

# CAMP CHIRICAHUA

**\*JULY 13-24, 2010**

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*Camp Chiricahua, co-sponsored by the American Birding Association, offers young naturalists between the ages of 14 and 18 the opportunity to explore and discover the biologically rich ecosystems of southeast Arizona, centering on the famed Chiricahua Mountains.*

*The primary focus is on the birdlife of the Chiricahuas (pronounced Cheer-ick-cow-wah) and other important sites in southeast Arizona, but we will take time to observe all facets of nature. The camp is set in a productive learning environment in which campers will be educated on ecology, habitats, and ecosystems, and on increasing observation skills. Daily activities are based on thorough exploration of each of the distinct regions we visit. Hikes, field trips and discussions will complement free time, during which campers will have the luxury of exploring their natural surroundings in small groups.*

*Starting in Tucson, we will first visit the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. This extraordinary facility, with its interactive and live exhibits, provides an excellent introduction to the flora and fauna of southeast Arizona. Famous both locally and internationally, this “living museum” is an essential first stop for anybody new to the desert southwest.*

*The majority of our time is spent in the Chiricahuas, an 80-mile long mountain range rising out of the Chihuahuan Desert to over 10,000 feet, and encompassing five distinct life zones. Long famous among naturalists for its biological diversity and rich assortment of “Mexican” type birds that inhabit these mountains, the Chiricahuas are also a place of considerable scenic grandeur. Enormous orange-tinted rock formations tower over shaded canyons and the surrounding desert. Perhaps it is the remoteness of the place, or maybe it’s the enchanting spell of summertime monsoons, or even the spirit of Apache warriors long gone, but the Chiricahuas are a true naturalist’s paradise, totally unspoiled and wild. We will have five days to explore this mystical mountain range, from the dry desert grasslands that encircle it to the lofty ponderosa pine forests that crown it. In between are a multitude of habitats that converge in majestic Cave Creek Canyon.*

*We will also explore the Huachucas, another of Southeast Arizona’s “sky islands,” using the very “birdy” San Pedro River Inn as our base. Closest in proximity to the Mexican border, the Huachucas attract a greater number of hummingbirds and Mexican “strays” than the other ranges in Arizona. We will explore at least two of the major canyons in the range, and visits to a variety of hummingbird feeding stations may net us a dozen species of hummers or more!*

*We’ll finish the trip with a day around Patagonia and Nogales, where cottonwood-lined Sonoita Creek provides for some of the best birding in all of Arizona. Though “listing” is not the goal of the camp, campers should expect to see most of the special birds of Arizona, highlighted by its own bird of paradise, the Elegant Trogon. Other prized sightings are likely to include Gray Hawk, Montezuma Quail, Arizona Woodpecker, Lucifer and White-eared hummingbirds, Thick-billed and Tropical kingbirds, Mexican Chickadee, Red-faced Warbler, and Varied Bunting.*

\*Please note: the dates for this departure have changed since the publication of the 2010 VENT catalog.

*Other wildlife unique to the region deserves our attention as well. Summertime in Arizona is an excellent time to see a host of butterflies, dragonflies, and other insects. Arizona is, additionally, one of the premier regions of the country for encountering snakes and lizards.*

*Camp Chiricahua presents a rare chance for young naturalists to be in the field with their peers and with expert leaders. Together we will all come to learn and appreciate more fully the complex and beautiful ecosystems of the Southwest.*

*Camp Chiricahua starts and ends in Tucson.*

**July 13, Day 1: Arrival in Tucson; welcome and orientation; afternoon birding.** Campers should plan to arrive in Tucson no later than 2:00 p.m. today. After leaving the plane, campers should proceed directly to the baggage claim area where they will be met by camp supervisors who will be holding large signs displaying the word VENT in large letters. Please wear your VENT button so you will be easier to recognize. Campers will be shuttled with their luggage to your Tucson hotel where we will spend our first night.

In the mid-afternoon, the staff will assemble all campers in the hotel lobby for a camp orientation and welcome. The staff will introduce themselves and outline the exciting events of the coming days. Afterwards, we'll depart the hotel for our first Arizona birding! A trip to the surrounding desert will surely yield such characteristic desert birds as Gambel's Quail, Roadrunner, Gila Woodpecker, Cactus Wren, Verdin, and many others.

NIGHT: Clarion Hotel Tucson Airport, Tucson

**July 14, Day 2: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum; Chiricahua Mountains.** After an early breakfast, we'll visit the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. This exquisite museum, with its interactive and live exhibits, provides an excellent introduction to the flora and fauna of the Southwest. Famous both locally and internationally, this "living museum" is an essential first stop for anybody new to the desert southwest. Set amidst towering saguaro (pronounced saw-war-o) cactus, thickly foliated mesquite and palo verde, barrel cactus and ocotillo, the displays and exhibits are literally part of the native landscape. We will spend most of the morning meandering through the museum's numerous paths and walkways. Our exploration will offer an excellent introduction to the amazing Sonoran Desert and its attendant life forms. Spacious enclosures feature many of the birds and animals native to the region. The hummingbird house is a must see, and the walk-in aviary offers a delightful way to encounter many of the special birds of the mountains and deserts. Wild birds are plentiful and are sure to keep excitement levels high. Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Verdin, and Hooded Oriole are among the many possibilities.

After lunch we'll load up the vans and head for the Chiricahuas. The journey will take approximately three hours and will see us traversing a broad slice of southeast Arizona. All along the route is a continual succession of sky island mountain ranges, bearing such names as Santa Catalina, Santa Rita, Rincon, Whetsone, Dragoon, Dos Cabezas, and Pinaleno. Moving east, the cactus-studded deserts of the Tucson area give way to mesquite dominated grasslands. The highway runs through the heart of scenic Texas Canyon, where mountains of igneous rock provide an improbable break in the landscape. Swainson's Hawks and Chihuahuan Raven are often seen around the old railroad town of Wilcox.

East of Wilcox, the highway skirts the north flank of the Chiricahuas, offering fine views of the peculiar geologic formation known as Cochise's Head. We'll arrive in the Portal area, near the mouth of Cave Creek Canyon, late this afternoon. Our first view of the canyon, with its towering, multi-colored cliffs and lush riparian floor, will make a lasting impression. It is these secret enclaves of cool and verdant growth, filled with specialty birds and surrounded by arid grasslands that make birding southeast Arizona special.

NIGHT: Camping, Portal

**July 15-17, Days 3-5: Cave Creek Canyon and the Chiricahua Mountains.** In a region known for its many legendary birding locations, the Chiricahua Mountains are arguably the most famous. The cool shaded canyons, mountain forests, and dramatic geologic formations that define this sky island range, have attracted birders, naturalists, and scientists for decades. We will have three full days to explore the Chiricahuas, visiting all the major habitats and searching for as many of the special bird and animals of the region as we can find. The Chiricahuas are a living laboratory of biological diversity, and though birding is of primary interest, we will want to take advantage of all that these mountains have to offer. Mammal viewing is often wonderful; past camps have been fortunate enough to encounter black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, mule deer, javelina, black-tailed jackrabbit, ringtail, and several species of skunk and kangaroo rat. Many campers have an interest in butterflies, and we will take time to identify any that cross our path. Due to its warm and semi-tropical climate, Arizona is superb for butterflies and hosts a beautiful array of species. We are likely to encounter such spectacular ones as giant, double-tailed, pipevine, western tiger, and black swallowtails, red-spotted admiral, mourning cloak, cloudless sulphur, southern dogface, California sister, and a scattering of whites, blues, checkerspots, and hairstreaks.

Field trips to a variety of ecosystems are designed to provide campers exposure to the amazing variety of the Chiricahua Mountains and surrounding desert and grasslands. In addition to time in the field, campers will participate in discussions that cover a variety of topics, including bird observation, journal keeping, botany, climate, and geography. We will have numerous options to consider when planning our birding activities, but campers should expect to visit the majority of the following sites:

**Cave Creek Canyon** – One of the most exciting days will be our first visit to the South Fork of Cave Creek. This is a beautiful riparian habitat in the lower elevations of the Chiricahuas, where oaks, sycamores, pines, and cypress provide shade for the lush green undergrowth. The birds here are wonderful; Elegant Trogon must lead the list, but Blue-throated Hummingbird, Arizona Woodpecker, Sulphur-bellied and Dusky-capped flycatchers, Hutton's and Plumbeous vireos, Grace's Warbler, Painted Redstart, and Hepatic Tanager are nearly as special. We'll spend as much time as possible in this very rich area, observing how the habitat becomes much drier as soon as one leaves the shady valley and starts up the mountain slope. Here we can expect to find Mexican Jays traveling in noisy flocks and Black-throated Gray Warblers and Bewick's Wrens foraging in the scrubby oaks. The geology of Cave Creek Canyon is not to be underestimated or overlooked, either. Stunning cliffs of rhyolite and granite dominate the skyline, and bizarre caves and pock marks give character to the canyon walls. The rock seems to burn under the morning sun, emanating a luminous mix of orange and yellow hues. Cave Creek Canyon may be home to some of the best birding in North America, but it is the tremendous geologic formations that give the canyon its splendor.

**Chihuahuan Desert and Rodeo** - The desert and grasslands below Portal hold an entirely different set of birds and plants than are found higher in the Chiricahuas. This is wide open ranch country, dominated by soaptree yucca, honey mesquite, and a wide variety of desert plants and scrub. The birds and other animals that live out here are dry country specialists, designed to survive in the harsher conditions of the desert environment. We will make a couple of trips into this desert ecosystem, making several strategic stops at different elevations and driving key side roads in search of the birds and reptiles that live out here. Scaled and Gambel's quail, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Chihuahuan Raven, Curve-billed Thrasher, Loggerhead Shrike, Black-throated Sparrow, Scott's Oriole, and Eastern Meadowlark are all birds we are likely to encounter. The old railroad town of Rodeo, New Mexico provides a curious distraction from the surrounding desert, but it also happens to be a premier site for Bendire's Thrasher. The main highway running north from Rodeo provides beautiful vistas of the expansive deserts and Chiricahua Mountains.

**Evening Night Drives and Owling Expeditions** – Nighttime in the Chiricahuas reveals another face to this wondrous place. A whole host of birds, insects, reptiles and mammals emerge after the sun goes down and the heavens fill with millions of stars. We'll go on a nightbird prowl one night after dinner. The voices of Elf Owl, Western and Whiskered screech-owls, Common Poorwill, and Whip-poor-will elevate the ambience of a Chiricahua summer evening, and we actually have a really good chance of seeing some of these nocturnal sprites. On another night we will load up and head out on to the desert for an evening night drive. Cruising

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lightly traveled side roads brings opportunities for a variety of other critters, including snakes, kangaroo rats, scorpions, and tarantulas.

**Paradise Road** – The road to Paradise takes off from Portal and follows a long section of Silver Creek. While it is still quite dry here, the environment is very different from that of the desert we've just seen. The creek provides a year-round source of water, and this allows trees like oaks and sycamores to become established. The drier hillsides are dominated by a high desert plant community, with sotol and agaves decorating the rocky hillsides. This area is, in fact, another major transition zone, where a variety of habitats come together. The great mix of trees and plants is paralleled by an interesting mix of birds. Specialties here are Western Scrub-Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Crissal Thrasher, and Rufous-crowned and Black-chinned sparrows. Near the old mining town of Paradise we may be lucky enough to come across the furtive Montezuma Quail.

**Portal Area** – Featuring a general store and restaurant, inn, and post office, quaint Portal is the center of human activity in the eastern Chiricahuas. It is also situated in the middle of a rich riparian zone along lower Cave Creek, where Arizona Cypress, Arizona Sycamore, hackberry and cottonwoods grow in abundance. The birding can be awesome during the summer months and we will make several walks down Main Street in search of the special birds of the region. Bell's Vireo, Phainopepla, Gila Woodpecker, Lucy's Warbler, Verdin, Yellow-breasted Chat, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Cassin's Kingbird, Cooper's Hawk, Summer Tanager, Hooded and Bullock's orioles, and Black-headed Grosbeak are all among the possibilities.

NIGHT: Camping, Portal

**July 18-19, Days 6-7: Rustler Park.** For the next two nights, we will be camping in the high Chiricahuas at Rustler Park, one of the most beautiful areas in the entire range. Lying at nearly 8,000 feet, Rustler is an open meadow surrounded by trees typical of the Canadian life zone: pines, firs, maples, and aspens. The birds here are unlike any others that we have encountered so far. Northern Pygmy-Owl, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Common Raven, Steller's Jay, and mixed species flocks including Pygmy Nuthatch, Mexican Chickadee, Olive and Red-faced warblers, and Yellow-eyed Junco will be new for us. Other wildlife is around as well; black bears are seen in this area regularly.

Aside from the birding, the Rustler Park area offers wonderful hiking. We will make the lengthy traipse to Barfoot Summit one morning. The trail winds up through a stately forest of Douglas fir and ponderosa pine, topping out at the tip of Barfoot Peak. The peak offers commanding views of the surrounding mountains and meadows; visibility is limitless, with hundred-mile views likely. Although birds are less numerous at this elevation, we will keep watch for many of the expected species of this life zone. In recent years, Short-tailed Hawk has expanded its range north from Mexico into Arizona. At least one individual a year now resides in the vicinity of Barfoot Peak, hunting over the mountain forests and over Barfoot Park far below. Zone-tailed Hawks regularly course over the mountain forests, offering spectacular views of this enigmatic raptor.

If summer rains have been good, the large open meadow at Rustler will be decorated with a profusion of wildflowers. Butterflies, in turn, can be outstandingly abundant, with as many as 50 different kinds possible, including blues, hairstreaks, cloudywings, roadside skippers, fritillaries, swallowtails, ladies, queens, sulphurs, and whites. We'll watch especially for three very special butterflies of the region, Chiricahua white, pine satyr, and Arizona hairstreak.

NIGHTS: Camping – Rustler Park, Coronado National Forest  
Chiricahua Mountains

**July 20, Day 8: From the Chiricahuas to the San Pedro River Inn.** Today will be a day of transition, from the lofty coniferous forests of the high Chiricahuas to the riparian lowlands of the upper San Pedro River valley. The drive will take most of the day, broken up by birding stops and lunch. We'll load the vans after breakfast this morning and begin the long descent of the western face of the Chiricahuas. The road takes us down through the heart of Pinery Canyon (reliable for Red-faced Warbler and Hepatic Tanager) and back into the oak-juniper

zone of the lower slopes. This is prime country for Montezuma Quail and we will watch the grassy breaks and swales for these beautiful, but shy ground-dwellers. We'll emerge into the expansive Sulphur Springs Valley, which is actually the bed of an ancient Pleistocene lake, and make our way west toward the highway.

On the way we'll stop at Lake Cochise on the west side of Wilcox. Really a large municipal wastewater treatment pond, the "lake" is the single most famous birding location in the entire Sulphur Springs Valley. The interface of man-made and natural habitats found here provides food and shelter for an impressive diversity of birdlife all year long, and the presence of permanent water represents an important refuge in a region nearly devoid of large bodies of water. An astonishing array of birds has been recorded here, and we hope to encounter a variety of waders and grassland species, as well as any surprises that may turn up. Wayward gulls and terns are frequently found here, and the open water often holds a variety of summering ducks and grebes. The first southbound shorebirds will provide some identification challenges and such dandies as Wilson's Phalarope and Baird's Sandpiper are possible. American Avocets nest here in some years, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds breed in the reed-lined ponds. Swainson's Hawks, Scaled Quail, Horned Lark, and Eastern Meadowlark are typical sights of the grasslands. In the distance the Chiricahua and Dos Cabezas mountain ranges form a backdrop of considerable panoramic beauty.

We will arrive at the San Pedro River Inn in the middle to late afternoon. After check-in, campers will have the remainder of the day for relaxation and exploration of the Inn property. The San Pedro River Inn sits on twenty acres of farmland and desert adjacent to the San Pedro National Riparian Area. It is a truly lovely and scenic place to spend a couple nights. The birding on the property is terrific and is matched by the graciousness of the inn managers. Marvelous views of the Huachucas and nearby peaks in Sonora, Mexico round out the experience. The inn faces west and is one of the best places to enjoy a classic southwestern sunset! The birding right on the property can be outstanding, and campers will discover, with little difficulty, the likes of Scaled and Gambel's quail, Gilded Flicker, Vermilion Flycatcher, Botteri's Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak. The most famous residents of the property are not even people, but rather the pair of Tropical Kingbirds that annually nest in the front yard!

NIGHT: San Pedro River Inn, Hereford

**July 21-22, Days 9-10: The Huachuca Mountains and the San Pedro River.** Using the San Pedro River Inn as our base, we'll devote one early morning to exploring the bird-rich cottonwoods of the San Pedro. Following a picnic lunch (perhaps enlivened by a monsoon thunderstorm!), our afternoon birding will be spent in the nearby cool mountain forests of the Huachucas, where we will visit Sawmill and Sheelite Canyons. A morning hike up little-visited and very birdy Miller Canyon should allow us wonderful studies of mixed species flocks forming up for the impending southbound migration. Miller Canyon is also well known for rarities, with recent sightings of exciting subtropical wanderers, including Eared Trogon, Aztec Thrush, and Tropical Parula. While such dream sightings cannot be counted on, the promise of something new and remarkable awaiting discovery at the next turn of the trail seems to saturate the air.

The summer months are a fabulous time for hummingbirds in southern Arizona and no place is more reliably productive than the Huachucas. Vigils at feeders in Ramsey, Miller and Ash Canyons may yield a list of a dozen species or more. A visit to Beatty's apiary and apple orchard in Miller Canyon is essential. Beside the quality, we can expect quantity. Dozens of hummers are typically zipping around the feeders at all times, feeding, chasing and fighting. Black-chinned and Anna's are most common, but Magnificent, Blue-throated, and Broad-tailed periodically put in appearances. The first southbound migrants will certainly be around and we can look forward to the coppery-colored Rufous Hummingbird earnestly defending favored feeders. Costa's is less common but certainly possible, while the very first Calliopes may even be around. For even greater viewing enjoyment, Miller is now the premier place for seeing the highly localized White-eared Hummingbird, several of which summer in the canyon every year. We will spend at least one afternoon at the feeders of renowned Ramsey Canyon, probably the single-best site for the rare Berryline Hummingbird, while the more southerly Ash Canyon is best for the elusive Lucifer Hummingbird.

NIGHTS: San Pedro River Inn, Hereford

**July 23, Day 11: Patagonia and Sonoita Creek; Return to Tucson.** We will depart *early* today for what promises to be one of our most exciting days of Arizona birding. Most of the day will be devoted to searching the riparian and desert thornscrub habitats of the Patagonia-Sonoita area. The list of birds possible from this locale underscores the uniquely subtropical flavor of the Sonoita Creek drainage: Neotropic Cormorant, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Black Vulture, Gray and Zone-tailed hawks, Violet-crowned Hummingbird (an exceptionally classy and elegant bird; always a trip favorite among the campers), Green Kingfisher, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Thick-billed Kingbird, Rose-throated Becard, and Varied Bunting are representative. We will try for as many of these species as possible, all the while hoping for a glimpse of a true rarity. In recent years Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Rufous-capped Warbler have regularly turned up in this special area. While seeing these Mexican species is not to be expected, their distinct possibility will charge our visit with that anticipation which makes birding in southeast Arizona such a pleasure. In the late afternoon we'll return to our hotel in Tucson. After a well-deserved dip in the pool, we will meet for a final group dinner.

NIGHT: Clarion Hotel Tucson Airport, Tucson

**July 24, Day 12: Depart for Home.** Campers will be escorted to the airport in time for flights home. All campers should plan to depart Tucson no later than noon today.

**CAMP SIZE/AGE LIMIT:** Camp Chiricahua is designed for boys and girls ages 14 through 18 who have an interest in birds and natural history. The camp will be limited to 14 participants.

**CAMP STAFF:** Rob Day and David Jasper

**Rob Day** became interested in birds and natural history at an early age. His fascination for birds started in Norway with the chance appearance of an elusive and striking pair of Eurasian Black Woodpeckers on a woodlot near home—a vivid childhood memory to this day. Birding in earnest started at age 10 in the then widespread suburban woods of Alexandria, Virginia, still rich in Neotropical migrants in spring and irruptive northern species in winter. Rob earned a degree in zoology at the University of California Santa Barbara, and has traveled widely since in pursuit of wilderness and wild things. Journeys to Africa, Southeast Asia, South and Central America, Europe, and the Arctic have fueled diverse interests including herpetology, ecology, paleontology, geology, and a particular fondness for deserts, mountains, and rainforests. He has led VENT youth birding camps for the last 14 years, escorting young naturalists to Southeast Arizona, West Texas, Washington, Belize, and Costa Rica. Birding good habitat, tasty camp meals, and safety are emphasized on Rob's camps. He is especially fond of working with new birders, whether through VENT camps, in the field near home, or as an instructor for the Mt. San Jacinto Natural History Association teaching docents about mountain birds. When not leading youth camps, Rob is a middle school science teacher with 26 years of experience. Home is in southern California with his wife Renee, and sons Seth and Matthew.

**Dave Jasper** started birding at the age of four while growing up in northern Wisconsin. He is an expert naturalist/guide specializing in the birds, flora, and wildlife of the southwestern United States, and has led numerous anthropology, natural history, and birding tours during the last 11 years. Dave's extensive research experience includes studies for the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife. He delights in sharing his knowledge of wildlife with all nature enthusiasts. Dave is a resident of Cave Creek Canyon in Portal, Arizona.

**CAMP POLICIES:** Summer youth camps operated by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours are designed to expose camp participants to the treasures of the natural world. The settings for VENT youth camps are selected for their biological richness and natural beauty. The staff of the camps designs programs that camp attendees will find exciting and educational. It is our expectation that campers will have the kinds of experiences that create memories that last for a lifetime. The success of our camps depends on the leadership and organization of the staff, but the level of enjoyment that an individual camper achieves will depend on his ability to demonstrate a willingness to cooperate and share. Over more than 20 years of offering youth nature camps, a camp participant has never been sent home.

In order to maintain a perfect record, campers must adhere to the following rules:

- There will be no usage of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products permitted. We take a zero tolerance approach.
- Any disputes that arise between campers will be mediated by staff members. Fighting will not be tolerated.
- Cooperation is essential. Every day brings a host of responsibilities to the staff members, from preparing meals to cleaning camp sites, vehicles, ice chests, and cooking supplies. Campers will be required periodically to help with these endeavors. Non-cooperation is not an option.
- Damage or destruction of the property of others is strictly prohibited and is considered grounds for dismissal.

**Finally, Campers will NOT be permitted to attend a VENT Camp unless they, along with their parents or legal guardians read, sign and return the following documents. These documents will be included in materials the Camper will receive after registering:**

**1) To the Applicant:** This document, signed by the Camp Cascades participant, certifies that the camper has read and understands the rules and regulations of the camp.

**2) Release and Assumption of Risk:** This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that participation in birding camp activities involves some degree of risk of injury from, but not limited to, the hazards of traveling, hiking in various types of terrain, accident, illness, and the forces of nature. A parent or guardian's signature holds VENT harmless from any and all liability. VENT is also granted permission to seek medical assistance for an ill or injured camper.

**3) Tetanus Shot Certification Document:** This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that the prospective birding camp participant is up to date with tetanus vaccination. Campers must provide proof of vaccination.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the camp is **\$1295** per person in double occupancy from Tucson. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 12, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and leadership services provided by the camp staff. The fee does not include airfare from your home to Tucson and return, airport departure taxes, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Also not included is the camping equipment (tent, sleeping bag and pad, and eating utensils) which must be brought by each camper. Accommodations while in Tucson and at San Pedro River Inn will be two to four persons per room.

Partial camp scholarships may become available through Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT) and the American Birding Association (ABA) and are typically awarded to campers who couldn't attend otherwise due to financial reasons. Please contact the VENT office and/or the offices of the ABA (800-850-2473 / 719-578-9703) for more information about scholarship availability.

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

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Cancellation Penalties and Refunds are based on the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, the deposit less **\$150** per person is refundable. 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, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.*

If you cancel:

120 days or more before departure date  
Between 120 and 90 days before departure  
  
Fewer than 90 days before departure date

Your refund will be:

Your deposit minus \$150.  
No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded.  
No refund available.

**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 are 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.

**BAGGAGE:** As space in the vans is limited, campers should pack as carefully and efficiently as possible. Please avoid bringing any unnecessary items that may take up more room. We recommend that campers pack their clothing and equipment in a pliable, middle to large size duffel bag, and perhaps a smaller bag for camping gear. Campers may wish to bring a carry-on or other small travel bag for toiletries, personal items, or valuables. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING HARD-SIDED SUITCASES OR FRAME BACKPACKS.**

**CLIMATE:** Southeast Arizona is a large and diverse region, so campers should expect to experience a variety of conditions. Temperatures during the camp will range from 45 to 105 degrees! The Sonoran Desert around Tucson and the Desert Museum sees daytime temperatures in excess of 100 degrees on a daily basis at this time of year. Our activities will be limited to the morning hours, and we will be off the desert during the hottest time of day. In the mountains, daytime temperatures will be warm to very warm, with temperature readings in the upper 80s and maybe even reaching 90 degrees. Most of our time will be spent in and around Cave Creek, where temperatures will range from 60 degrees at night to 85 degrees in the daytime. Mornings at Rustler Park can be chilly, typically with temperatures in the middle 40s. The altitude will be moderate to high, about 5,000-9,000 feet.

A fascinating weather feature of the Southwest is the summer “monsoon” season. Usually beginning in early to mid-July, a pattern develops in which moisture-laden air, streaming north from Mexico, runs into extremely hot air, produced by intense heating of the earth. Since hot air rises, great updrafts of superheated air condense the moisture, creating magnificent cumulo-nimbus clouds. Cumulo-nimbus clouds bear a trademark anvil appearance in which the flat, gray bottoms (where the rain is), rapidly spread out into massive, white multi-headed formations, some of which tower up 10,000 feet. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms are a daily occurrence in the monsoon pattern. These storms are highly concentrated and typically produce a large amount of heavy rainfall in a short period of time, accompanied by booming thunder claps and dramatic lighting shows. The arrival of the summer rains in Arizona (if it’s a normal to good year) provides welcome relief from the

searing heat of early summer. These daily storms have the ability to magically transform parched deserts and mountain forests into vibrant, thriving landscapes. Campers should be prepared for rain and humidity.

**CLOTHING:** Since summer is a warm and dry time of the year in Arizona, campers will want to pack clothes associated with hot weather. Campers should pack several t-shirts, but making sure to avoid white and other bright colors. A long-sleeved t-shirt will come in handy for evenings and the early morning hours. Shorts will be fine, even preferred most days, but you should also pack a pair or two of long pants. Jeans are acceptable, but are not as comfortable as cotton or other lightweight materials. Packing a light jacket or shell is a good idea in the event of rain. Mornings at Rustler Park can be quite chilly so campers are advised to bring an item of clothing for cooler weather, such as a fleece, flannel shirt, or light jacket. A hat for protection from the sun is essential. A wide-brimmed hat is best, but campers should bring a baseball cap at the very least. Though laundry services may be available in the Portal area, only the San Pedro River Inn provides washing machines for certain.

**For footwear, campers should bring a good fitting, broken in pair of hiking boots or trail shoes. There is at least one hike of moderate length planned and campers will have a much better time if they do not have to cope with sore feet or blisters.** A pair of sandals or other lightweight shoes will provide more comfort for all other times.

**CONDITIONS:** A typical day will see us out bright and early to take advantage of the cooler morning hours. We will stay busy and active up to lunch, and then take a lengthy break during the heat of the day. During such periods of down time, campers will be free to relax, play games, catch up on notes and lists, or explore the immediate area in small groups. We will venture out again in the mid- to late afternoon, when the heat of the day begins to abate and bird and animal activity is picking up again. The days are long in the summer, and darkness does not fully descend until after 9:00 p.m. There will be post-dinner activities some days including short hikes/walks, evening night drives, and night-birding excursions. All vehicle travel will be in 15 passenger touring vans.

Meal times will fall usually within these timeframes:

Breakfast:	6:30 – 7:30 a.m.
Lunch:	12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
Dinner:	6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

While camping in Portal, we will be staying on the property of a private residence. Campers will camp in tents in the yard but will have unlimited access to a full service bathroom, shower, and a kitchen. Your staff members will use the house for cooking and as a site for group discussions and meetings. Campers will “tent-camp” for two nights in the campground at Rustler Park. Accommodations at San Pedro River Inn are clean, comfortable small multi-bedroom houses.

Campers should expect to participate in several lengthy, lightly strenuous hikes. The hike to Barfoot Lookout from Rustler Park is approximately 3 miles roundtrip at an elevation between 8,000 and 9,000 feet. No activities will be scheduled, however, for which not all campers will be able to participate.

In addition to bird observation, campers can expect to participate in discussions and seminars about birding, biology, and ecology. Campers should bring a notebook for note taking and journal entries.

Campers will be encouraged to call home on a regular basis and keep their families informed of their activities. A cell phone is recommended. Pay phones, hotel room phones, and private phones will be available for coin use, calling card use, or for calling collect.

**EQUIPMENT:** Campers should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, two water bottles, notepads, extra clothing, cameras etc.). Your camp supervisors will have spotting scopes, but if you have one and wish to bring it, feel free to do so. One or two

## ***Camp Chiricahua, Page 10***

one-quart water bottles are essential for lengthier hikes. Bicycle type bottles are not a good choice, as they tend to leak. Other items to bring include a camera, towel and washcloth, insect repellent, flashlight, and or headlamp. Sunscreen is required for a trip to Arizona in the summer, as the sun's rays are intense and can easily burn exposed skin. A battery-powered travel alarm clock is also recommended. Other items to consider are personal toiletries and medications. Campers should bring a notebook and pens. Some optional items are your favorite snack foods and extra batteries. **Please refer to the packing list which will be included in materials the Camper will receive after registering, for a more complete listing of items to bring to camp.**

**Note:** As we will be involved with the natural world, we prefer that you do not bring radios, portable music devices, electronic games, etc. to camp.

**HEALTH:** We want your time at Camp Chiricahua to be as rewarding and memorable as possible. To insure this comes to pass, we offer the following information and suggestions for health-related issues:

- All staff members are certified to perform standard first aid and CPR and carry an assortment of first aid supplies.
- All staff members carry a Sawyer Extractor Kit in the unlikely event of poisonous snake bite.
- Those campers on prescribed medication should remember to pack it, and preferably in carry-on luggage.
- **VENT requires that all campers be up to date with his/her tetanus shot. Campers will not be permitted to attend a VENT Camp unless the accompanying tetanus shot certification document has been returned to the VENT office, signed and dated by a parent or legal guardian.**
- Due to the high temperatures of summer, campers will always be provided with plenty of cool drinks in the forms of bottled water and juice.
- On the portion of the camp where camping is required, staff members will do all the cooking. Campers should expect healthy meals that are low in fat, salt, and sugar, but high in protein, starch and vitamins. Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables will be available.
- Throughout the trip, fast food restaurants will be avoided, although campers are allowed to buy items of their choosing (with their own money) at rest stops.

## **CAMPERS WITH SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS SHOULD NOTIFY OUR OFFICE UPON REGISTRATION.**

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website, [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 this store benefits the Cornell Lab. of Ornithology. You may also visit other online stores such as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print or hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) which specializes in ornithology books. The bookstores of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, [www.laaudubon.org](http://www.laaudubon.org) and Tucson Audubon Society, [www.tucsonaudubon.org](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org) also carry a fine inventory of books on birding and natural history. The bookstores can be accessed through their respected websites.

### **Bird Identification:**

Kaufman, Kenn. *Kaufman Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000.

National Geographic Society. *Field Guide to North American Birds*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 2006.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf Publishing Company, 2000.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Western Birds*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000. This is a slimmed down version of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*.

### **Bird References:**

Ehrlich, Paul R., et. al. *The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988. (An excellent reference guide full of essays and information about North American birds.)

Kaufman, Kenn. *Lives of North American Birds*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. This is an excellent and underrated resource to the natural history of North American birds.

**Mammals:**

Kays, Roland W. and Wilson, Don E. *Mammals of North America*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002. The newest field guide and therefore the most taxonomically up to date.

Bowers, Nora, Rick Bowers, and Kenn Kaufman. *Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 2004. This field guide features a better text than the preceding guide.

**Butterflies:**

Brock, Jim P. and Kenn Kaufman. *Kaufman Focus Guides: Butterflies of North America*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 2003. This is the best North American butterfly identification guide available.

**Reptiles:**

Stebbins, Robert C. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Reptiles and Amphibians*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1985.

**Trees:**

Petrides, George A. and Olivia. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Trees*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1992.

**Geology:**

Chronic, Halka. *Roadside Geology of Arizona*. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press, 1986.

**History:**

Trimble, Marshall. *Roadside History of Arizona*. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press publishing, 1996.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect September 18, 2009 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.

*Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc.*

**GUIDELINES FOR VENT CAMPS**

Dear Parents and VENT Campers,

A VENT youth birding camp is different from a traditional summer camp. Please review the items below together prior to the start of the camp.

**Overview**– Adding to life lists and chasing rare birds are not the sole purpose of VENT youth camps. Time in the field with peers, sharing a passion for birds and nature, starting friendships that extend beyond the camp, fostering a desire to promote responsible birding, developing a shared concern for the well-being of habitats and ecosystems that shelter birds, and building a deeper appreciation of the avifauna unique to a region and its ecosystems are at the core of VENT youth camps.

Your leaders will have current information on any sightings of rare birds, and *reasonable* efforts will be made to locate these species. Even with repeated visits to prime habitat, it is inevitable that we may miss a “target” bird. Such is the nature of birding.

The sites that host VENT youth camps are selected for their overall biological richness and outstanding natural scenery. Though the primary focus is on the birdlife of each of the regions we visit, we will take time to observe all facets of nature. Many campers possess interests in butterflies, other insects, reptiles, and mammals; your time at camp will give you plenty of exposure to these other forms of life.

Daily activities are based on exploration of each of the distinct regions we visit over the course of the camp. In addition to simply watching birds, campers will be engaged by their supervisors on a variety of themes, including note taking and journal keeping, increasing observation skills, and discussions about habitat, ecology, botany, and weather.

Finally, campers are still kids and kids are supposed to have fun! In most afternoons, campers will have a couple of hours of down time/personal time to themselves or with other campers. Campers may use the time to catch up on notes and lists, play cards or other games, or throw the football or frisbee. Many campers opt to explore the surrounding area in small groups.

**In camp** – As representatives of VENT, the ABA, our local Audubon chapters, and birding in general, it is mandatory that we conduct ourselves in *an appropriate and mature manner* (the same is equally important in the field). The places we stay at and visit on the camps have generally hosted prior VENT camps. For those that we are visiting for the first time, leaving our hosts with a good impression of birding and birders is important for those birders that follow us.

Generally, we enjoy a light breakfast by 6:30 a.m., followed by a morning outing. Lunch follows, usually no later than noon or 12:30. You will have down time/personal time following lunch, or your supervisors may organize a group discussion about the morning’s activities or some other topic related to camp activities. Our afternoon activities start by 3:00 p.m. We’ll return to camp late in the afternoon, and dinner will usually be served by 6:30 p.m. After dinner activities may include nothing but personal time, or your supervisors may organize a nightbird prowl, night drive, or checklist session. The agenda for the following day will usually be announced at this time as well. On most nights, campers will be in their tents by 9:30 p.m.

Though learning and having fun are the overall objectives of the camp, you will be expected to work when your supervisors request your help. You may be asked to help clean the touring vans and ice chests, assist with meal preparation and clean-up, take out garbage, or clean up the camp site. Your willingness to cooperate with your camp staff and other campers, and agreeing to abide by camp rules are essential for having a successful camp experience.

**In the field** – Please consider some of the following suggestions for time in the field before and during the camp:

- **Refrain from talking in loud voices while in the field.** Talking and birding do not mix well, and many birds are heard prior to being seen. Shy birds are seen more easily when everybody is quiet, patient, and attentive. This is especially true when looking for nightbirds.
- **Point out all birds.** Your skills and help will insure that we do not miss important species. Be an active participant and help others who are newer to birding or are less skilled.
- **Share your knowledge.** A number of campers in recent years have demonstrated exceptional knowledge of butterflies and reptiles. Your willingness to share your knowledge of these other lifeforms contributes greatly to others' camp experience. Even your supervisors will appreciate an opportunity to learn from their "students."
- **Pay attention to your supervisors when on trails.** Camp supervisors will set the pace of a hike, with one leader in the front and one toward the rear. Please pay attention to where your leaders are and how fast they are going. Going ahead of your leaders when on the trail, or lingering far behind creates distractions for all of us.
- **Show generosity with the spotting scope.** Your leaders will have spotting scopes available for group use. It is important that all participants have an opportunity to study a bird in the scope. Make your first look a quick one then move to the side for those behind you. If a bird is very cooperative, we can savor long looks once all of us have had a chance.

**Safety** – Because we conduct VENT camps in regions that are remote, often with rugged terrain, and potentially dangerous weather and wildlife we ask that the following be strictly adhered to: **NEVER BIRD ALONE**; there are no exceptions to this. On some afternoons prior to our regular afternoon outing, you may have some time to bird on your own. Your leaders will tell the group in advance where you may go birding or exploring. It is essential that you bird with at least one other camper, tell one of us where you will be, and when you intend to return. Birding alone jeopardizes your safety and threatens the flow of the camp and the experience of others.