

# CAMP CHIRICAHUA

## AUGUST 6-17, 2013

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*Camp Chiricahua, co-sponsored by the American Birding Association and Leica Sport Optics, offers young naturalists between the ages of 14 and 18 the opportunity to explore 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-ow-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 participants are 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. An ascent of the Catalina mountains on the outskirts of Tucson for two nights of camping in the forested highlands will acquaint us with the “sky islands” so very characteristic of the borderlands of Southeast Arizona.*

*Much 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 three 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. While the prolonged drought that continues to effect the Southwest, along with the forest fires of 2011, has resulted in extensive modification to the plant communities here, the majority of specialty birds can still be found. It should also prove a fascinating opportunity to observe the resilience of southwestern species, avian and otherwise, in the dynamic process of post-fire ecological succession.*

*We will also explore the Huachucas, another of Southeast Arizona’s “sky islands.” Closest in proximity to the Mexican border, the Huachucas attract a greater number of hummingbirds and Mexican “strays” than the other ranges in Arizona. Contingent upon post-fire recovery/restrictions from the large Monument fire of 2011, we will explore at least two of the major canyons in the*

*range, while 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 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.*

*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. We'll take advantage of this biological richness and focus some of our attention on all of these animals.*

*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 the complex and beautiful ecosystems of the Southwest.*

*Camp Chiricahua starts and ends in Tucson, Arizona.*

**August 6, 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 holding 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 the Clarion Hotel Airport 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 itself 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: TBA Airport Hotel, Tucson

**August 7-8, Days 2-3: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum; Catalina 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 amid towering saguaro (pronounced sah-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 will climb the Mt. Lemon Highway for two night of camping in the Santa Catalina Mountains. The route will take us from rugged saguaro covered hillsides through the oak/juniper transition zone and juniper and eventually up to the cool conifer-dominated highlands of this "sky island" range. The ascent offers

commanding views of the Tucson desert below and surrounding mountains from many pull-outs along the way. Visibility is limitless, with hundred-mile views likely. 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 containing Pygmy Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Greater Pewee, Olive and Red-faced warblers, and Yellow-eyed Junco will be new for us. Other wildlife is around as well; we will look for the endemic Abert's Tassel-eared Squirrel (a colony has been established here in the Catalinas) and black bears are sometimes seen in this area. If summer rains have been good, the open forest above Rose Lake and cool streambed at Marshall Gulch 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, sulfurs, and whites.

NIGHTS: Camping – Rose Canyon Lake, Catalina National Forest

**August 9, Day 4: Mt. Lemon to Portal and the Chiricahua Mountains.** After our descent (stopping to bird en route) we'll head for the famed Chiricahua Mountains. 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 Pinaleño. 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 so special.

NIGHT: Southwestern Research Station, Portal

**August 10-12, Days 5-7: Cave Creek Canyon and the Chiricahuas.** In a region known for its many legendary birding locations, the Chiricahua Mountains are probably 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 birds 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, javelin (collared peccary), 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 large, showy types such as giant, two-tailed, pipevine, and black swallowtails; red-spotted admiral; mourning cloak; cloudless sulphur; southern dogface; Arizona sister; and an impressive diversity of blues, metalmarks, checkerspots, and skippers.

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 shaded canyon 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 mountains. This is wide open ranch country, dominated by soap tree 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, adapted 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 oasis amid 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 and Peloncillo ranges.

**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 Mexican Whip-poor-will elevate the ambience of a Chiricahua summer evening, and we have decent chances of seeing some of these nocturnal sprites. On another evening we will load up and head out to the desert for a night drive. Cruising 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 outstanding during the summer months and we will take a walk 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.

**August 13, Day 8: From the Chiricahuas to Sierra Vista.** Today will be a day of transition, from the cool canyons of the 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 through the years, 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 likely. 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 Sierra Vista in the middle to late afternoon. After check-in, campers will have the remainder of the day for relaxation and exploration of the property. We will have 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 in this area can be outstanding, and campers will discover, with little difficulty, the likes of Scaled and Gambel's quail, Common Ground-Dove, Vermilion Flycatcher, Botteri's Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak.

NIGHT: Windemere Hotel, Sierra Vista

**August 14-15, Days 9-10: The Huachuca Mountains and the San Pedro River.** We'll devote one early morning to exploring the bird-rich cottonwoods of the San Pedro River area. Following a picnic lunch (perhaps enlivened by a monsoon thunderstorm!), our afternoon birding will be spent in the cool mountain forests of the nearby Huachucas, where we hope to 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, having hosted such exciting subtropical wanderers including Eared Quetzal, Aztec Thrush, Brown-backed Solitaire, and Tropical Parula. While such dream sightings should not be expected, the possibility of something new and remarkable awaiting discovery at the next turn of the trail adds an undeniable sense of excitement.

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

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the rare Berylline Hummingbird, while the more southerly Ash Canyon is best for the elusive Lucifer Hummingbird.

NIGHTS: Windemere Hotel, Sierra Vista

**August 16, 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: TBA Airport Hotel, Tucson

**August 17, 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:** 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:** Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis

**Michael O'Brien** is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has a passionate interest in bird vocalizations and field identification, and a serious addiction to migration and nocturnal birding. His travels have taken him throughout North and Central America and beyond. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*, and is primary author of *Larkwire.com*, an online application for learning bird sounds. His illustrations have been widely published in books and field guides, including the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the new Peterson field guides. Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies, leads several "Birds & Butterflies" tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis, and is coordinator of the Cape May Butterfly Count.

**Louise Zemaitis** is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey where she is a popular field trip leader teaching birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory. She also enjoys leading birding groups and lecturing at birding festivals and is known for her enthusiasm for all natural history subjects. Louise and her husband, Michael O'Brien, have been guiding young birders at birding events and conferences for many years. In addition to leading, Louise is coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May, compiler of the Cape May Christmas Bird Count, and member of the Cape May Artists' Cooperative. An honors graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art, she enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published. Her proudest accomplishment has been the raising of her two sons, Bradley, a biologist and artist, and Alec, a philosopher and musician.

**MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT:** The parents, or legal guardian, of all camp participants are **required** to purchase emergency/medical evacuation insurance for his/her son or daughter for this program, and will be asked to sign and return to the VENT office a waiver stating that this has been done. Such insurance should be available from any insurance company which provides trip cancellation coverage.

Please refer to the **Trip Cancellation & Medical Evacuation Insurance** section of this itinerary for more information.

**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 25 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 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.

**4) Acknowledgement of Receipt of Camp Packing List:** This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges receipt of a packing list provided by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours.

**5) Emergency/Medical Evacuation Insurance:** This document signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges purchase of insurance that covers emergency evacuation and medical coverage.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the camp is **\$1450** 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.

Partial camp scholarships MAY be available through the American Birding Association (ABA) and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours and awarded to campers who couldn't otherwise attend. Please contact the ABA and VENT for more information.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for this tour is **\$300** per person. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, 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 the initial deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com)) should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

**PAYMENTS:** Initial tour deposits may be made by MasterCard, Visa, check, money order, or bank transfer. All other tour payments, including second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc., must be made by check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$150** per person will be charged. If cancellation is made between 120 and 90 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 90 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.*

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$150
Between 120 and 90 days before departure	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded
Fewer than 90 days before departure date	No refund available

**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. **The purchase of Emergency Evacuation/Medical insurance is required for attendance at this camp.** We recommend the purchase of this and any other insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness.

Emergency Evacuation insurance is typically available through general travel insurance policies; however, some providers may offer this type of insurance as a stand-alone benefit. 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 cover illness or evacuation during your trip. Your credit card provider may also offer a travel program in which various forms of travel insurance are available **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.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Travel Insured International offers four Worldwide Trip Protector plans, all of which include Emergency Evacuation insurance. We recommend the plan entitled Worldwide Trip Protector Lite as it contains sufficient coverage to meet the needs of this program. The fee for this plan for Camp Chiricahua within the age group is approximately \$46. To view this and other Worldwide Trip plans please refer to the *Travel Insured International* brochure or contact *Travel Insured International* at <http://www.travelinsured.com/> or call



800-243-3174. If you do not choose to purchase the insurance through *Travel Insured International*, you will need to do so through another insurance provider. A good website for information and acquisition of emergency evacuation/repatriation insurance is: [www.insuremytrip.com](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:** 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 on Mt. Lemmon 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. Laundry services may be available in the Tucson and Sierra Vista areas.

**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 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.

Campers will “tent-camp” in a developed campground on Mt. Lemmon. Potable water and outhouses are available, but there are no shower facilities. While at Southwestern Research Station, each camper will be housed on a newly built dormitory which has 2-3 beds per room and shared bathrooms down the hall. Accommodations while in Tucson and in Sierra Vista will be two to four persons per room.

Campers should expect to participate in several lengthy, lightly strenuous hikes. 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 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 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 ensure this comes to pass, we offer the following information and suggestions for health-related issues:

- Staff members are certified to perform standard first aid and CPR and carry an assortment of first aid supplies.

- 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*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000.

National Geographic Society. *Field Guide to North American Birds*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2002.

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:**

Baicich, Paul J. and J. O. Harrison. *A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2005. This is a superb and usually overlooked reference to the breeding biology of North American birds. Offers far more information that is available in standard field guides.

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.)

**Mammals:**

Kays, Roland W. and Wilson, Don E. *Mammals of North America*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2009.

Bowers, Nora, Rick Bowers, and Kenn Kaufman. *Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007.

Reid, Fiona. *Peterson Field Guide to the Mammals of North America*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2006.

**Butterflies:**

Brock, Jim P. and Kenn Kaufman. *Kaufman Focus Guides: Butterflies of North America*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2006. This guide is, overall, the best North American butterfly identification resource available.

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**Reptiles:**

Brennan, Thomas C., and Andrew T. Holycross. *A Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles in Arizona*. Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, 2009.

Stebbins, Robert C. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Reptiles and Amphibians*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2003.

**Trees:**

Petrides, George A. and Olivia. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Trees*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, second edition 1998.

**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 March 7, 2013 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.