, Amazilia Hummingbird, Ringed Kingfisher, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Jet Antbird, Streak-headed

Woodcreeper, Pacific Hornero, Masked Water-Tyrant, Cinnamon and One-colored becards, Ecuadorian Thrush, Orange-crowned Euphonia, Crimson-breasted Finch, and Chestnut-throated Seedeater.

Then we begin a rapid ascent eastward to higher elevations, where we will quickly be putting on our sweaters, jackets and gloves as we reach the high temperate and paramo zones at the “top” of the Andes, just south of the city of Cuenca. We will make a few pointed stops here, especially as we drive through the El Cajas National Recreation Area, to pick up some high Andean specialties and continue southwestward to the more arid Yunguilla Valley and our destination for the night. Some of the many species that have been recorded along this route include Andean Teal, Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Ruddy-Duck, Variable Hawk, Carunculated Caracara, Andean Gull, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Purple-throated Sunangel, Blue-mantled Thornbill, the endemic Violet-throated Metaltail, Stout-billed and Bar-winged cinclodes, Tawny Antpitta, Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Paramo Ground-Tyrant, Red-crested Cotinga, Chiguanco Thrush, Giant Conebill, Tit-like Dacnis, Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, and Large-billed Seed-Finch.

NIGHT: Sol y Agua, Santa Isabel

April 5, Day 3: Morning at Yunguilla Reserve; Then Drive to the Catamayo Valley. This morning we will take a short drive up to the Jocotoco Foundation’s Yunguilla Reserve where we will explore some rather unlikely habitat in search of the very rare and critically endangered Pale-headed Brush-Finch. The remaining ten pair of this species was “rediscovered” here by Dr. Niels Krabbe only a few years ago, after having been feared extinct for some 30 years. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the Jocotoco Foundation, this species’ remaining habitat has been purchased, protected and managed carefully—resulting in gratifying results. To date, there are now more than 50 pair in existence and the species’ future seems bright indeed. This small area holds many interesting species and we will make an effort to see as many as we can, among them Andean Condor, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Loja Hummingbird, Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, Line-cheeked Spinetail, Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, Black-lored Yellow-throat, Highland Hepatic-Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Rufous-chested Tanager, Stripe-headed Brush-Finch, Scrub Blackbird, and Peruvian Meadowlark.

By mid-morning we will return to the hotel to gather our luggage and depart southward to the Catamayo Valley in the southern province of Loja. We will make a few stops *en route* as we go through some very different habitats before reaching our final destination for the night. Although much of today will be dedicated to travel, we should still see (depending on weather and timing) some interesting species. Possibilities include Curve-billed Tinamou, Bearded Guan, Mountain Caracara, Golden-plumed Parakeet, Red-faced Parrot, Rainbow Starfrontlet, Black-tailed Trainbearer, White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant, Paramo Pipit, Spectacled Whitestart, Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, and Black-eared and Black-headed hemispingus, among others.

NIGHT: Hostería Rosal del Sol, Catamayo

April 6, Day 4: Drive from Catamayo to Utuana; Then on to Macará. This morning we will continue our travels after birding a bit in the Catamayo Valley, heading southward through a variety of habitats to Utuana and the “Bosque de Hannah,” a protected area owned jointly by both the Arcoiris and Jocotoco Foundations. This is a relatively small reserve situated in high temperate zone woodland in extreme southern Ecuador. *En route* we will make a few stops to pick up species of interest from both arid Tumbesian scrub and woodland as well as humid temperate forest with some interesting possibilities. These could include Andean Tinamou, Bearded Guan, Pacific Pygmy-Owl, Collared and Chapman’s antshrikes, Elegant Crescentchest, Blackish Tapaculo, Tumbesian and Loja tyrannulets, Long-tailed Mockingbird, the very seasonal Andean Slaty-Thrush, Fasciated Wren, Silver-backed Tanager, Saffron Finch, Bay-crowned Brush-Finch, Band-tailed Sierra-Finch, Tumbes Sparrow, and Collared Warbler-Finch, along with Chestnut-throated and Drab seedeaters. Utuana offers some very special finds including Rainbow Starfrontlet, Purple-throated Sunangel, Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner, Gray-headed Antbird, Leymebamba Antpitta, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, Black-crested Tit-Tyrant, Jelski’s Chat-Tyrant, Plushcap, Piura Hemispingus, Bay-crowned Brush-Finch, and Black-cowled Saltator.

We will continue now westward and downslope to the city of Macará, making a few more pointed stops to pick up more Tumbesian specialties. We will be on the lookout for Gray-backed Hawk, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Red-masked Parakeet, Gray-capped Cuckoo, Gray-chinned [Porculla] Hermit, Little Woodstar, Chapman's Antshrike, Watkin's Antpitta, Rufous-winged Tyrannulet, Gray-breasted Flycatcher, Ochraceous Attila, Chestnut-collared Swallow, Three-banded Warbler and Silver-backed Tanager, among the species that inhabit this region. We will arrive at our destination by late afternoon.

NIGHT: Hostal Chantillí, Macará or Jorupe Reserve*

**Single accommodations may not be available at this small hotel.*

April 7-8, Days 5 & 6: Macará (Jorupe Reserve). We will spend the next two days birding in and around another Jocotoco Foundation reserve—Jorupe—just on the outskirts of Macará. We will walk forest trails through deciduous scrub and Bombax forest and explore roadside vegetation in search of a number of Tumbesian endemic specialties, taking time to find the many skulking species that have evolved in this tangled seasonal forest. We may even head off to nearby areas to broaden our search, but we will certainly see an impressive number of special species such as Pale-browed Tinamou, Comb Duck, King Vulture, Gray-backed Hawk, Laughing Falcon, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Red-masked Parakeet, Gray-cheeked Parakeet, Pacific Parrotlet, Groove-billed Ani, Striped Cuckoo, West-Peruvian Screech-Owl, Pacific Pygmy-Owl, Spectacled Owl, Lesser Night-hawk, Anthony's Nightjar, Tumbes Swift, Short-tailed Woodstar, Long-billed Starthroat, Ecuadorian Trogon, Western Violaceous Trogon, Blue-crowned Motmot, Ecuadorian Piculet, Scarlet-backed Woodpecker, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Black-headed Spinetail, Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Red-billed Scythebill, Great and Collared antshrikes, Plain Antvireo, Watkin's Antpitta, Elegant Crescentchest, Loja and Tumbesian tyrannulets, Pacific Elaenia, Pacific Royal-Flycatcher, Tumbes Pewee, Sooty-crowned Flycatcher, Baird's Flycatcher, Snowy-throated Kingbird, Slaty Becard, White-tailed Jay, Plumbeous-backed and Ecuadorean thrushes, Superciliated and Speckle-breasted wrens, Gray-and-gold Warbler, Highland Hepatic-Tanager, Black-and-white Tanager, Streaked Saltator, White-winged and White-headed brush-finches, Black-capped Sparrow, Yellow-rumped and Yellow-billed caciques, and White-edged and Yellow-tailed orioles, along with Saffron Siskin.

NIGHT: Hostal Chantillí, Macará or Jorupe Reserve*

**Single accommodations may not be available at this small hotel.*

April 9, Days 7: Drive to Buenaventura; Afternoon birding at the Reserve. This morning we will head northward through varied habitat to the province of El Oro and still another Jocotoco reserve—Buenaventura. Although much of today is slated for travel, our drive will be broken up by a series of birding stops to look for additional Tumbesian species at first, and then more humid zone species as we travel farther north. We should come up with quite a number of new species for the trip by the time we reach our destination in the early or mid-afternoon. Some of the specialties we might find include Tumbes Hummingbird, Purple-collared Woodstar, Chestnut-throated and Parrot-billed seedeaters, White-headed Brush-Finch, and Saffron Siskin. As we pass through more humid habitats, we will begin to see a whole new set of species that will become more common over the next two days. Once we settle in at our new location, we will have some time to bird around the lodge before dinner.

NIGHTS: Umbrellabird Lodge, Buenaventura*

**Single accommodations may not be available at this small hotel.*

April 10-11, Days 8 & 9: Buenaventura Reserve. We will enjoy two full days of birding at this species-rich location. Buenaventura is home to two rare and endemic bird species, the El Oro Parakeet and El Oro Tapaculo, but above that, it is one of the birdiest sites in Ecuador—and that's saying a lot! Here we shall find an interesting mix of Tumbesian species along with important Chocó endemics, which are normally expected far to the north. We will walk several forest trails, bird roadside vegetation and enjoy spectacular hummingbird feeders right at the lodge. The avian possibilities are many and exciting and with habitat right at our feet, this promises to be a

thrilling experience. Among the incredible number of species found here, we will be looking for Fasciated Tiger-Heron; Gray-backed and Barred hawks; Solitary Eagle; Black Hawk-Eagle; Rufous-headed Chachalaca; Pallid and Ochre-bellied doves; Red-masked and El Oro parakeets; Rose-faced and Bronze-winged parrots; Baron's and White-whiskered hermits; Green Thorntail; White-vented Plumeteer; Emerald-bellied Woodnymph; Purple-bibbed White-tip; Violet-bellied Hummingbird; Violet-tailed Sylph; Collared Trogon; Barred Puffbird; Pale-mandibled Araçari; Crimson-rumped Toucanet; Chocó and Chestnut-mandibled toucans; Guayaquil Woodpecker; Line-cheeked Spinetail; Pacific Tuftedcheek; Uniform Treehunter; Brown-billed Scythebill; Western Slaty- and Russet antshrikes; Rufous-rumped Antwren; Chestnut-backed and Esmeraldas antbirds; Scaled and Plain-backed antpittas; El Oro Tapaculo; Sooty-headed Tyrannulet; Ornate Flycatcher; Sulphur-breasted and Black-tailed flycatchers; Brownish Twistwing; Scaled Fruiteater; Long-wattled Umbrellabird; Ochraceous Attila; Thrush-like Schiffornis; Club-winged and Golden-winged manakins; Bay, Song and Whiskered wrens; Spotted Nightingale-Thrush; Silver-throated and Rufous-throated tanagers, along with an as yet unidentified *tangara* species; Three-banded and Gray-and-gold warblers; Crimson-breasted Finch; Tricolored Brush-Finch; Black-winged Saltator; and Yellow-bellied Siskin.

NIGHTS: Umbrellabird Lodge, Buenaventura*

**Single accommodations may not be available at this small hotel.*

April 12, Day 10: Morning Birding and Departure from Buenaventura; Drive to Guayaquil; Afternoon visit to Cerro Blanco. We will enjoy a dawn walk this morning to search for a few species we may not have seen over the last two days. After breakfast we will head westward towards the coast and then northward to Guayaquil, making a few pointed stops to bird some marshland and shrimp farms in the Santa Rosa area. Here we will look for several interesting wetland and Tumbesian bird species (with the possibility of a few surprises) including Least Grebe, Cocoli and Tricolored herons, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Savanna Hawk, White-cheeked Pintail, Collared Plover, Masked Water-Tyrant, several species of gulls and terns, Black-necked Stilt, Short-tailed Field-Tyrant, Long-tailed Mockingbird, Superciliated Wren, Brown-chested Martin, and Parrot-billed Seedeater. We will also check marshland as we continue for the odd rail, crane or bittern that have been seen from time-to-time in the area. We will be arriving in Guayaquil around midday or early afternoon. After we check into our hotel, we will take off again for a short trip to Cerro Blanco Reserve, just west of this bustling city. Many species found here may have already been seen in other areas we have visited, but this site is usually quite active and we will surely find something of interest. We will return to our hotel during the late afternoon. Tonight we will sit down to our farewell dinner and final checklist session.

NIGHT: Hotel Sheraton, Guayaquil.

April 13, Day 11: Departure for Home. Transfers will be provided to the Guayaquil Airport in time for the morning departure of American Airlines to Miami.

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

TOUR LEADER: Paul Greenfield

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

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for this tour is **\$2995** per person in double occupancy from Quito. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to dinner on Day 10, accommodations as stated in the itinerary,

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ground and air transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Guayaquil and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$370**. 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. This fee does not cover nor guarantee single accommodations at Macará (Days 4-6) or Umbrellabird Lodge (Days 7-9) where you may be asked to share. However, if single accommodations are available, they will be provided for you at no additional cost.

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 a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While VENT will do everything possible to maintain the original price of the cruise or tour, if fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to implement a fuel surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In most cases, these additional fuel costs are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers who reserve the right, in their agreements to provide services for VENT, to raise their prices due to significant changes in fuel costs.

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.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500**. 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 departure date, the deposit less \$75 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. 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 to protect yourself.***

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$75
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available

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

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

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

BAGGAGE: We request you limit your luggage to one suitcase or duffel bag and one carry-on bag while on tour. As a precaution, pack your binoculars, a change of clothes, walking shoes, medications, toiletries and travel documents in the carry-on. Because this tour visits a variety of climates, you may feel the need to bring more with you than you really need. Laundry service is available at the city hotels on the tour.

CLIMATE: During the tour we will experience a wide variety of altitudes and a considerable range of temperatures. The mountains are generally pleasant during the day, cool to warm, and occasionally almost hot (in the foothills). At lowland sites it can be warm to hot. However, at higher elevations (we will be visiting these only for a brief period on our second afternoon) the temperatures may be as low as the 40s on occasion (quite chilly, especially if windy or misty). There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in mist or light rain at times.

CLOTHING: Bring a warm jacket or sweater and layers for the cool high-mountain locations; if you know that you are “cold-blooded,” you should also bring gloves and a warm cap. Lightweight field clothing (combined with a jacket or sweater for the early morning) is the norm for most areas visited, including one or more pair of khaki or other field pants along with a couple of long-sleeved shirts of lightweight material, preferably in dark colors that do not scare the birds and that provide additional protection from both the sun and biting insects. Clothing that you can wash yourself and which dries quickly is preferred. Layering is a good idea at higher elevations; you can begin the morning with a thermal T-shirt, outer shirt, sweater and jacket if need be, and then shed layers as the day warms up. Good footwear is essential, as we will do quite a bit of walking. Much of it will be on gravel roads, but we also enter the forest on trails, and for this we strongly suggest sturdy mudboots, or waterproof hiking boots. In any case your footwear for the field should be very water-resistant, as parts of this trip will be in a damp climate and even the roadside grass will get your feet wet! There is likely to be some rain, so please bring a folding umbrella and rain jacket or poncho. Dress is casual and informal throughout. You may find sandals or flip-flops useful for wear in your lodge rooms.

CURRENCY: The U.S. dollar is the currency in Ecuador. Cash is needed only for your personal expenses, such as bar bills, laundry, souvenirs and international airport departure tax. Be aware that U.S. traveler's checks are not readily accepted, but MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Diner's Club credit cards are widely accepted in Guayaquil and other major cities—as are CIRRUS banking cards with a 4-digit pin number.

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

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars in good condition, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, raingear, extra film, etc.). You will need an alarm clock; umbrella and poncho for protection from the rain; a flashlight or headlamp and extra batteries; and washcloth. Sunglasses, sunhat and sunscreen will be needed for protection from the sun. Chiggers and no-see-ums can be a problem in some areas. We recommend the use of Cutter's lotion (plastic squeeze bottles) and a pump-style container of OFF. Topsy gel is useful in reducing irritation from bites and stings, and some cortisone creams are now available without prescription. If you feel it necessary, a good collapsible walking stick can be quite helpful. Your leaders will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

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HEALTH: As in most Latin American countries, we recommend drinking only bottled water, and using no ice in beverages. Also avoid milk products which have not been pasteurized, and unpeeled fruits and vegetables. Yellow fever vaccination is recommended, as well as polio and tetanus protection. Malaria is present in Ecuador, including the chloroquine-resistant strain. You may contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta at www.cdc.gov/travel/ on the web for further health information and updates. Consult with your physician regarding vaccinations and malaria pills.

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 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (877) FYI-TRIP. You can check the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

MISC: Departure Tax - \$35 USD (subject to change without notice)
Electricity - 110 volts AC, the same as the U.S.
Language - Spanish, with Quechua or Indian dialects; some English
Time - Eastern Standard Time

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

Birds, Basic Field Guides:

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

Schulenberg, Thomas S., Stotz, Douglas F., Lane, Daniel F., and O'Neill, John P., *Birds of Peru*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007. This new field guide could be quite useful as a supplementary reference for the Tumbesian endemic species of southwestern Ecuador.

Birds, Reference:

Ridgely, Robert S. and Paul Greenfield. *The Birds of Ecuador: Status, Distribution and Taxonomy (Vol I)*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. This is the companion volume to the field guide. It goes into greater depth on ranges and taxonomy of the birds, but it is not necessary to carry this one with you (there are range maps in the Field Guide).

Fjeldsa, Jon and Niels Krabbe. *Birds of the High Andes*. Apollo Books, 1990. A good reference to study, but not needed as a field guide, plus it is expensive and may be difficult to obtain.

Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. *Birds of South America Volume I, The Oscine Passerines: Jays, Swallows, Wrens, Thrushes and Allies, Vireos, Wood-warblers, Tanagers, Icterids and Finches*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated.

Ridgely, Robert S., and Guy Tudor. *Birds of South America Volume II, The Suboscine Passerines: Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers, Antbirds, Gnateaters, and Tapaculos, Tyrant Flycatchers, Manakins and Cotingas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. Very useful reference, with range maps and illustrations of many species not previously illustrated.

Background Reference: Birds

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd, 1994. A very readable and informative book on the general ecology of birds in the New World tropics, with specific examples drawn from the montane avifauna.

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