

**PERU: MANU BIOSPHERE RESERVE**  
**CLOUD FOREST, FOOTHILLS AND LOWLAND RAINFOREST**  
**SEPTEMBER 20 – OCTOBER 5, 2017**

**MACHU PICCHU EXTENSION**  
**OCTOBER 4-10, 2017**

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*Here is an opportunity to visit one of the wildest and most pristine rainforests on the planet, a region where all the top predators are still present—from jaguars and Harpy Eagles to the smallest prey species. The huge Manu National Park and biosphere reserve, encompassing over four and a half million acres, preserves an entire ecosystem. Not a single element is missing or removed, and it is a land where humans still coexist in a harmonious state with the natural environment. This can be said of relatively few other places on earth. It is widely acknowledged that the park hosts the most diverse flora and fauna of any park in the world, and the region is home to three tribes of Indians who live all or partly within the present park boundaries. Two of these tribes, in fact, have little or no contact with the outside world.*

*The boundaries of Manu National Park and the biosphere reserve that surrounds it embrace an unbroken rainforest stretching from the western Amazonian lowlands to the puna above treeline. This area is home to more than 1,000 species of birds. Tour participants will be treated to a broad spectrum of forest habitats and will have the opportunity to stay at four different locations, covering virtually all elevations. The locations are near or within the biosphere reserve surrounding the park. The localities include a lodge not far below treeline; a cloud forest at about 4500 feet elevation; a foothill location (formally an old farm), and a lowland rainforest site along the Madre de Dios River.*

*A great variety of birds and mammals are possible on this trip, including some species that are rare or not well known, such as the Orinoco Goose, Blue-headed Macaw, Scarlet-hooded Barbet, Bamboo Antshrike, Manu Antbird, Rufous-fronted Anthrush, and White-cheeked and Black-backed Tody-Flycatchers. There also are many spectacular species: Razor-billed Curassow, Sunbittern, Horned Screamer, five or six species of macaws, Curl-crested Araçari, and Band-tailed Manakin. Mammals are difficult to observe in forest habitats, but because of the wildness of the Manu region, we will have unparalleled opportunities to see seven or eight species of monkeys including impressive Common Woolly Monkeys in the cloud forest. Other primates include Black Spider Monkey, Squirrel Monkey, Dusky Titi-Monkey, Red Howler Monkey, Saddle-backed Tamarin, and both Brown-and White-fronted capuchin monkeys. There is a good chance that tour participants will see Giant Otters, as well.*

*While at the Manu Wildlife Center, we may have the opportunity to see a tapir if one comes to a salt lick at night. We also have a chance of seeing a jaguar, although they occur in low density*

*Those interested in maximizing their time in Peru are encouraged to join our optional extension to Machu Picchu, the incomparable ancient capital of the Inca. In addition, you will have the opportunity to see many of the special birds of the Peruvian Andes in the regions of Cuzco and the Urubamba River Valley.*

**Be advised:** The Manu Biosphere Reserve tour is a trip into a true wilderness region with relatively simple accommodations (the lodges have little or no electricity) and there will be several long travel days; we will be up very early almost every day; and some time will be spent on trails. Participants on this trip should be in reasonably good physical condition, able to walk several miles on trails, climb more than two-hundred vertical steps (the canopy platforms require an ascent of up to almost 250 steps), climb up or down steep river banks, and walk a plank (with assistance) in order to load and unload from boats.

**Special Note:** Day 2 is unavoidably long and can be tiresome with extreme elevation changes and long driving time on a mountain road. It begins with a very early flight from Lima (sea level) to Cuzco (11,200 feet), followed by a six to seven hour drive (with stops) crossing three mountain passes at approximately 12,000 feet (ca. 3600 m), before descending to our lodge in the upper cloud forest at 9750 feet (2950 m). The drive is beautiful and inspiring but, in view of this strenuous day, we recommend that clients, if possible, arrive early and use Day 1 for rest and hydrate.

For those who wish to arrive early and depending, reservations can be made at the Costa del Sol Lima Airport Hotel, or at the Allpa Hotel. The Allpa Hotel has a pleasant park and some interesting birding close by, as well as numerous businesses and a shopping area. The Allpa Hotel is located in an upscale neighborhood in the southeastern part of Lima and approximately thirty to forty minutes from downtown Lima.

Another option for those arriving early is a day trip from Lima to the Pantanos de Villa (Villa Marshes) and the fishing village of Pucusana. This trip will start with a breakfast at the Allpa Hotel and depart about 8:00 a.m. for a drive southward toward the picturesque coast of Pucusana. En route you will make a stop at a large freshwater marsh, the Pantanos de Villa Marshes. In addition you will see a good cross section of the stark Atacama Desert of western Peru, and many of the seabirds typical of the cold, rich waters of the Humboldt Current just offshore. You should see 50-60 species of birds, almost all of which will not be seen elsewhere on this trip. These may include Humboldt Penguin (a good chance of seeing these), White-tufted Grebe, Peruvian Pelican, Peruvian Booby, Neotropic and Guanay cormorants, several egrets and herons, Puna Ibis, White-cheeked Pintail, Cinnamon Teal, Harris's and Variable (Red-backed) hawk, Plumbeous Rail, Andean Coot (with several different frontal shield colors), Common Moorhen, Peruvian Thick-knee (now scarce), Surfbird, Ruddy Turnstone, Whimbrel, Belcher's (formerly Band-tailed) Gull, Gray-hooded, Kelp, and Franklin's Gull (common resident during northern winter), Inca Tern, West Peruvian Dove, Croaking Ground-Dove, Amazilia Hummingbird, Wren-like Rushbird, Surf Cinclodes (endemic), Coastal Miner (endemic), Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Short-tailed Field-Tyrant (local), Vermilion Flycatcher (black morph in Lima, normal red ones along the coast), Long-tailed Mockingbird, Peruvian Meadowlark, Grassland Yellow-Finch, Drab, Parrot-billed, and Chestnut-throated seedeaters (these *Sporophila* are sometimes unpredictable in abundance). A box lunch will be included with the trip and you will return to the hotel in time for dinner this evening.

If you decide to do the day trip to the Pantanos de Villa (Villa Marshes) and the fishing village of Pucusana, you should plan your flights to arrive Lima on September 18, do the day trip on September 19, leaving September 20 (Day 1 of the tour) set aside for rest. All tour participants that do this trip will do it as a group and it will be led by a local birding guide. The price will be dependent on the number of participants and include hotel accommodations at the Allpa Hotel, breakfasts, one box lunch, and the services of a local birding guide.

Should you decide to do this option, you will need to relocate to the Costa del Sol Airport Hotel on the scheduled "Tour Day 1". This transfer is best done sometime around the check-out time (mid-day) so there is little or no wait time at the Costa del Sol. On the morning of Day 2 you will meet your fellow tour participants and leaders in the hotel lobby at a prearranged time prior to our flight to Cuzco.

**September 20, Day 1: International flight to Peru and late-night arrival in Lima.** Most flights from the United States arrive in Lima, Peru (Jorge Chávez Lima-Callao International Airport, LIM) between 9-11:00 PM. Upon arrival and after clearing immigrations (sometimes there is a lengthy wait), collect your bags from the carousel, pass customs, and then proceed outside the baggage claim area and cross the street on foot to the Costa del Sol Airport Hotel where a room is reserved in your name. The Costa del Sol Airport Hotel is located inside the Lima International Airport complex and within walking distance (150 yards) of international arrivals. It also is connected to the airport terminal via a second floor over-the-street walkway. Tomorrow morning you will return to the airport for a very early commercial flight to Cuzco. If you arrive a day or two early, you will be met on arrival by a representative of Manu Expeditions that will take you to the Allpa Hotel, a thirty to forty minute drive from the airport.

NIGHT: Costa del Sol Airport Hotel, Lima

**September 21, Day 2: Fly from Lima to Cuzco and then continue overland to the Wayqecha Lodge and Biological Station located along the only road that leads from Cuzco to Boca Manu and the Manu Biosphere Reserve.** This will be primarily a travel day. We will have a very early commercial flight from Lima (about 5:00-6:00 a.m. depending upon schedules) for the approximately one hour flight to Cuzco and then board a comfortable bus for the continuation of our trip. Please note that we will arrive in Cuzco without an opportunity to acclimate to the high elevation (Cuzco is at 11,200 feet elevation) and the overland drive will take us over three passes in excess of 12,000 feet before we finally descend the forested eastern slope of the Andes to our final destination at about 9750 feet. This will be a relatively long day (about a 7 hour drive including several stops) and you should take particular care with the extreme changes in elevation. In particular we recommend that you begin this day well rested and, in this regard, would urge clients to arrive a day early in Lima if time permits. We recommend that you take Diamox or at a minimum consult with your physician regarding possible medication for high altitude sickness.

If time and flight schedules permit we plan to make our first and relatively brief stop shortly outside of Cuzco at Laguna Huacarpay, a high-elevation natural lake that has extensive marshes as well as some interesting scrub vegetation on the steep slopes surrounding the lake. The lake and the setting are beautiful, especially early in the morning when the air is cool and crisp. We'll try to see some of the waterfowl here, as well as high elevation specialties before continuing onward. White-tufted Grebe, Puna Ibis, Andean Teal, Puna Teal, Yellow-billed Pintail, Ruddy Duck (black-headed Andean form), American Kestrel, Cinereous Harrier, Plumbeous Rail, Slate-colored Coot, Andean Lapwing, Andean Gull, Spot-winged Pigeon, Sparkling Violetear, Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant, Brown-bellied Swallow, Chiguanco Thrush, Yellow-winged Blackbird, and Band-tailed Seed-eater are all likely to be seen. We'll also try to locate the endemic Rusty-fronted Canastero, and if possible the Wren-like Rushbird and the colorful little Many-colored Rush-Tyrant although these latter two usually prefer to stay hidden in tall bushes. Many other species that occur here are perhaps more easily found elsewhere along our route today. So after an hour or more here we will continue our overland journey.

We plan to make a few strategic, but relatively short, birding stops throughout the day. Although it is a long drive, part of the road is now much improved which allow us to travel more quickly and gives us more birding time. Birds should be much in evidence in the cultivated valleys in these dry Peruvian highlands, in brushy ravines, and around villages. Examples of some species in these arid zones include (both targets and widespread species) that we may be able to see today include Puna Ibis, American Kestrel, Andean Lapwing, Tawny-throated Dotterel (an austral migrant present only from ca. April to September), Andean Flicker, Slender-billed Miner, Common Miner, Creamy-crested Spinetail, (endemic), Cream-winged Cinclodes (formerly called Bar-winged Cinclodes), Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant, Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant, Rufous-webbed (Bush-) Tyrant (scarce), White-browed Chat-Tyrant, Chiguanco Thrush, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, Chestnut-breasted Mountain-Finch (endemic), Golden-billed Saltator,

Band-tailed Seedeater, Peruvian Sierra-Finch (endemic), Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch, Rufous-collared Sparrow (ubiquitous), and Hooded Siskin. These arid highlands are also the favorite habitat of several interesting hummingbirds including the Giant Hummingbird, Bearded Mountaineer (endemic), Sparkling Violetear, Shining Sunbeam, and White-chested Sunbeam.

You also will surely have an opportunity to observe some of the colorfully-dressed Indian groups of the highlands as we pass through several small towns, especially in the town of Pacuartambo where there is a small but particularly colorful food market. Once over the final high pass (about 12,000 feet), we will enter the cultural (mixed use) zone of the park and begin our descent of the eastern slope of the Andes. If time permits we'll stop in the puna grass and shrub zone at or near this last mountain pass and look for a few specialties of the region, among them Line-fronted Canastero, Scribble-tailed Canasteros (both scarce), Puna Tapaculo, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Grass Wren, Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, Golden-collared Tanager, White-browed Conebill, and Moustached Flowerpiercer although we will likely return here tomorrow as well. Once we clear this last pass, however, the road begins a long and uninterrupted descent to the lowlands, which are still nearly a day's drive away. Victor Emanuel has called this long, single-lane road "one of the best birding roads in the world" and we hope that, over the next few days, you will see why.

We'll stop here on this eastern slope of the Andes and just beyond the pass, because you are sure to notice a dramatic change in the vegetation, and maybe temperature and humidity as well! Here, the annual rainfall increases dramatically and we may almost immediately encounter fog. The vegetation, especially on exposed slopes, becomes wet and moss-covered, although it is relatively short and stunted because of the cold temperatures and more difficult growing conditions. From here it is less than an hour to our first lodge and we'll make a few stop along the way if time permits. A sampling of birds in this ultra-high, humid, montane forest zone includes Mountain Caracara, Variable (Puna) Hawk, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan (hard to find), Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, Red-crested Cotingas, White-throated Jay, Black-capped Hemispingus, Black-headed Hemispingus, Hooded and Scarlet-bellied mountain-tanagers, Grass-green Tanager, Golden-collared Tanager (scarce), Masked Flowerpiercer, Moustached Flowerpiercer, and Mountain Cacique (southern race). This also is an excellent zone for several species of hummingbirds but our time will be brief and we may see relatively few today.

The Wayqecha Lodge, originally built as a biological station for students, is now open for visits by visiting birders and naturalists. The facilities have recently expanded to include several rustic cabins, each with private bathrooms. Rooms have bunk beds and, if our group is large, a few people might have to use an upper bunk for this relatively brief two-night stay. We think you'll agree, however, that the birds and the spectacular views in the morning will be worth any minor convenience. Previously, the only option for an overnight here was camping, so we regard this as a major improvement.

NIGHT: Wayqecha Lodge (9750 feet elevation) on Cuzco-Shintuya Road

**September 22, Day 3: High montane forest in vicinity of Wayqecha Lodge, department of Cuzco, Peru.**

We'll have the day here to explore this high-elevation zone and, depending upon the weather and what we find, we may drive back to vicinity of the high pass again today and walk down sections of this road with our bus following. If the weather is clear some spectacular views of the mountains and forests below are possible. In addition to the species mentioned for yesterday afternoon, we also will be looking for other high Andean species including: Amethyst-throated Sunangel, Tyrian Mtealtail, Sparkling Violetear, Puna Thistletail, Trilling Tapaculo, Sierran Elaenia, White-throated Tyrannulet, White-banded Tyrannulet, White-winged Black-Tyrant, Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant, Rufous-bellied Bush-Tyrant, Black-throated Tody-Tyrant, Barred Fruiteater, Barred Becard and White-collared Jay and Three-striped Hemispingus to name a few. Finding birds here in very much dependent upon sampling a variety of elevations, and on checking different habitats, even at the same elevation, because different soils and exposures to the sun and prevailing winds and rain, can dramatically alter habitats over remarkably short distances.

NIGHT: Wayqecha Lodge (9735 feet elevation) on Cuzco-Shintuya Road

**September 23, Day 4: High montane forest down to the Cock-of-the-rock Lodge.** It is likely that we will leave the lodge relatively early this morning, taking a pack lunch with us, in order to begin our birding at a somewhat lower elevation. In the past we've discovered some areas that offer exciting birding with spectacular mixed species flocks forming shortly after dawn. We'll gradually work our way down slope today, birding some sections and then moving further down slope by bus. This entire road passes through steep mountain forest, most of which has never been cut or disturbed beyond what is necessary for road maintenance. Between treeline and the Cock-of-the-rock Lodge a huge number of species have been found but finding them often takes time and is dependent upon both weather (overcast days are better) and being able to intercept fast-moving mixed species flocks. A sampling of species that have been seen on previous tours in this zone includes: Speckled Hummingbird, Rufous-capped Thornbill, Tyrian Metaltail, Buff-thighed Puffleg, Bronzy Inca, Collared Inca, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Mountain Velvetbreast, Long-tailed Sylph, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, White-bellied Woodstar, Yungas Pygmy-Owl, Golden-headed Quetzal, Masked Trogon, Black-striped Puffbird (rare), Blue-banded Toucanet (near endemic), Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Scaly-naped Parrot, Tyrannine Woodcreeper, Montane Woodcreeper, Pearled Treerunner, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Marcapata Spinetail (endemic), Trilling Tapaculo, Sierran Elaenia, White-banded Tyrannulet, White-throated Tyrannulet, Inca Flycatcher, Handsome Flycatcher, Unadorned Flycatcher, Slaty-backed (Maroon-chested) Chat-Tyrant, Barred Fruiteater, Barred Becard, Fulvous Wren, Great Thrush, Superciliaried Hemispingus, Oleaginous Hemispingus, Rust-and-yellow Tanager, Rufous-chested Tanager (scarce), Slaty Tanager, Grass-green Tanager, Chestnut-bellied Mountain-Tanager, Capped Conebill, Blue-backed Conebill, Masked Flowerpiercer, Black-faced Brush-Finch, Spectacled Redstart, Citrine Warbler, and Common Chlorospingus. As we descend to lower elevations, the diversity of the birds increases and, closer to the Cock-of-the-rock Lodge, a good mixed species flock could contain some species mentioned on tomorrow's list.

The Cock-of-the-rock Lodge, situated at a location known locally as San Pedro, and in an area of even greater rainfall than higher up, is approximately halfway (in distance) between the pass and the Madre-de Dios River. It's a great elevation for many lower montane and foothill birds and we'll have a two days to enjoy the area. The lodge has 10 comfortable private cabanas, each with private baths and hot showers, as well as a separate dining room with attached kitchen and bar, and is a great location from which to watch the hummingbird feeders, a fruit feeder, and the activity of birds in and around the small clearing below the dining area. Rooms have candles; there is no electricity, although a small generator is available for charging batteries in the evenings.

NIGHT: Cock-of-the-rock Lodge (ca. 4500 feet elevation), Manu Biosphere Reserve

**September 24-25, Days 5-6: Cloud forest of Manu Biosphere Reserve.** One of our highlights here is access to an active display lek of Andean Cocks-of-the-rock and we will certainly visit this site our first afternoon for a matinee performance. These birds are quite accustomed to people and continue to display, often no more than 10 meters away, even when fairly large numbers of people are present and it is surely one of the greatest avian spectacles to be seen in the Andes.

We also will spend most of one morning in the vicinity of the lodge and along the nearby road. The dining area also overlooks a small clearing with hummingbird feeders and fruit trays that attract tanagers and barbets and we will certainly be spending some time here as well. One of the first songs we may hear today, even before sunrise, is the delicate, flute-like notes of the Andean Solitaire. In the shadowy, moss-covered forests, however, this shy singer can be elusive to see.

The forest is often misty here and trees almost disappear under gardens of epiphytes such as mosses, orchids, bromeliads, and ferns. Small, fast-moving *Tangara* tanagers dominate mixed-species flocks in this mid-elevation zone, but they always seem to be in a rush and the numerous species can be confusing and a challenge to observe. One of our goals, when trying to observe birds in these flocks, is to maneuver ourselves into a good position to view some of them and that may mean moving quickly up or down the road to get ahead of them. A sampling of tanagers around the lodge includes: Deep-blue Flowerpiercer, Bluish Flowerpiercer, Masked Flowerpiercer, Black-goggled Tanager, Fawn-breasted Tanager and Orange-eared Tanager, as well as many *Tangara* tanagers, among them Golden-naped, Blue-necked, Spotted, Beryl-spangled, Paradise, Bay-headed,

Golden-eared, Saffron-crowned, and Golden tanager. Other species include Yellow-throated Tanager, Blue-capped, Blue-gray, and Palm tanagers, Silver-beaked Tanager, Black-eared Hemispingus and Yellow-throated Chlorospingus. In the vicinity of the lodge Andean Motmot, Versicolored Barbet, Crested Quetzal, Azara's Spinetail, Montane Foliage-gleaner, Black-billed Treehunter, Stripe-chested Antwren, Yellow-breasted Antwren, White-crowned Tapaculo, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Cinnamon-faced Tyrannulet (scarce), Bolivian Tyrannulet, Smoke-colored Pewee, Black Phoebe, Yungas Manakin (common but difficult to see), White-capped Dipper, Green Jay, Slate-throated Redstart, Two-banded Warbler, and Dusky-green and Russet-backed oropendola, can be found.

NIGHTS: Cock-of-the-rock Lodge (ca. 4500 feet elevation), Manu Biosphere Reserve

**September 26, Day 7: From the cloud forests of the Cock-of-the-rock Lodge to the foothills near Pilcopata.** This morning we'll begin our descent from the cloud forests to the foothills, birding en route, and descending almost to the Alto Madre de Dios River. In most places along the road the forest is thick and lush and the foothill slopes steep, and as we descend there will be large areas with bamboo, which harbor some species that do not regularly occur away from it. As we reach lower elevations the land gradually flattens in valley floors. Still within the cultural zone of the Biosphere Reserve we will see clearings, small fields, and disturbed forest in this lower zone and we will pass several tiny villages. Some areas have been extensively cut and are now regrown with invading bamboo. Among a long list of possibilities that occur in the mountains between the Cock-of-the-rock Lodge and the Alto Madre de Dios River are the following: Blue-headed Parrot, Red-bellied Macaw, Ash-browed Spinetail, White-backed Fire-eye, Ornate Flycatcher, Cinnamon-faced Tyrannulet (scarce recently described species), Cerulean-capped Manakin (rare), Slaty Thrush (Andean form), and Gray-mantled Wren,. Other possibilities include Golden-collared Honeycreeper, Orange-bellied Euphonia, and Orange-eared, Golden, Paradise, Blue-necked, and Yellow-throated, tanager, as well as Short-billed, and Yellow-throated Chlorospingus and Golden-bellied Warbler. Along this lower elevation route today we pass a region where a still undescribed new species (tanager or finch or cardinalid) was found several years ago. Our chances of seeing this rare species are slim although we have located it on a few occasions and finding it again would be exciting.

In the low hills near Pilcopata, the avifauna begins to change even more noticeably and here there are fewer tanagers and more parrots, macaws and antbirds. Some of the possibilities include Military and Blue-headed macaws (later mainly on hills near Atalaya), Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Black Antbird, Yellow-breasted Warbling-Antbird, Black-backed Tody-Flycatcher, Golden-bellied Warbler, Yellow-bellied and Black-faced dacnis, Purple Honeycreeper, and Buff-throated Saltator. With luck we also may spot the spectacular Amazonian Umbrellabird (a foothill population). Sometime early to mid- afternoon we should our lodge at which point we will have completed an elevational transect descending more than 10,000 feet (3200 m) in elevation from top to bottom. At the highest elevations, hummingbirds, furnariids, finches and a few tanagers predominate; at middle elevations tanagers are dominant with an increasing mix of flycatchers; now, at the bottom of the foothills, we have entered a much more diverse region, home to hundreds of species of birds and a much wider array of bird families.

The Villa Carmen Lodge is in a terrific location to begin our lower-elevation birding, nestled, as it is, within an outlying foothill ridge at about 1,700 feet (500 m) elevation. The lodge cabanas are simple but comfortable and clean and offer access to a splendid array of habitats and it is the only site where we have access to native bamboo and the many bamboo-specialist birds of this region.

NIGHT: Villa Carmen Lodge, Dept. of Madre de Dios,

**September 27, Day 8: Villa Carmen.** Here the air is still moist and cool at night, but it will be much warmer than the cloud forest lodge during the day. The trail system around the lodge is relatively level but traverses mostly second growth habitat. It is generally a relatively easy place to see birds and many species, in fact, can be seen right around the lodge clearing. There is considerable bamboo here, but we have found that most of the bamboo specialties are not easy to see. Some we have heard or seen in this area include Manu Antbird, Dusky-

cheeked Foliage-gleaner, Peruvian Recurvebill (scarce), Flammulated Pygmy-Tyrant; White-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher, Dusky-tailed Flycatcher and Large-headed Flatbill.

A sampling of the hundreds of other species here (the lodge list is around 475 species) includes Brazilian Teal; Blue-throated Piping-Guan; Blackish Rail; Gray-necked Wood-Rail; Blue-headed, Military, Scarlet, and Red-and-green macaws, Dusky-headed and White-eyed parakeet, Yellow-crowned and Mealy parrot, White-collared Swift (enormous kettles circling overhead on clear mornings), Chestnut-capped Puffbird (scarce); Bluish-fronted Jacamar, Chestnut-eared Araçari, Fine-barred Piculet, Spot-breasted Woodpecker; Lineated Woodpecker; Bluish-slate Antshrike, Blackish Antbird; White-lined, Goeldi's, and Yellow-breasted Warbling-Antbird; Orange-fronted Plushcrown; Rusty-belted Tapaculo, Fiery-capped Manakin; Mottle-backed and Yellow-bellied Elaenia; Long-tailed Tyrant; White-winged Becard; Violaceous and Purplish jays, Magpie Tanager, Masked Crimson Tanager (scarce here), Silver-beaked Tanager, Turquoise Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Black-faced and Yellow-bellied dacnis, Chestnut-vented Conebill; Grayish Saltator; and Russet-backed, Crested, and Amazonian oropendolas and Yellow-rumped Caciques; and Thick-billed and Rufous-bellied euphonias.

NIGHT: Villa Carmen Lodge, Dept. of Madre de Dios

**September 28, Day 9: Downriver travel to the Manu Wildlife Center.** This morning, following a drive of about an hour, we will board long dugouts for the downriver trip to the Manu Wildlife Center. These motorized dugouts have comfortable padded seats and a covered top for protection from sun and rain (at this time of year rain is likely only during southern cold fronts). The boat trip downriver is approximately seven hours (not counting some comfort stops). As we travel downriver we are sure to see a good number of birds. In the past we have recorded more than sixty species on this downriver trip. The gradient of the Alto Madre de Dios, with its frequent riffles and rapids, is exciting, but later, as we near the lower end of the river, it begins to flatten. Our serpentine river route winds around or between several isolated, outlying ridges of the Andes. We will pass enormous gravel bars and boulder piles often inhabited by stolid pairs of Fasciated Tiger-Herons, an infrequently seen species that is common only where fast-rushing Andean rivers meet the lowland plains. Lovely cliff-cuts are covered with ferns graced by mist and spray from the river, and flowering *Schizolobium* and *Erythrina* trees sometimes dot the hillsides with blazes of yellow and red. Our route also takes us past two substantial Indian communities located on the south bank of the Alto Madre de Dios River. Because of the openness of the river and good visibility, this is often an excellent day to spot raptors, as well as caracaras, a few northern migrant waders (yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpipers, etc.), great spirals of swifts, and a scattering of macaws, oropendolas, and other large species crossing the river. On two occasions we have seen jaguars along the riverbank on this portion of the trip. Several hours downriver, and just above the village of Boca Manu, the Alto Madre de Dios is joined on the left side by the Manu River, which is sluggish and brown, and silt-laden. Together the two form the Madre de Dios River, and from this point it is about two more hours to the Manu Wildlife Center Lodge.

After passing the entrance of the Manu River and the tiny village of Boca Manu we'll see a dramatic change in the water color from the relatively clear, mountain water of the fast-flowing Alto Madre de Dios River to the brown, silt-laden, and opaque water of the Manu, which now feeds heavily into the Madre de Dios River. Here, also, we leave the green, forested Andes behind, as well as several outlying ridges, all now receding into the distance. Gravel bars of the upper river are replaced by sweeping sandbars, the river flow is more leisurely, and the amount of wildlife on the river begins to increase with nesting colonies of terns, skimmers, and nighthawks. Along the numerous sandbars that we pass, we may spot Pied Lapwing, Collared Plover, Large-billed and Yellow-billed terns, Capped and Cooi herons, Horned Screamer, and perhaps even the rare Orinoco Goose. And, we should see macaws, especially Blue-and-yellow, Scarlet, and Red-and-green flying overhead. Sand-colored Nighthawks and Black Skimmers sleep on the sandbars, and Great Black-Hawks may be on patrol on foot around the sandbars as well.

This also is a good section of the river in which to watch for mammals. On past trips we have seen tiny Brocket Deer, White-tailed Deer, Brazilian Tapir, capybaras, ocelots, and even jaguars from the river, although none of these mammals are common. Increased boat traffic in recent years has considerably reduced opportunities to see

jaguars and larger mammals but they still occur in the forest. Our best chance of catching sight of a jaguar is to watch for them on logs along riverbanks, or standing near the water. Jaguars show little fear of, or interest in passing boats and usually sit or stand quietly, watching as we pass. They blend so well with the dark ochre and clay colors of the riverbank that they are remarkably difficult to notice, despite their size. Whether we see large mammals or not, the scenery, the dramatic changes in wildlife, the big open sky, and the sight of macaws and other birds flying high over the river are sure to make the trip pass quickly. We should reach the Manu Wildlife Center Lodge by early afternoon.

We will spend the next four days at the Manu Wildlife Center Lodge, which consists of private, screened bungalows with thatched roofs and wooden floors. Each bed has mosquito netting, and all rooms have private baths and hot-water showers. The spacious dining room and lounge buildings are located within 100 yards of the riverbank along the Madre de Dios River. The trails at Manu Wildlife Center are all clean and wide; some that are used for night walks are especially wide. More than 15 miles (25 km) of trails, including a huge grid are on flat terrain and several more long trails are on undulating higher terrain with modest rises and slopes.

NIGHT: Manu Wildlife Center Lodge

**September 29-October 2, Days 10-13: Manu Wildlife Center Lodge.** There are many important reasons for visiting the Manu Wildlife Center Lodge, but one of the most important is its strategic location relatively close to a large clay bank, formerly on a river bend but now completely cut off from the river. Here many parrots and macaws come to eat clay in the early morning hours. The clay seems to aid in emulsifying the toxic seeds and unripe fruit they eat during the dry season when ripe fruit is scarce and few or no macaws visit during the wettest months. Viewing from a blind, we are treated to the sights and sounds of dozens of macaws and hundreds of parrots, and parakeets at eye level on a riverbank. This is a magnificent spectacle, and it usually offers good photographic opportunities for those with long telephoto lenses. Bear in mind, however, that the blind is positioned about 100 yards or more away from the clay bank, an excellent distance for binoculars and telescopes, but too far away for all but those with large telephoto lenses.

In addition to a morning spent observing the macaws and parrots on the clay bank we'll have two mornings devoted to observation from canopy platforms where we have the possibility of seeing high canopy species such as cotingas, hawks, parrots, araçaries, and toucans, as well as mixed species flocks that are difficult to observe from ground level. And lastly, we'll use one of our mornings for a lovely catamaran boat trip on one of the oxbow lakes in the region.

The complexity of mixed species foraging flocks in the vicinity of the Manu Wildlife Center is remarkable. These flocks are of two basic types: canopy forest flocks and understory flocks. In general, the two types are composed of different species, and on occasion these may overlap and forage together for a time. When this happens, birds are present from near ground to treetop level, with up to 70 species chattering, singing, and foraging and all generally moving rapidly in one direction through the forest. It may seem as if birds are everywhere when this happens, but because they move so quickly it can be a challenge to see and identify them before they disappear. An experience like this is just one reason we are drawn back to these magnificent forests over and over.

Saying the word "antbird" usually brings excitement to the eyes of even the most hardened Neotropical enthusiasts. Without question, antbirds are one of the premier families of the New World tropics, evoking visions of dark shadowy forms flitting in the rainforest undergrowth, following army ants, walking rail-like through thickets, hopping up through vine-tangles, and singing from unseen locations. The Manu area boasts a high diversity of these interesting birds and we will spend as much time as possible tracking down some of them in an attempt to show them to you. We think that after a visit to Manu, you, too, will see why antbirds seem to embody the spirit of the Neotropical rainforest.

The best way to prepare for the richness of the avifauna of the Manu area is to request a bird list from a previous VENT tour and review it. The park and biosphere reserve boasts a list of more than 1,000 species, from the lowlands to the puna grasslands but many of these species are not likely to be seen on our tour. The lowlands are naturally the richest area, and over 500 species are now known from the Manu Wildlife Center. On previous trips we have encountered all of the following species: Harpy Eagle (only a few sightings), Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Razor-billed Curassow (not reliably seen in recent years), Blue-throated Piping-Guan, Spix's Guan, Pale-winged Trumpeter (most trips), Lemon-throated and Gilded barbets, Striolated and Chestnut-capped puffbirds, nearly a dozen kinds of woodcreepers, Curl-crested, Chestnut-eared and Ivory-billed araçaris White-throated and Channel-billed toucan, a half dozen species of foliage-gleaners, and a dozen or more kinds of antbirds.

Infrequently we have found obligate army ant-following antbirds, such as Black-spotted Bare-eye, White-throated, and Hairy-crested antbirds at ant swarms although finding these birds at ants is never a sure bet. Other birds here include Rusty-belted Tapaculo, Plum-throated and Spangled cotingas, White-crested Spadebill, Purplish and Violaceous jays, Paradise and Green-and-gold tanagers, and Russet-backed, Crested, Olive, and Casqued oropendolas.

The Manu region is not only rich in birds, it is also host to one of the most diverse primate faunas in the world. Up to ten species of monkeys occur around the Lodge, and a few more are occasionally observed in outlying areas. Due to the absence of hunting and frequent contact with humans walking the trails, some of the monkeys are now somewhat habituated to human presence and they do not automatically flee. Some, such as the little Saddle-backed Tamarins, now show relatively little fear of humans, which gives us the opportunity to observe them at length. It is possible to encounter six to eight species in the course of a few days. Truly, there is no other place in the New World tropics where these delightful mammals can be so easily observed in such abundance. Furthermore, several interesting birds often accompany the Squirrel and Capuchin monkeys, foraging on the insects they disturb. The Manu Wildlife Center Lodge also boasts a nearby mineral lick frequented by tapirs, peccaries, deer, and other animals. For those with an interest, a night visit can be arranged to this nearby site, where there is a fairly good chance that a tapir or group of peccaries can be observed although this often takes considerable patience

NIGHTS: Manu Wildlife Center Lodge

**October 3, Day 14: Downriver to Puerto Maldonado.** We will depart fairly early this morning for the downriver boat trip to Puerto Maldonado. For the first hour or two our journey passes through lovely lowland forest with little evidence of human presence and we should see macaws, parrots, parakeets, oropendolas and toucans overhead and likely many other birds. Occasionally we have even spotted a Razor-billed Curassow at the river's edge early in the morning. Eventually, however, we will begin passing small gold-mining dredges and these become ubiquitous on gravel bars further downriver near the village of Colorado where we leave our boats. It is about a three-hour trip to our take-out point at the little village of Puerto Colorado. From there we will travel an hour or so by car, cross the Río Inambari on a river taxi, and then continue by bus to Puerto Maldonado. If all goes as planned we should arrive in Puerto Maldonado sometime in mid- to late-afternoon.

NIGHT: Cabana Quinta, Puerto Maldonado

**October 4, Day 15: Morning birding near Pto. Maldonado. Mid-day flight from Puerto Maldonado via Cuzco to Lima.** This morning, we will do some final birding near Puerto Maldonado before going to the airport for our mid-day commercial flight to Cuzco and Lima. And we usually add a number of new species to our birdlist here. White-throated Jacamar, a very locally distributed species, occurs at one of the sites we'll visit, as does Brazilian Teal (a recent invader from the south), Southern Lapwing, White-tailed Kite, and a variety of seedeaters and grassquits and an interesting mix of edge species, some of which have invaded or profited with settlement and forest clearing. We also may visit an area of Moriche palms where sometimes we are successful in locating a pair of Point-tailed Palmcreepers or Sulphury Flycatchers. Both species are entirely restricted to groves of Moriche palms.

Our afternoon flight will stop in Cuzco where those participants continuing to Machu Picchu will de-plane and board a bus for the approximately two-hour overland trip to the Sacred Valley and the old Inca cities of Urubamba and Ollantaytambo.

Departing tour participants will remain on the aircraft and continue to Lima where, upon arrival. You can walk to the Costa del Sol Airport Hotel and check in to your day-use rooms to repack and prepare for international flights later tonight. **Your dinner tonight is NOT included in the tour price.**

Departing Participants, Dayroom: Costa del Sol Airport Hotel, Lima

**October 4-5, Days 15-16: departing flight home.** Most international flights to the USA typically depart after 10:30 p.m. (Day 15), arriving in the USA early the following morning. For participants not wishing the rigors of a long overnight flight you may wish to consider spending your final night at the Costa del Sol Airport and take an international flight the following morning. Arrangements can be made through the VENT office for overnight accommodations at an additional charge.

## **MACHU PICCHU BIRDS, RUINS AND HISTORY OCTOBER 4-10, 2017**

*On this optional extension we'll visit the impressive Inca site of Machu Picchu for a chance to wander among some of world's most remarkable stone ruins. We'll also witness a broad swath of the Andes from the colonial city of Cuzco to the high mountain pass at Abra Malaga. Among the many highlights are opportunities to bird some high plateau marshes, transit lengthy stretches of the Urubamba River Valley, experience a singular train ride to the famous archaeological site, and exploring the subtropical forests below the ruins. Beautiful Andean scenery, Inca history and culture, and marvelous birding are themes of this trip.*

*From Cuzco, we will likely travel across the high puna, stopping at a marsh or two along the highway with possibilities such as Puna Ibis, Yellow-billed Pintail, Speckled Teal, Andean (Slate-Colored) Coot, and Plumbeous Rail are possible. Around our hotel, or nearby it also may be possible to see the spectacular and endemic Bearded Mountaineer, as well as Green-tailed Trainbearers.*

*An early morning departure for a high mountain pass will take us past snow-capped mountains, enormous glacier-filled valleys, golden panoramas of puna grassland, and Inca ruins. At high elevations we may be able to find three Peruvian endemics: White-tufted Sunbeam, Creamy-breasted Spinetail, and Chestnut-breasted Mountain-Finch. Early the following day we will board a train for our Machu Picchu destination, arriving there in time for mid-morning birding. Located on a high ridge, this most famous and spectacular archaeological site is surrounded on three sides by sheer cliffs that fall away to the river far below. We will also bird the subtropical forests in the valley below the ruins, where we may see Torrent Duck, Andean Guan, Plum-crowned Parrot, and a wonderful array of hummingbirds, antshrikes, tyrannulets, warblers, and numerous tanagers. These are but a few of the many experiences possible on this special Machu Picchu trip.*

**October 4, Day 1: Flight to Cuzco from Puerto Maldonado, continue overland by bus to the city of Urubamba and Ollantaytambo.** Depending upon time schedules, it may be possible to return to Laguna Huacarpay (Cuzco) for a short afternoon visit but, afternoon air schedules generally do not leave enough time for this option. However, the route through the highlands from Cuzco to Urubamba passes a few small lagoons and marshes where brief birding stops may be possible. We should arrive in the old traditional town of Ollantaytambo is time for a little rest or relaxation and a chance to watch for the Bearded Mountaineer in the garden of the hotel. There should be some magnificent views of the snow-capped Cordillera Urubamba mountain range along the way, especially as we approach the city of Urubamba.

Our plan is to arrive at the hotel in time to rest and reorganize following the Manu trip. A few birds can be seen on or near the hotel grounds including Puna Ibis (groups in flight overhead), American Kestrel, Spot-winged Pigeon (also in flight overhead), Eared Dove (abundant), Green-tailed Trainbearer (typically only females in flower garden), Bearded Mountaineer (in the flower gardens), White-bellied Hummingbird, Chiguanco Thrush, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, Black-backed Grosbeak, and dozens of Rufous-collared Sparrows.

NIGHT: Hotel Pakaritampu, town of Ollantaytambo

**October 5: Day 2, Early-morning departure for the high passes of the Vilcanota Mountains.** We will depart fairly early today for the approximately thirty minute drive into the high mountains beyond Ollantaytambo. Our route takes a paved but winding side road that leads into the high mountains, eventually reaching about 14,000 feet. The road is spectacular for its scenery alone, with snow-capped mountains, glacier-filled valleys, golden panoramas of puna grassland, and many modern-day descendants of the Incas. In the drier scrub zone at about 9000-11,000 feet elevation, three Peruvian endemics are possible: White-tufted Sunbeam, Creamy-crested Spinetail, and Chestnut-breasted Mountain-Finch. Above about 11,000 feet, we will leave the scrub zone and enter puna grassland (here heavily grazed by herds of llama and alpaca). Along this route we should see llama and alpaca tended by Indians who still wear their colorful, traditional dress. Eventually we'll continue on up to the pass at about 14,250 feet. Here an optional walking excursion may be possible depending upon weather conditions, and our stamina and interest. It is a climb (that can be exhausting at this elevation) of another 250-350 feet in elevation to some low-stature *Polylepis* woodland (Rosaceae family) along a ridge-line where, just beyond on the opposite side, a few special Peruvian birds are possible including White-browed Tit-Spinetail, Ash-breasted Tit-Tyrant, Stripe-headed Antpitta, Puna Tapaculo, and maybe even a Royal Cinclodes. Most of these birds are typical of high *Polylepis* woodland that grows above normal treeline. Please note that this is not an easy walk and should not be attempted by those that are not in relatively fit condition. Your guide can determine if time, weather conditions and other factors make this excursion feasible.

Also, any of the following species are possible in the dry scrub zone and puna grassland region higher up to about 11,000 feet elevation (although it is extremely unlikely that you will see all of them in a single morning): Puna Snipe, Andean Ibis, Andean Goose (scarce), Andean Condor, Variable Hawk, Gray-breasted Seedsnipe (we need some luck to find it), Shining Sunbeam, Great Sapphirewing, Tyrian Metaltail, Giant Hummingbird, Olivaceous Thornbill, Cream-winged (formerly Bar-winged) Cinclodes, Streak-throated Canastero, Yellow-billed and Tufted tit-tyrants, Brown-backed and White-browed chat-tyrants, Spot-billed, Rufous-naped, Ochre-naped, Cinereous, and perhaps even Puna and White-fronted ground-tyrants (all quite seasonal here and usually most numerous during Austral winter months but most are difficult to identify without a telescope), Brown-bellied Swallow, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, Greenish and Bright-rumped yellow-finches, White-winged Diuca-Finch, Peruvian Sierra-Finch, Golden-billed Saltator, Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, and Black-backed Grosbeak.

All birding today will be along the roadside (except the *Polylepis*) and will not involve strenuous walking, although just moving even short distances at these elevations requires effort! As we walk this road, we should be afforded magnificent views of the mountains but please move slowly and drink plenty of liquids to help prevent altitude sickness

NIGHT: Hotel Pakaritampu, town of Ollantaytambo

**October 6, Day 3: Ollantaytambo to Machu Picchu.** Following an early breakfast, we will depart on foot for the short walk to the Ollantaytambo train station. Once aboard the train, it is two hours to Machu Picchu along a route that follows the bottom of the Urubamba River Valley. Torrent Ducks, White-capped Dippers, and tremendous views of Mt. Veronica are part of this fascinating trip. Upon arrival we will check into our hotel, (but not the actual rooms which will not be ready until we return later this afternoon), spend time birding the hotel grounds, and then take a bus up the famous Hiram Bingham road (which is not the original trail used by Hiram Bingham) to the Machu Picchu ruins, some 1,500 feet higher.

## *Peru Manu, Page 12*

For this part of the trip we request that you bring a small duffel (or back-pack) for the trip to Machu Picchu, as well as a small day-pack for carrying umbrella, water, camera, and personal items on your trip up to the ruins. There is very little space on the train for large luggage, and you will find it much easier to check in and out of the hotel and train station at Machu Picchu if you have only what you need for the trip. Your larger bag(s) containing items from the Manu trip will be sent by bus from Ollantaytambo back to the hotel in Cuzco and will be waiting for you when you return.

Little needs to be said of the incomparable beauty of this place, one of the most famous and most spectacular archaeological ruins in the world. Located on a fault line between two higher mountains, the old city is surrounded on three sides by sheer cliffs that fall away to the river far below. Across the river on all sides are sheer-walled mountains covered with shrubs and cloud forests. In the distance, even higher snow-capped mountain ridges can be seen. We may never know the true origins of this remarkable site, but whether ancient fortress, secret city, or elaborate agricultural station, we are humbled before such a magnificent panorama. After the train departs around 3:00 p.m., we will have the site almost to ourselves and enjoy the opportunity of seeing Machu Picchu in that special late-evening light.

We will also be able to look for a few birds around the ruins, notably the endemic Inca Wren. However, it is the subtropical forests far below, which we will see tomorrow, rather than the scrub vegetation around the perimeter of the ruins that are most interesting for birds. In forests and bushy areas in the vicinity of the ruins, we might see White-tipped Swift, White-winged Black-Tyrant, Tufted Tit-Tyrant, White-crested, Sierran, and Highland elaenias, Blue-and-white Swallow, Spectacled Redstart, Cinereous Conebill, Rusty and Black-throated flowerpiercers, Blue-capped Tanager, and Yellow-bellied and Black-and-white seedeaters. Andean Condors, however, are only occasionally seen near the ruins.

NIGHT: Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, Aguas Calientes

**October 7, Day 4: Full day in Machu Picchu area.** This morning we may return to the ruins to enjoy the beauty and explore some of the area we may have missed the previous day, then return to the hotel for lunch. This afternoon, we will be birding around the hotel and along the railroad tracks. On the hotel grounds there are hummingbird feeders, numerous wooded trails and lots of flowers (and especially orchids). Some of the following birds are possible: Torrent Duck, White-throated Quail-Dove, Plum-crowned Parrot (irregular in occurrence), Mitred Parakeet, Green Violetear, Sparkling Violetear, Green-and-white Hummingbird (endemic but difficult to distinguish from White-bellied Hummingbird), and Speckled hummingbirds, Bronzy Inca, Collared Inca, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Booted Racket-tail, Long-tailed Sylph, White-bellied Woodstar (irregular here), Andean and White-tipped swifts, Andean Motmot, Golden-headed Quetzal (present but uncommon), Montane Woodcreeper, Variable Antshrike, Masked Fruiteater (endemic but can be difficult to find), White-winged Black-Tyrant (sometimes close around hotel), Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Smoke-colored Pewee, Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet (common), Sclater's Tyrannulet (common), Streaked-necked Flycatcher, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Torrent Tyrannulet, Andean and White-eared solitaires (both heard much more than seen), Glossy-black and Great thrushes, Slate-throated and Spectacled redstarts, Dusky-green Oropendola, Capped Conebill, Rusty Flowerpiercer, Thick-billed and Orange-bellied euphonias, Golden-naped, Saffron-crowned, Beryl-spangled, Silvery, Bay-headed, and Black-capped tanagers, Blue-capped Tanager, Oleaginous Hemispingus, Silver-beaked Tanager, Russet-crowned Warbler, and Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch. There also is a possibility that we may see an Andean Cock-of-the-rock during our walk this morning.

NIGHT: Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, Aguas Calientes

**October 8, Day 5: Morning birding, afternoon train back to Cuzco.** This morning we will board the train for the approximately four-hour trip back to Cuzco. If attendance is high at the ruins, we may travel only part way by train and then be transferred to a bus for the remainder of the trip. This afternoon we will have some time to explore Cuzco on foot.

NIGHT: Libertador Palacio del Inca Hotel, Cuzco

**October 9, Day 6: Afternoon flight from Cuzco to Lima.** There should be some time available to shop or see the main plaza and other sites in Cuzco before departing for the airport and your mid-afternoon flight to Lima. Upon arrival you should proceed across the street to the Costa del Sol Airport Hotel for an afternoon at leisure. Depending upon arrival time part of the afternoon should be available for resting and repacking for international flights. **Your dinner on Day 6 is not included in the tour price.**

Departing Participants, Dayroom: Costa del Sol Airport Hotel, Lima

**October 9-10, Days 6-7: departing flight home.** Most international flights to the USA typically depart after 10:30 p.m. (Day 6), arriving in the USA early the following morning. For participants not wishing the rigors of a long overnight flight you may wish to consider spending your final night at the Costa del Sol Airport and take an international flight the following morning. Arrangements can be made through the VENT office for overnight accommodations at an additional charge.

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

**MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT:** All participants will be **required** to purchase a medical evacuation policy for this tour and will be asked to sign and return to the VENT office a waiver stating that this has been done. Such a policy should be available from any insurance company which provides trip cancellation coverage.

**TOUR SIZE:** Each tour will be limited to 14 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Steve Hilty & David Ascanio for the main tour; Doris Valencia for Machu Picchu

**Steve Hilty** is the senior author of *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*, and author of *Birds of Venezuela*, both by Princeton University Press, as well as the popular *Birds of Tropical America, A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*. He has also written a number of scientific papers on birds and plants, has described two species of birds new to science in Venezuela, and another, with a team of scientists, in Colombia. He also wrote the text and species accounts for the tanager family for the acclaimed *Handbook of Birds of the World*, published by Lynx Press in Barcelona. His most recent work, *Dirt, Sweat, and Diesel: A Family Farm in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, marks a departure from his previous works, in focusing on a Midwestern farm family. Steve holds a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Arizona and has worked at the Arid Lands Department at the University of Arizona, and as a broker with Merrill Lynch. He is currently a research associate in ornithology at the University of Kansas Biodiversity Institute. Since 1983 he has worked for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, guiding trips throughout North and South America, and co-leading trips to India, the Orient, and Australasian regions. With more than four decades of experience in South America and a wide range of natural history interests, he brings a unique breadth of expertise to his Neotropical tours. At night he often turns his binoculars towards the skies for stargazing. Steve lives in Kansas City with his wife, Beverly. They have two daughters.

**David Ascanio**, a Venezuelan birder and naturalist, has spent the last 32 years guiding birding tours throughout his native country, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, the Amazon River, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the Lesser Antilles, Cuba, the Orinoco River, Costa Rica, Chile, and Panama. He is especially interested in bird vocalizations, and has a private library containing sounds of more than 70% of all the birds of Venezuela. David combines superb birding skills with an astonishing command of bird vocalizations. He has published a book for children about the songs of the birds of Venezuela, and has coauthored the descriptions of two new species, the River Island Spinetail and the Delta Amacuro Softtail. David has also published various manuscripts about the birds of the *llanos* (plains), the Orinoco River island species, and the pan-tepui endemic species for which he has become an authority. He is currently writing the species accounts for a new *Field Guide to the Birds of Venezuela*. David is an excellent communicator, has a great sense of humor, and is tireless

in helping others find birds and wildlife. These traits have made him one of the most popular naturalists/guides in the Neotropics.

**Doris Valencia**, a naturalist born in Cuzco, Peru, began her study of the Manu wilderness at a young age. She has served as a volunteer park ranger in Manu National Park, and has been working as a naturalist tour guide for about twelve years. She is an avid student of the flora and fauna of Manu and has a special interest in birds. Doris is an excellent birder and leads birding groups throughout Peru including Paracas National Marine Reserve, Bajauha-Sonene National Park, Tambopata-Candamo National Reserve, Pampas del Heath, Machu Picchu Historical Sanctuary, and Manu Biosphere Reserve. Doris is also an avid student of Peruvian history and of the history of Machu Picchu. Her lectures on the history of Machu Picchu are superb.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the Manu Biosphere trip is **\$6495** per person in double occupancy from Lima, Peru which includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 15, internal flights (economy class) between Lima and Cuzco with a return flight from Puerto Maldonado to Lima, hotel accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, guide services provided by the tour leader(s) and all tips to hotel, lodge and transportation staff. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Lima and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs. If the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The fee for the Machu Picchu Extension is **\$3595** per person in double occupancy from Cuzco, Peru which includes all meals from lunch on Day 1 through lunch on Day 6, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, internal flights (economy class) from Puerto Maldonado to Cuzco with return to Lima, ground transportation during the tour, one round-trip bus transfer (to ruins), one entrance into Machu Picchu, guide services provided by the tour leader, and all tips to hotel, lodge and transportation staff. It does not include airfare from your home to Cusco with return from Lima, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based on group tariffs. If the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may be charged.

The single supplement for the Manu Biosphere trip is **\$895**; and for the Machu Picchu Extension it is **\$435**. 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.

**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.

**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.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSITS:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit is **\$500** per person per tour (example - \$500 for Manu Biosphere plus \$500 for the Machu Picchu extension). 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, Visa or American Express 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, American Express, 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:** 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.

Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where you, the customer, are not at fault and have not cancelled in violation of the terms and conditions of any of the contract for transportation or travel services, all sums paid to VENT for services not received by you will be promptly refunded by VENT to you unless you otherwise advise VENT in writing.

**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.**

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE:** 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* (800-243-3174 or [www.travelinsured.com](http://www.travelinsured.com)) prior to registration for details. Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than *Travel Insured International*, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

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

**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 be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be responsible for any air ticket penalties.*

**BAGGAGE:** Please limit the weight of your checked luggage you bring to Manu to ca. 40 pounds and please use a duffel type (no suitcases). LATAM (the airline used for the flights within Peru) has a maximum free luggage limit of 50 pounds (23 kg) and will accept one or two checked bags. Persons on the Machu Picchu extension should have a small spare duffel (or extra backpack) for use on the visit to the ruins while your main luggage is sent back to Cuzco.

The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

**CLIMATE:** Our tour is scheduled for the dry season, but we still may encounter rain in the lowlands. Expect the weather to be warm and humid. Normal daytime temperatures in the Amazonian lowlands average from 80 to 90 degrees (F), with nighttime lows down to about 70 degrees (F). However, at any time, but especially during the peak dry months of June, July, and August, cold fronts from the south (polar air masses) can bring a few days of rain and cold temperatures. During these cold fronts, daytime highs may be only in the mid-50's (F) to mid-60's (F), and temperatures may drop to the 40's (F) at night. Combined with high humidity, these temperatures can be very chilling. In the mountains, temperatures, especially early in the morning, can be chilly at any time, and may drop to the low 40's (F) during cold fronts.

The **Machu Picchu Extension** takes place between 6,600 and 14,000 feet elevation. Bear in mind that although mornings can be cool around Machu Picchu (ca. 7500 ft el), temperatures warm rapidly by mid-morning, and mid-day is usually quite pleasant and often sunny. At the InkaTerra (Machu Picchu Pueblo) Hotel below the Machu Picchu ruins (ca 6,600 ft el), mornings are generally fairly warm and pleasant. Visitors should be aware that weather conditions during the day trip to Abra Malaga (prior to going to Machu Picchu) can be extremely variable, and may change quickly. Typically mornings are quite chilly (40's F) but as we climb to almost 14,000 feet elevation weather conditions can range from warm and sunny with intense solar radiation to cold and windy. Rain, and occasionally even snow, is always possible so warm jackets, gloves and warm hats (see below) are recommended.

**CLOTHING:** Lightweight field clothing is the rule. Do not bring white or brightly-colored clothes, including hats or bright raingear, as it may frighten shy birds and animals. We suggest loose-fitting khaki clothing or other cotton clothing in dark green, dark blue, gray, or brown shades. Military camouflage clothing should not be worn as it conveys an inappropriate image to police and military personnel, whom we may encounter. Also, please avoid nylon or plastic jackets and/or rainwear of similar materials. "Noisy" clothing is annoying to others and may frighten birds and animals. Long pants and long-sleeved shirts are recommended, as insects can be a problem from time to time (especially tiny black flies on the river).

For the Cuzco area, **and for any cold periods that may occur at Manu or in the cloud forest**, the following items will be needed: a long, waterproof poncho or rain jacket (ponchos are better than rain jackets for rain protection on boats), very warm sweater or down jacket (or light jacket and down vest combination), long underwear (top and bottom), warm hat, and gloves [note that these cold fronts from the south occur with some frequency in July and August but infrequently after that].

Participants on the Machu Picchu Extension should have warm clothing, including caps and gloves for the early mornings in the high mountains, as temperatures can drop to freezing at dawn, and light snow can fall at any time of the year. Light-weight long underwear made of silk can be useful for sleeping at night.

A pair of thongs is useful for showering, and in the rooms and porch at the Hacienda Amazonia, and dining area at the Manu Wildlife Center where shoes are left at the door. Good raingear is essential (see above) but while on the river boats ponchos are usually provided if needed. Bring a broad-brimmed hat for sun protection and perhaps a cap for wearing inside the forest. Footwear should include boots or sturdy walking shoes. Some also

may find a pair of sneakers useful. You may bring tall rubber boots (Wellingtons) although they are not essential and they are hot, but they may be easier to put on and take off than regular boots, and they can be useful in cooler weather, on muddy trails (although trails are not muddy in the dry season), on sand bars along the river, and in tall, wet grass. They also provide excellent protection from chiggers. Also, long socks to tuck your pants into will be helpful. A swimming suit is optional but may be useful on one or two occasions. A pair of old tennis shoes, or footgear suitable for wading (not rubber boots) may be useful on our long boat trips although all our landing should be dry.

**CURRENCY:** Nuevo Sol (PEN). US dollars can be exchanged in Lima at the airport and at most hotels and at “casas de cambio” (exchange sites) in shopping malls and at a few stores. Money exchange outside of Lima and Cuzco is limited to the major tourist areas. It is not recommended to exchange money from street vendors. All major credit cards are accepted, but usage may be limited outside of Lima. Also, US dollars are accepted at almost all of the lodges that we visit and we recommend that you pay for miscellaneous items at the lodges with dollars. You may need Peruvian Soles for purchases around Machu Picchu.

**DOCUMENTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Peru is required. Visas are not required for entry by U.S. citizens. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions. A tourist card will be issued by the airline.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is always advisable to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medication 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.

You should bring a rugged flashlight with extra batteries, and two small lights such as an LED-light and a small head lamp (LED-types work best). There is no electricity at the two cloud forest lodges or the Manu lodge (but there are generators for charging batteries only) and no electric outlets. The Hacienda Amazonia has limited electric lights powered by solar panels and plug-in receptacles for recharging batteries. In most instances you will be dependent upon your flashlight or headlamp for checklist sessions in the evening, as well as for walking on trails before first light, so you will be quite dependent upon your flashlights. (Do not underestimate your dependence on a good flashlight on this trip.) Pack a one-quart/one-liter plastic water bottle, a day pack, plastic bags (large ones for waterproofing clothes and small ones for miscellaneous items), and any personal medications. There should be an opportunity to recharge video batteries at all lodges but it is recommended that you bring extra batteries for cameras.

Raingear is essential, either a long poncho (preferable) or a rain jacket. A small compact umbrella is also very handy and recommended. Be sure your gear is 100% waterproofed (some large plastic bags for waterproofing at least some of your clothing is recommended. Also useful is a compass and small pocket knife (but always packed in checked luggage).

**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. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with yellow fever (good for ten years) and tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

No vaccination is required for entering Peru, however the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a yellow fever vaccination for all travelers within the endemic zone in Peru (arriving from any country) for those who intend to visit any jungle areas of the country at elevation lower than 2,300 meters (7,546 feet). Yellow fever is carried and transmitted by primates (monkeys) and most of them are in the lowlands, NOT at high elevations.

Malaria has been confirmed in Peru including the chloroquine-resistant strain in rural areas. Malaria is confirmed around Puerto Maldonado and in adjacent gold-mining areas (which are rapidly spreading upriver) although it is not yet believed to be endemic to or have reached the Manu Wildlife Center, however, this could change. There are several options for malaria prophylaxis: Mefloquine (Lariam), Malarone, and Doxycycline. These medications are available by prescription only. Please consult your physician or local travel clinic for recommendations.

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).

**INSECT/SNAKE PROTECTION:** Leishmaniasis is a disease transmitted by a small fly that is mainly active at dusk or during the night. It is not a common insect, and only a few of the flies are disease carriers but it is found throughout the Manu lowlands. Proper clothing (long sleeves and long pants) and the use of insect repellent are your best protection. Although there are few biting insects in the forest, mosquitoes might be a problem sometimes in the forest and tiny black flies (no-see-ums) are common in open areas over the river and will bite, leaving tiny red dots. Wear loose-fitting long-pants and long-sleeved shirts, and bring a bottle of Cutter's lotion and a spray can of OFF. Chiggers also are found throughout the lower elevations areas (up to at least 3000 feet elevation), both in grass and in the forest on logs and lower vegetation.

Although poisonous snakes are seldom encountered in Amazonia, they are present. Depending on where we are it could take as much as 24 hours to reach the Anglo-American hospital in Lima (the only recommended hospital). In this regard, Snake-proof Gaiters (obtained from Cabelas at 1-800-237-4444) that come up to your knee and are put on over your pants may be worn if you would feel more comfortable using them. Please consider, however, that they add extra weight and are rather hot and cumbersome to wear. We regard them as an option for those who prefer the additional security they offer.

**MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:**

- Laundry: Limited laundry service is available at Manu Wildlife Center Lodge and as of 2013 they have both a gas-operated washer and dryer with one-day service usually possible.
- Departure Tax: USD \$31 is now included in the cost of the air ticket, at least by all USA carriers.
- Electric Current: 220 Volts (flat pin plug) and all lodges have some limited ability (usually just a few hours in the evening) to recharge batteries.

**SUGGESTED READING:** A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

***Field Guides***

**Most Recommended for this trip:**

Schulenberg, T. S., D. F. Stotz, D. F. Lane, J. P. O'Neill, and T. A. Parker III. *Birds of Peru*. Princeton University Press, 2007 (revised edition). Princeton NJ. This book is reasonably portable (a little heavy in the field) but it has every species we will encounter, is relatively current, has good illustrations and accurate maps, in short everything you would want.

**Optional Guide**

Walker, B. 2015. *Field Guide to the Birds of Machu Picchu and the Cuzco Region*. Published By Lynx Editions and Buteo Books. Illustrations and good text for all species in the Machu Picchu area as well as Cuzco. This is a new and completely revised version of the original 2001 book.

### **Natural History**

#### **Most recommended for this trip (Manu only):**

Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Tropical America: a watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2004. Very applicable to the Manu region with major portions of the research drawn from studies conducted in southeastern Peru and the Manu region. This paperback book is written in a popular, easy-to-read style and provides an excellent background into many aspects of the fascinating natural history of birds of the Amazonian region.

#### **Other Key Natural History Books (for Manu trip only):**

Forsyth, Adrian and Kenneth Miyata. *Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rain Forests of Central and South America*. Touchstone (Simon & Shuster), 1995.

Kritcher, John and Mark J. Plotkin. *A Neotropical Companion. An Introduction to animals, plants and ecosystems of the New World Tropics*. Princeton University Press, 1997 (2nd rev. ed.). Good overview of just about everything from plants and insects to birds and mammals in the Neotropics.

Terborgh, John. *Five New World Primates: A study in comparative ecology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. Fine overview of primate ecology in the Manu wilderness.

#### **Checklists and Bird Finding Guides:**

Valqui, Thomas. 2004. *Where to watch birds in Peru*. [www.granperu.com/birdwatchingbook](http://www.granperu.com/birdwatchingbook) (privately published in Lima). In English. Useful guide to many regional birding spots. May be difficult to obtain outside of Peru (Lima).

#### **Natural History Articles and Background Reading (for Manu only):**

Janson, Charles H. "Capuchin counterpoint." *Natural History*. 95(2) (1986): 44-53.

Munn, Charles A. "Birds that cry wolf." *Nature*. 319(1986): 143-145.

Robinson, Scott K. "Social security for birds." *Natural History* 95(1986): 38-47

Snow, David W. *The Web of Adaptation: Bird Studies in the American Tropics*. Cornell University Press, 1985 (reprint).

#### **History (mainly Machu Picchu):**

Bingham, Hiram. *The Lost City of the Incas*. Sterling Publications, 2002.

Hemming, John. *The Conquest of the Incas*. New York: Harvest Books, 1973.

Honigsbaum, M. 2004. *Valverde's Gold*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.

Wright, Ronald. *Cut Stones and Crossroads: A Journey in the Two Worlds of Peru*. Viking, 1986.

Wright, R. M. and A. V. Zegarra. 2004 (revised edition). *The Machu Picchu Guidebook*. Johnson Books, Boulder.

Meisch, Lynn. *A Traveler's Guide to El Dorado and the Inca Empire*. Viking, 1984.

Thomson, H. 2001. *The White Rock*. An Exploration of the Inca Heartland. Overlook Press, Woodstock & New York.

**Recordings:** For the current Cornell Lab Library of Sounds, see [www.birds.cornell.edu/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/) under audio guides.

English, Peter and Theodore A. Parker III. *Birds of Eastern Ecuador*. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 1992. <http://birds.cornell.edu/LNS/CommercialProductns/csamerica/eastecuador.htm>.

Parker III, Theodore A. *Voices of the Peruvian Rainforest*. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. <http://birds.cornell.edu/LNS/CommercialProductns/csamerica/perurain.htm>.

Schulenberg, T., C. Marantz, and P. English. *Voices of Amazonian Birds. Vols. 1 - 3*. CD. Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 2000. <http://birds.cornell.edu/LNS/CommercialProductns/international/amazonvol1.html>.

Schulenberg, T., *Voices of Andean Birds. Vols. 1 - 2*. CD. Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. <http://birds.cornell.edu/LNS/CommercialProductns/international/andeanvol1.html>.

**General Travel:**

Rachowiecki, R. *Lonely Planet guide to Peru*. Lonely Planet, (newest edition about 2009; generally updated every 3-4 years). This and several other travel guides, all provide much information on Lima, Cuzco and the Manu region as well as a brief background of Peruvian history and culture.

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

**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 November 29, 2016 and is 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.

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