

# BARRANCA DEL COBRE

## MEXICO'S COPPER CANYON

### OCTOBER 8-16, 2011

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*This tour offers participants a wide cross-section of northwestern Mexico's bird-rich habitats, from the lowlands of the Pacific coast up to the pine-clad barrancas, or river gorges, of the mighty Sierra Madre Occidental. The trip effectively combines the colorful history of western Mexico with the rich cultures of the large Mestizo population and the Tarahumara Indians of the highlands.*

*Of course, everything is based around our birding! A list of nearly 200 species is to be expected. Many of the species we will encounter are familiar songbirds on their wintering grounds while a number of sought after species are endemic to western Mexico. The diversity of birds is matched by the constantly changing scenery.*

*It starts in El Fuerte, where we will spend two full days birding the tropical El Fuerte River Valley, and then board the famed Chihuahua al Pacifico train for the trip across the Sierra. En route to Chihuahua City we will spend two nights at Cerocahui, where we will explore several beautiful areas around this charming and remote little village. Short trips from the hotel will put us in shaded, well-watered canyons and provide us with picturesque vistas. A longer trip through the heart of the mountain will lead to the rim of 6,136 foot-high Urique Canyon. Here one can take in the grandeur of this timeless place.*

*Next we'll spend two nights in 7,769 foot-high Creel, located in the heart of the Tarahumara Indian area. On our hike along the trail to the scenic waterfall known as Cascada Cusarare, we will seek out the regal Eared Quetzal, one of the most spectacular and seldom-seen members of this exciting family. Our final night is in Chihuahua City only hours from the Sierra by train, but centuries apart culturally.*

*The pace of this tour will generally be leisurely, with frequent stops to observe birds, scenery, and cultural attractions. Elevations range from sea level to 8,200 feet. Accommodations are good at all locations (one is without electricity) and the train cars are comfortable, clean, and air-conditioned.*

**October 8, Day 1: Arrival in Los Mochis.** Participants may make arrangements to arrive in Los Mochis today and go to our hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. Upon collection of your baggage, proceed through the small customs station and out the exit to the front of the airport. Taxis are easily found, and the ride to the Best Western costs approximately \$15.00 U.S. We will meet in the hotel lobby at 7:00 p.m. for a tour introduction and orientation, immediately followed by dinner.

NIGHT: Best Western Los Mochis

**October 9, Day 2: Parque Sinaloa; El Fuerte.** This morning we will introduce ourselves to birding in western Mexico with a visit to nearby Sinaloa Park. The park, right in the middle of bustling Los Mochis, is really more of a botanic garden that doubles as a city park. It serves as home for a surprising number of breeding and over-wintering species. By walking the many paths through the park we stand a good chance of turning up Red-billed

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Pigeon, Groove-billed Ani, Mexican Parrotlet, Happy Wren, Great Kiskadee, Social Flycatcher, Grayish Saltator and Streak-backed Oriole. Other possibilities include the striking Purplish-backed Jay, Black-capped Gnatcatcher and “Cinnamon-rumped” Seedeater, the west Mexican endemic subspecies of White-collared Seedeater. During our quest for these species, we may encounter several neotropical species arriving on their wintering grounds, including Bell’s and Plumbeous vireos; Yellow, Wilson’s, Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Gray warblers; Lark Sparrow; and Western and Summer tanagers.

Late this morning, we will make the hour and a half drive to our lodgings in the little colonial town of El Fuerte. Our route will take us out of bustling Los Mochis and into the extensive agricultural zone outside town. Bird diversity is not yet heavy, but we are practically assured of locating our first Sinaloa Crows moving about in their predictable flocks. As we enter the El Fuerte River Valley, agriculture gives way to mesquite and acacia woodland and a series of small villages. The green ribbon of cottonwoods growing along the El Fuerte River appears off to the west. On this drive we frequently encounter Black-throated Magpie-Jays flapping through the trees or over the road. These beautiful birds are possibly the most spectacular birds of the Pacific lowlands of northwestern Mexico.

Upon arrival in El Fuerte we’ll check into our hotel for the next two nights. In the afternoon we will take a short walking tour of historic El Fuerte, a town made famous by priests, generals, and presidents. The raised plaza, with its bust of national hero Benito Juarez, is a feature attraction, but the town church and government building are not to be missed. Many of the buildings retain their original walls, dating from the 1600s, and are the remains of the original haciendas.

A late afternoon walk along the El Fuerte River should produce a nice variety of over-wintering neotropical migrants as well as several more species we think of as “Mexican”. Many warbler species are possible including Nashville, Lucy’s, Orange-crowned, and MacGillivray’s as well as Black-headed Grosbeak and Hooded and Bullock’s orioles. By carefully scanning the cottonwoods, willows and exposed snags along the river, we may discover such shy, more sought-after species as Common Black-Hawk, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Green Kingfisher and if we are especially lucky, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron. By working the brush lines and fruiting trees we may kick up Thick-billed Kingbird, Happy Wren, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Rufous-backed Robin, and Varied Bunting.

NIGHT: Hotel La Choza, El Fuerte

**October 10, Day 3: Birding the El Fuerte River Valley.** We will have an early breakfast this morning to take advantage of our time in the species-rich El Fuerte River Valley. This area is near the northern-most limit of the Pacific thorn-forest that extends all the way to northwestern Costa Rica, and it is the most species-rich area we will visit. It is probably the best area for endemic, western Mexico specialty birds, such as Black-throated Magpie-Jay, Sinaloa Wren, Rufous-backed Robin and Streak-backed Oriole. Time spent birding along the El Fuerte River will allow us to get into several habitat types from thorn forest to riparian bottom lands. Some birds to keep an eye out for are Short-tailed, Gray and Common Black-Hawks; Elegant Quail; Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl; Plain-capped Starthroat; Nutting’s, Ash-throated, and Dusky-capped flycatchers; Rose-throated Becard; Blue Mockingbird; Rufous-winged Sparrow; Varied Bunting; and Streak-backed and Black-vented orioles. Less likely but certainly possible is the Northwest Mexican endemic Rufous-bellied Chachalaca. We will make a concerted effort to find the near-endemic Russet-crowned Motmot. The possibilities are extensive and no two visits are ever the same.

Late this afternoon, we will drive to the overlook at Miguel Hidalgo Dam and check out any waterbirds that might be present. Scores of Neotropic and Double-crested cormorants are virtually assured. American White Pelicans are usually around and Zone-tailed Hawks sometimes hug the apron or cruise over the spillway looking for a meal. On the way back to town we have more chances for Red-billed Pigeon and Elegant Quail as well as Gilded Flicker and Cactus Wren.

NIGHT: Hotel La Choza, El Fuerte

**October 11, Day 4: El Fuerte to Cerocahui.** We will board the famed Chihuahua al Pacifico train, and climb the rugged western flank of the Sierra Madre Occidental. Deemed the eighth engineering marvel of the world, the track crosses 37 spans and passes through 89 tunnels, including one over a mile long and another that makes a 270-degree turn inside a mountain, all before we arrive at Bahuichivo Station, our jump-off for the remote village of Cerocahui. Crested Caracaras and Black-throated Magpie-Jays are occasionally seen along the train line, but the scenery itself is a constant distraction. Upon arrival in Bahuichivo, we will be transported by bus to our hotel, the Paraiso del Oso.

In the afternoon, we will go by hotel bus to the small village of Cerocahui for a short walking tour. Here we will encounter our first Tarahumara Indians as well as visit the historic church and town plaza. Beyond Cerocahui lies shaded Cerocahui Canyon. The scenery here is outstanding. Steep cliffs tower over us and the beautiful stream is lined with pine, oak, and cypress. Birds we hope to see include Zone-tailed Hawk, Short-tailed Hawk, Painted Redstart, Greater Pewee, and Mexican Jay. Our walk back to the village is easy and generally good for birding. Open pine woodland abuts apple orchard, providing good habitat. Previous tours here have seen Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Williamson's Sapsucker, and Chestnut-collared Swift.

NIGHT: Paraiso del Oso Lodge, Cerocahui

**October 12, Day 5: Barranca Urique.** After another early breakfast, we leave for the largest and most spectacular barranca (river canyon) in the entire Copper Canyon complex. Barranca Urique is 6,136 feet deep and several miles across. It is deeper even than our own Grand Canyon and is home to several species of birds that we will work hard to find, including the handsome Mountain Trogon, the lovely Slate-throated Redstart and the perky Tufted Flycatcher.

The distance to the canyon rim is only 13 miles, but we will spend the better part of the morning birding our way there. The road snakes up through woodland dominated by Apache and Chihuahua pine and myriad oak species. It is here in the mountains of western Mexico where oaks achieve their greatest diversity. By stopping at several points along the road, we should encounter mixed-species flocks. The birds we see will remind one of southeast Arizona. Species to expect include Hutton's and Plumbeous vireos, Arizona Woodpecker, Hepatic Tanager, Grace's and Olive warblers, and Yellow-eyed Junco. Often we discover less common wintering species mixed in. We may find Red-naped Sapsucker and Townsend's and Hermit warblers. The "Mountain" Pygmy-Owl is here and we will be sure to make a special effort for this bird that will likely be split from the Northern Pygmy-Owl.

The road eventually tops out at the Cerro Gallergos lookout where we'll have a prepared lunch. The expansive view from here is just awesome. Sheer-sided canyon walls, pine-covered plateaus and rugged side canyons form the seemingly endless panorama before us. On the canyon floor far below, the Urique River meanders along, carving relentlessly on.

NIGHT: Paraiso del Oso Lodge, Cerocahui

**October 13, Day 6: Cerocahui to Creel.** Our birding will be confined to the immediate precincts of the lodge this morning before we are transferred back to Bahuichivo station to continue on the train to Creel. We will make a special effort to find Brown-backed Solitaire and White-striped Woodcreeper before departing. The Woodcreeper is endemic to western Mexico and one of the most strikingly marked members of this tropical family. If the lodge hummingbird feeders are full, we may see White-eared and Berylline hummingbirds.

At Divisadero the train stops to take on water. The nearby overlook offers a spectacular vista of 5,770-foot Copper Canyon, fourth deepest in the Copper Canyon complex. Upon arrival in Creel we'll be transferred to our hotel. Although our hotel here does not have electricity, the location for birding and its ambiance make up for it.

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The charming mountain town of Creel, at nearly 7,800 feet, will be our base for the following two nights and is in the heart of the Tarahumara Indian country. We will have some time one afternoon to explore the small town and the many shops where Tarahumara handcrafts are plentiful. Note that money is not easily exchanged in Creel.

NIGHT: Hotel Cabañas Canon del Cobre, Creel

**October 14, Day 7: Cascada Cusarare.** This morning we'll look for one of the rarest and most desired birds in Mexico. Some 14 inches long, the Eared Quetzal is a close relative of the Resplendent Quetzal of southern Mexico and Central America, and the trail to 101-foot high Cascada Cusarare offers a moderate to good chance for viewing this bird. Aside from Eared Quetzal, we'll be watching for American Dippers, since one or two pair are resident along the stream. The walk to the falls is beautiful. A wide path takes us through a forest of Chihuahua pine and Arizona cypress while the bubbling stream meanders along through a grassy valley. The mountaintops are usually visible and the air is cool and crisp at this time of year. As we move along we can encounter flocks of birds in which Mexican Chickadees, Hairy Woodpeckers and Pygmy Nuthatches are found. Often these flocks hold such surprises as Hermit Warblers and Tufted Flycatchers. The walk to the falls and back is approximately three and a half miles in length and is mostly level with few ups and downs. In the late afternoon, there will be more time to explore Creel or simply relax in our scenic surroundings.

NIGHT: Hotel Cabañas Canon del Cobre, Creel

**October 15, Day 8: Creel to Chihuahua City.** After breakfast, we will board a bus for our trip to Chihuahua City. Heading out of the mountains, we will pass the lumber town of San Juanito and reach the plains. As we descend the eastern flank of the Sierra Madre, the extensive pine forest opens into grassy valleys and oak woodland. Having finished most of our birding, we can set our sights on one last prize bird, the endemic Striped Sparrow. This large sparrow is a bird of high grassy areas surrounded by pine. In past years our track record has been good and we will keep a sharp eye out from the road. Other birds we will look for include Northern Harrier, Chihuahuan Raven, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

North central Chihuahua has become a major agricultural area in Mexico. Many kinds of beans and chilis are grown here and we will have plenty of opportunities to see them still on the plants. At the town of Guerrero we will proceed directly to a private hacienda for lunch. The restaurant will be a welcome respite as the food is delicious and the setting in the middle of an apple orchard is lovely. Upon arrival in Chihuahua City, we will check into our hotel. Following a short break, we will offer an optional afternoon trip to the Pancho Villa Museum. The museum is really the former home of this enigmatic figure that played such an integral role in revolution era Mexico. As we move from room to room, the life of Pancho Villa comes alive as photographs, weapons, clothing and old documents tell the colorful story of the outlaw/hero/bandit/patriot. Everybody is encouraged to participate in this fascinating activity.

NIGHT: Hotel Sicomoro, Chihuahua City

**October 16, Day 9: Departure for Home.** Participants may depart for home at any time today with taxis readily available to take you to the airport from the hotel.

**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:** This tour will be limited to 14 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Brian Gibbons and Brennan Mulrooney.

**Brian Gibbons** grew up in suburban Dallas where he began exploring the wild world in local creeks and parks. Chasing butterflies and any animal that was unfortunate enough to cross paths with the Gibbons boys occupied his childhood. A wooden bird feeder kit sparked a flame that was stoked by a gift of the *Golden Guide* and family camping trips to Texas state parks. Nearly 20 years ago Brian attended two VENT camps for young birders. Birds are now his primary interest, but all things wild continue to captivate him. After college, Brian undertook a variety of field biology research jobs that have taken him to the Caribbean, the Bering Sea, and the land of the midnight sun, arctic Alaska. For many years Brian's field research has involved banding. His most amazing recoveries were a female Wilson's Warbler that had been banded in Alaska and was captured by Brian in Colorado, and a Sooty Tern that perished after a hurricane on the Texas coast; it had plied the Gulf of Mexico and the oceans of the world for 24 years. Brian's recreational bird-seeking has taken him to Machu Picchu in Peru, the Great Wall in China, and the Himalayas in Nepal. He enjoys working with kids, hoping to spark environmental awareness through birds. Brian leads tours in Mexico and the United States.

**Brennan Mulrooney** was born and raised in San Diego, California. Growing up, his heart and mind were captured by the ocean. He split his summer days between helping out behind the scenes at southern California's leading aquarium and working on sport fishing vessels off the coast. As a wildlife and fisheries biology major at UC Davis, he developed his fascination with birds and love of birding while taking a required ornithology course. Since graduating from UC Davis, Brennan has traveled throughout the United States working on widespread ornithological field studies. His work has taken him from the mountains of northern California to the Salton Sea in southern California, and from Cape May, New Jersey to Key Largo, Florida. Currently Brennan lives in San Diego with his wife Brynne and their son Declan. Participants often comment that Brennan's sharp eyes, sharper wit, and easygoing attitude make it a pleasure to bird with him.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the tour is **\$2970** in double occupancy from Los Mochis, Mexico and ending in Chihuahua City, Mexico. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to dinner on Day 8, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour including train tickets, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Los Mochis and return from Chihuahua City, taxi rides to and from the airport, 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 **\$295**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**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.

**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, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person 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 **\$100** per person. 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. *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 \$250*
Fewer than 120 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 \$100 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 is recommended.** This coverage is included in the “Worldwide Trip Protector” plan offered by *Travel Insured International*. A good website for information and acquisition of emergency evacuation/repatriation insurance is: [www.insuremytrip.com](http://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:** Please limit your luggage to one suitcase or duffel and one carry-on bag. As a precaution, we suggest you pack a change of clothes, your binoculars, medication, toiletries, walking shoes, and documents in the carry-on bag.

**BIRDING ETIQUETTE:** To make the tour most enjoyable for yourself, other participants, and your leader, it is important to use plain common sense and show proper etiquette while in the field. Birds tend to be shy. Loud noises and bright colors can scare them. We encourage clothing with earth tones. Try to avoid colors like oranges, yellows, and reds. Always keep your voice down. Shouting is not conducive to extended looks at a given species. When looking through the spotting scope, always wait your turn and look briefly the first time so that others may have the opportunity to get a look. If you are a smoker, please do so at some distance from the group.

**CLIMATE, TRIP DIFFICULTY, CONDITIONS:** The pace of the tour will be leisurely, with frequent stops to observe birds, scenery, and cultural attractions. All walking in the lowlands is easy and short. At the middle elevations, our walking is mild and not considered strenuous. At the upper elevations 8000 feet, the walk to Cusarare Falls is four miles roundtrip and is mostly level with few ups and downs. However, due to the length of the walk, not everybody may be suited for this outing. If this is the case, you are encouraged to at least go half way.

The lowlands can be downright HOT, and the highlands downright COLD. Temperatures can range from the mid-40s in the highlands to the mid-90s in the lowlands. We will be traveling during the dry season, but at 8,000 feet, rain is always a possibility. Elevations range from sea level to 8,200 feet on top of the Sierra Madre plateau. Most of the roads we will travel are dry and dusty this time of the year.

The Eared Quetzal is certainly one of the highest profile birds on this tour and one we all want to see. Be aware though that our experiences over the years tell us that our chances of finding the bird are probably not better than 70%. We have found the bird easily on some tours, but not at all on others. In 2003, 2004, and 2005 we missed it. However, in 2001, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 we had great studies.

Birding from a few different locales will be by van. The roads in the mountains can be quite rough and some of these drives are 2-3 hours long.

Bugs were mild in the fall. You are encouraged to use clothing based insecticide like Permanone which can be applied directly to your clothing, and it lasts 5-6 washings. This discourages chiggers, ticks and flying insects.

**CLOTHING:** Dress will be casual throughout the tour. Due to changes in elevation that occur on this tour, participants will want to be prepared accordingly. A pair or two of long pants is essential as the higher elevations can be cold and the lowlands “buggy”. A pair of shorts is often a good idea as the days do get warm. Several T-shirts, short and/or long-sleeved, are recommended as well. Many people now prefer designer field shirts that most outdoor stores and mail order companies are carrying. A typical shirt is usually long-sleeved and buttoned down the center. The material is lightweight and usually of earth tones or pastel coloration. Mesh for ventilation is a standard feature as are several pockets for personal effects. A hat to protect against the sun is absolutely essential. Do not overestimate this statement. The lowlands can be very hot, but it is the highlands where the sun’s rays are most intense and can cause rapid burning of the skin. Heavy hiking boots are not necessary, but you will want to have a light hiking boot or shoe. For down time, or during periods around towns or hotels, sandals or other open toed shoes are a good idea if you prefer them. Last but not least, bring a jacket or other cold weather gear. Do not be fooled into thinking that it does not get cold in Mexico.

**CURRENCY:** PLEASE be aware of several important facts that relate to using money and credit cards in Mexico. The Barranca del Cobre tour route is well-traveled and used by many other travel companies. Nevertheless, the area is pretty remote in some places and primitive in others. Most places where we stay accept dollars and small bills are always best. If you wish to change some money \$50-100 should cover most alcohol and gift expenses.

As a result, you should keep two important things in mind:

- (1) Large amounts of cash can be exchanged at the airport or exchange houses (Casas de Cambio) in Los Mochis. The hotels along the route may be able to make change for small amounts but definitely not large amounts.
- (2) Once we leave Los Mochis, you will not be in a place where you will be able to use your credit card. Even traveler’s checks are difficult to use. The mountain town of Creel is the center for Tarahumara crafts and textiles. These can be purchased here for far less than what they would cost in stores at home, but in spite of this, very few of the stores accept credit cards or traveler’s checks. You will want to have cash in Creel or nearly every other place we visit.

**DOCUMENTS:** Travel into Mexico for citizens of the United States requires a passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure. Non United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions. Additionally, a tourist card, which may be filled out aboard your flight to Mexico, is required. Both the passport and the tourist card must be carried with you while in Mexico.

**EQUIPMENT:** You will want to have sunglasses and sunscreen first and foremost. You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). Other important travel items include a flashlight (**VERY IMPORTANT AS THE LODGE IN CREEL HAS NO ELECTRICITY**), travel alarm clock, water bottle. Insect repellent for the lowlands is probably a good idea. A camera is highly recommended as there is much to see. As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. A Once again, on this tour one lodge has no electricity so a good personal flashlight and travel alarm clock are essential. Earplugs may be necessary for dogs, roosters, and donkeys.

**HEALTH:** When traveling, becoming seriously ill is never expected nor anticipated, but is always a possibility, especially when in a foreign country. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B. Hepatitis A is a disease of contaminated food and water. Hepatitis B is a disease transmitted through unsanitary needles and contaminated blood. Hepatitis vaccinations are standard travel precautions. Traveling in western Mexico does not necessarily mean your chance for exposure is greater or less than anywhere else. You should also know your blood type!

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on travel health).

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. Standard travel items include such stand-bys as aspirin/Advil/Tylenol as well as Pepto-Bismol and Imodium. Sunscreen is a necessity on this tour! Your leaders will always let you know when it is or is not appropriate to drink the local water. In places where it is not appropriate, bottled or purified water will be provided.

**MISC:** Departure Tax: \$28 and usually included in the cost of your air ticket  
Electricity – 110 volts; US two pin (flat) plugs are usual (where available)  
Language – Spanish is the official language  
Time – Mountain time zone

**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 such 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.

**THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK TO BRING FOR YOUR TRIP TO MEXICO:**  
Howell, Steve N. G. and Sophie Webb. *A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

***Birds and General Nature:***

- Edwards, Ernest D. *Finding Birds in Mexico*. Sweet Briar, VA: Ernest P. Edwards, 1976. The website [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) lists this book, with a 1985 Supplement.
- Ford, Linda J. *A Field Guide to the Wildflowers of Mexico's Copper Canyon Region*. Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Company Publishers. 2009. Can be purchased at [www.coppercanyonwildflowers.com](http://www.coppercanyonwildflowers.com) or at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).
- Glassberg, Jeffrey. *A Swift Guide to the Butterflies of Mexico and Central America*. Sunstreak Books, 2007
- Leopold, A.S. *Wildlife in Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959. Detailed volume on the mammals and other wildlife of Mexico.
- Pesman, Walter M. *Meet Flora Mexicana*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press, 1962. An introductory guide for the amateur botanist. Out of print, but available on [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).
- Sutton, George M. *Mexican Birds: First Impressions*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951. Out of print, but try [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).
- Wauer, Roland H. *Birder's Mexico* (Number Twelve: The Louise Lindsey Merrick Natural Environment Series). College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1999. Originally published under the title *A Naturalist's Mexico* as a hardback in 1992 with color photographs, this paperback edition features black-and-white photos.

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***Recordings:***

These will be helpful in learning the vocalizations of some of the birds of the region. According to Buteo Books "John William Hardy and his colleagues have produced a remarkable inventory of bird song recordings over the years. Regrettably, production has ceased and many of the cassettes are no longer available." However, Buteo Books multimedia section (<http://www.buteobooks.com/cat99-00/multimedia.html>) does sell bird song recordings, including some of the ARA works. Also consult the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology for other bird recordings ([http://www.birds.cornell.edu/lab\\_cds.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/lab_cds.html) ).

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