

# **JUNGLE RIVERS: THE ORINOCO, ESSEQUIBO, AND SURINAME**

**OCTOBER 12 - 24, 2006**

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*The vast watery delta of the Orinoco River, spanning over two hundred miles at its widest point, is an overlooked wilderness even among veteran travelers. No roads penetrate the delta, there are few permanent settlements, and only a handful of naturalists and ornithologists have ever set foot within this immense, largely flooded region. Truly one of the great rivers of the world, the Orinoco drains approximately seventy percent of the land of Venezuela. The Orinoco carries a massive silt load to the Atlantic during the rainy season, but the strength of the Atlantic's equatorial counter current pushing against this outflow dramatically slows the river, causing much of the silt to be dropped at its mouth. The result today is one of the largest and most complex river delta systems in the world.*

*The Orinoco, which means "father of our land" in the Warao Indian language, is a wild region of mangrove swamps, seasonally flooded forests, river islands, and isolated marshy grasslands which are connected via a complex, interconnecting labyrinth of river channels and lagoons.*

*Given the undeveloped nature of this area, the present itinerary offers a unique opportunity to see and explore this region from the comfort of a large, well-appointed ship. Accounts of enormous colonies of Scarlet Ibises and glorious flocks of Blue-and-yellow Macaws in the delta have, from time to time, tantalized us, but the locations of these sites have usually been remote, far beyond the reach of roads or small boats. A mission site in the southern portion of the delta is the primary source for most examples of the dazzling but little-known Black-chested Tyrant. Now, for the first time, we will have the opportunity to explore this fascinating region. Who knows what we will find?*

*We've combined the delta with visits to two other fascinating river systems. They are the Essequibo River in Guyana, the Suriname River in Suriname, each the largest river in its respective country. From our ship-based locations in these rivers, we'll have unrivaled opportunities to explore habitats ranging from rainforest to white sandy soil savannas.*

**October 12, Day 1: Arrival in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.** Participants should plan to arrive in Trinidad sometime this afternoon or evening. You will be met at Piarco airport and transferred to your hotel for the night. Evening meal will be on your own.

NIGHT: Hilton Hotel, Trinidad

**October 13, Day 2: Day at leisure in Trinidad; optional afternoon boat trip to Caroni Swamp.** Today is at leisure for resting or relaxing following yesterday's long travel day. There will be an optional birding trip this afternoon before boarding the ship. We will assemble at 1:30 p.m. in the hotel lobby for the approximately thirty minute transfer to Caroni Swamp. At this time all luggage (except for what you take with you for the excursion to Caroni Swamp), will be transferred to the cruise ship.

Although somewhat reduced in size now, the Caroni Swamp still harbors one of the largest and most accessible colonies of Scarlet Ibises to be seen anywhere in the world. Our optional boat excursion into the swamp usually departs about 4 p.m., in time to reach a large roosting site of these ibises. We expect to have some time available for birding en route to the ibis roost. The sight of several thousand of these birds winging toward their roost and finally assembling on a mangrove island is not to be forgotten. No bird on earth possesses such a deep, penetrating red color as the coastal populations of the Scarlet Ibises, and the first sight of one, whether it is feeding in the mangroves or flying overhead, is breathtaking. We'll conclude the evening with some rum punches (or non-alcoholic drinks) before departing as dusk overtakes us. Some of the birds that we may see in the fields near Caroni and during the boat excursion include Black-crowned Night-Heron; Scarlet and White ibises; Osprey; Long-winged Harrier; Whimbrel; Least Sandpiper; Black-bellied (Gray) Plover; Ruddy Turnstone; Green-rumped Parrotlet; Ringed, Amazon, and Green kingfishers; Common Potoo; Straight-billed Woodcreeper; Pied Water Tyrant; Bicolored Conebill; Red-capped Cardinal; Saffron Finch; and Carib Grackle.

Following our Caroni Swamp excursion (which should conclude by 7:30 to 8 p.m.), we will transfer directly to Port-of-Spain to board the *Clipper Adventurer*.

NIGHT: On board *Clipper Adventurer*

**October 14, Day 3: Morning (or day) at sea.** Depending upon departure time and tides, all or most of our first day will be at sea, although we should weigh anchor by nightfall. We will begin by sailing eastward, then south along Trinidad's eastern shore. Rounding the southeastern tip of Trinidad, our route will then take us southeastward along the coast of the Orinoco River's vast, mangrove-covered delta, and finally up one of the major branching tributaries of the Orinoco. At this time of the year, with the rainy season ending, the waters of the delta will be running high, carrying a heavy load of brownish silt that spreads far out to sea and clouds waters as far away as Tobago. High water levels within the delta should facilitate navigation of the labyrinth of channels that spread out, fanlike, through this fascinating but little-explored region. If we reach a channel of the Orinoco late this evening, we should obtain our first distant views (the channel is still wide here) of some birds of this region, among them herons, egrets, parrots, perhaps a few Caracaras or other raptors.

NIGHT: On board *Clipper Adventurer*

**October 15-16, Days 4-5: Orinoco Delta.** The watery Orinoco Delta is unlike any other in Venezuela. One of the largest swamps in the world, the outer region is composed primarily of mangroves which are evergreen and permanently flooded. Red mangroves, with their conspicuous stilted appearance, are dominant in the high-salinity seaward regions, but inward, in more brackish conditions, black mangrove and finally white mangrove become prominent. Farther inland still, where the influence of the sea is muted and flooding is seasonal, palms become abundant, especially *Euterpe oleracea*—from which palm hearts are harvested—and *Manicaria saccifera*. Because of high water, most of our birding excursions in the delta will be via Zodiac (inflatable raft), with only one or two places available for short walks. We expect to encounter muddy conditions on walking excursions.

Seasoned travelers will notice that although many birds found in the delta are widespread, there are many others that are relatively local in distribution, and some that are hardly known outside of this little-explored region. Among the more widespread birds we should see are Cooi and Capped herons, Great and Snowy egrets, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, Wood Stork, Limpkin, and Horned Screamer. Raptors may include Hook-billed, Slender-billed, and Snail kites; Common Black-Hawk; Savanna, Black-collared, Roadside, and Gray hawks; Black Hawk-Eagle; Crane Hawk; and Red-throated Caracara. The Rufous Crab Hawk, a locally distributed species in coastal mangrove swamps from Venezuela's Paria region eastward to Brazil, may also occur here.

During earlier visits to the delta region, we have in some areas encountered immense flocks of parrots, especially Orange-winged and Festive parrots, which gather in large numbers at roosting sites. Seeing these birds—in pairs, trios, and small groups, streaming across evening skies—and hearing their cacophonous, almost

nonstop vocalizations is an unforgettable experience. Blue-and-yellow Macaws breed in more remote sections of the delta, and a few of these may be seen, as well as the much more numerous Chestnut-fronted and Red-bellied macaws, White-eyed Parakeet, and Blue-headed Parrot.

A sampling of other species of the delta region includes Horned Screamer; Black-bellied and White-faced whistling-ducks; Muscovy Duck; Capped Heron; Green Ibis; King Vulture; Great Black-Hawk; Black Caracara; Northern Crested-Caracara; Laughing Falcon; Azure Gallinule; Gray-necked Wood-Rail; Rufous-vented and/or Little chachalacas; Pale-vented and Ruddy pigeons; Eared Dove; Gray-fronted Dove; Red-bellied Macaw; Brown-throated Parakeet; Festive Parrot; Yellow-crowned and Orange-winged parrots; Little Cuckoo; Greater Ani; Hoatzin; Short-tailed and Band-rumped swift; Neotropical Palm-Swift; Rufous-breasted, Reddish, and Little hermits; Black-throated Mango; Tufted Coquette; Glittering-throated Emerald; Green-and-rufous Kingfisher; Rufous-tailed and Green-tailed jacamars; Amazonian White-tailed Trogon; Spotted and Russet-throated puffbirds; Black-spotted Piculet (rare); White-bellied Piculet; Spot-breasted, Lineated, Little, Chestnut, Cream-colored, and Crimson-crested woodpeckers; Black-necked Aracari; White-throated Toucan; Pale-breasted, Plain-crowned, Yellow-chinned, and Rusty-backed spinetails; Point-tailed Palmcreeper (local); Cinnamon-rumped Foliage-gleaner; Straight-billed, Striped, and Buff-throated woodcreepers; Great and Black-crested antshrikes; Guianan Streaked-Antwren; Jet, Black-chinned, and Silvered antbirds; Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet; Forest and Yellow-crowned elaenias; Pale-tipped Inezia; Yellow Tyrannulet; Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher; Yellow-olive, Euler's, Fuscous, Short-crested, Boat-billed, White-bearded, and Social flycatchers; White-throated Spadebill; Cattle Tyrant; Pied Water-Tyrant; Bright-rumped and Cinnamon attilas; Great and Lesser kiskadees; Tropical Kingbird; Cinereous and White-winged becards; Crimson-hooded Manakin; Rufous-browed Peppershrike; Gray-breasted Martin; White-winged Swallow; Black-capped Donacobius; Stripe-backed, Coraya, Buff-breasted, and House wrens; Pale-breasted, Thrush; Scrub and Golden-fronted greenlets; Tropical Parula; Yellow Warbler; Bicolored Conebill (local); Hooded, White-shouldered, Blue-gray, Palm, Silver-beaked, and Turquoise tanagers; Violaceous and Purple-throated euphonias; Blue Dacnis; Grayish and Buff-throated saltators; Blue-black Grosbeak; Red-capped Cardinal; Gray Seedeater; Velvet-fronted Grackle; Moriche and Yellow orioles; Crested and Green oropendolas; and Yellow-rumped Cacique.

Less common species include Lesser (Chestnut-bellied) Seed-Finch and Great-billed Seed-Finch, two species that have suffered heavily from illegal trapping by Guyanese in this area. We also will be searching for the rare and locally distributed Black-chested Tyrant, a lovely little flycatcher that is known mainly from the delta region and a few scattered localities on or near the Amazon in Brazil. Our previous cruise group also was treated to the unexpected sighting (by almost everyone) of an Orinoco Softtail, a species heretofore known only far to the west of the area we visited. The exact taxonomic placement of this population, so distant from the original population, is currently being studied.

NIGHTS: On board *Clipper Adventurer*

**October 17, Day 6: The Orinoco Delta to Guyana.** Following a last early morning of birding, we will depart for the Guyana coast and the Rio Essequibo. Depending upon our route, we may encounter a few coastal or pelagic species during the day. We are certainly likely to see Brown Pelican and Magnificent Frigatebird, as well as Laughing Gull and Royal Tern and perhaps Pomarine Jaeger.

NIGHT: On board *Clipper Adventurer*

**October 18-21, Days 7-10: The Essequibo River, Shanklands Resort, forest roads and trails; optional trip to Kaieteur Falls.** After clearing customs we will proceed up the Essequibo River. The Essequibo River slices Guyana almost in half and provides access to the vast rainforest of the interior of the country. We will travel some distance up the river before dropping anchor. We will be able to access small tributaries by Zodiac, visit one or more river islands, and visit the rainforest on trails. More than 200 species of birds have been seen on the Shanklands property, more than enough to keep us busy. Among them are a number of large primary forest species that typically are found only in undisturbed areas free of hunting and other human interference. Birds here (rivers and forests) include Great, Little, and Variegated tinamous; Greater Yellow-headed Vulture; Black

Curassow; Gray-winged Trumpeter (scarce); Large-billed Tern; Spotted Sandpiper; Red-bellied Macaw; Black-headed, Caica, Blue-headed, Dusky, and Orange-winged parrots; Gray-breasted Sabrewing; White-necked Jacobin; Black-throated Mango; Fiery-tailed Aowlbill; Crimson Topaz; Black-eared Fairy; Amazonian White-tailed, Black-throated, and Amazonian Violaceous trogons; Green-tailed and Paradise jacamars; Pied Puffbird; Black Nunbird; Black-spotted Barbet; Black-necked Aracari; Guianan Toucanet; White-throated Toucan; Chestnut, Waved, Cream-colored, Golden-collared, Yellow-throated, Yellow-tufted, and Crimson-crested woodpeckers; Cinereous and Dusky-throated antshrikes; Pygmy, Brown-bellied, and White-flanked antwrens; Todd's Antwren; Gray, Dusky, Warbling, Spot-winged, and Ferruginous-backed antbirds; Painted Tody-Flycatcher; Grayish Mourner; Short-crested and Brown-crested flycatchers; Rusty-margined, Yellow-throated, Piratic, and Variegated flycatchers; Screaming Piha; White-winged Becard; Black-tailed Tityra; Pompadour and Spangled cotingas; Purple-throated Fruitcrow; White-bearded, Golden-headed, and White-crowned manakins; Tiny Tyrant-Manakin; Gray-breasted Martin; White-winged and Southern Rough-winged swallows; Coraya Wren; Long-billed Gnatwren; Pale-breasted Thrush; Tropical Mockingbird; Yellow and Blackpoll warblers; Silver-beaked, Palm, Turquoise, Opal-rumped, and Bay-headed tanagers; Blue Dacnis; Black-faced, Red-legged, and Purple honeycreepers; Fulvous Shrike-Tanager; Violaceous Euphonia; Buff-throated Saltator; Slate-colored and Yellow-green grosbeaks; Chestnut-bellied Seedeater; Giant Cowbird; Moriche Oriole; Yellow-rumped Cacique; and Crested and Green oropendolas.

There will be an optional day visit, by air, to Kaieteur National Park. The cost of this trip is not included in the cost of the tour. The operation of this trip is dependant on weather conditions and the price is based on current fuel cost at the time of operation. Passengers will be notified of the tour's cost and may register for the trip once aboard the ship. Kaieteur Falls plunges a heart-stopping 700 feet into a deep gorge and is without question one of the world's most lovely waterfalls. Compared to other large waterfalls worldwide, the falls, and Kaieteur National Park itself, are remarkably pristine and little-visited. No roads link the region to the outside world, and there are no overnight facilities. Perhaps this is part of the lure of this magnificent region. At about 1320 feet (400 meters), this is the only region on the trip where there is enough elevation to encounter species typically associated with higher elevations—although during a day visit there will be only limited time for birding. The delightful but shy Flutist Wren is found here, as is Red-and-green Macaw, Blue-cheeked Parrot, White-chinned Swift (notably local elsewhere), White-tipped Swift, Crimson Topaz, Black-eared Fairy, Swallow-winged Puffbird, Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, and many others.

We will depart on the afternoon of Day 10, sailing back to the coast and eastward toward Suriname.

NIGHTS: On board *Clipper Adventurer*

**October 22-23, Days 11-12: The Suriname River, coastal swamp forests, interior white sandy soil savannas, and Brownsberg Nature Park forest.** We should reach the Suriname River this morning, with several exciting options for our time here. First are the swampy forests and old canals immediately east of the colorful, if quaint, old capital city of Paramaribo. Here we will disembark and be met by one or more buses for our drive eastward along the coastal highway which leads to French Guiana. Of course, we won't go anywhere near that far. A short distance away, some fine sandy tracks and trails lead away from the highway toward old plantations, or parallel vegetation-choked canals originally built to drain this low-lying region so that citrus orchards, once an important business here, could be cultivated. In this region we should see many of the following species: Slender-billed Kite; Black-collared Hawk; Laughing Falcon; Brown-throated Parakeet; Striped Cuckoo; Green-throated and Black-throated mangos; Glittering-throated Emerald; Spotted Puffbird; Arrowhead Piculet; Spot-breasted and Blood-colored woodpeckers (local); Straight-billed Woodcreeper; Yellow-chinned Spinetail; Black-crested Antshrike; Blackish and Silvered antbirds; Yellow-crowned Elaenia; Spotted Tody-Flycatcher; Cinnamon Attila; White-headed Marsh-Tyrant; Pale-tipped Inezia (Tyrannulet); Crimson-hooded Manakin (local); Black-capped Donacobius; Buff-breasted Wren; Ashy-headed Greenlet; and Turquoise, Hooded, Blue-gray, Silver-beaked, and White-lined tanagers. We will be making a special effort to find the Rufous Crab-Hawk, which occurs only in mangroves. We will return to the ship for lunch with possibilities for late afternoon birding elsewhere, or sightseeing in Paramaribo.

On one or both mornings, we also will have trips to the white-sandy-soil savannas of the interior of Suriname, as well as trips farther inland to the Brownsberg Plateau and Brownsberg Nature Reserve. The diversity of birds in sandy soil regions is typically lower than in floodplain and upland areas, and the soils correspondingly poorer; however, a number of species occur primarily in savannas and forests that grow in these nutrient-poor sandy soils. One morning we'll start birding in a savanna region, and, because savanna species sing for only a short period of time at dawn, we'll plan to go early, when they are most active. Savanna species here include Red-bellied Macaw; Brown-throated Parakeet; Pale-breasted Spinetail; Southern White-fringed Antwren; Pale-bellied Mourner (scarce and local); Plain-crested, Yellow-bellied, and Rufous-crested elaenias; Red-shouldered and Black-faced tanagers; Grassland Sparrow; and Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch. Three species—the Sulphury Flycatcher, Moriche Oriole, and Point-tailed Palmcreeper—also occur in the savanna, usually in the vicinity of Moriche Palms, and we will be searching for these as well. Other species of the savanna and white-sandy-soil forests surrounding the savannas and lagoons include Savanna Hawk; Crested Bobwhite; Collared Plover; Greater Ani; Fork-tailed (Neotropical) Palm-Swift; Eastern Long-tailed Hermit; Green-tailed Goldenthrout; Pale-breasted Spinetail; Pompadour Cotinga; Fork-tailed Flycatcher; Swainson's and Brown-crested flycatchers; Black Manakin; Saffron-crested Tyrant-Manakin (scarce); and Red-shouldered and Burnished-buff tanagers.

Along roads through sandy soil forests, and in the taller, richer interior forests of Brownsberg Plateau itself, diversity increases markedly, with many more bird species possible. It is worth mentioning that the Tropical Humid Forest that occurs on the Brownsberg Plateau (elevation of 490 meters) is among the tallest and most stately to be seen anywhere in lowland tropical America. While some canopy and emergent level birds can be difficult to see here, the Brownsberg Nature Reserve has excellent roads and trails, and some nice clearings and overlooks which give visitors an opportunity to see many of these canopy level birds. The bird list for the Brownsberg area is large, befitting any lowland rainforest region. Among the large number of possibilities here are many species seen on previous days, as well as any of the following: Marail Guan; Barred and Lined forest-falcons; Golden-winged Parakeet; Black-headed, Caica, Mealy, and Red-fan parrots; Amazonian White-tailed Trogon; Paradise and Bronzy jacamars; Black Nunbird; Swallow-winged Puffbird; Green Aracari; White-throated and Channel-billed toucans; Waved and Yellow-tufted woodpeckers; Plain-crowned Spinetail; Barred, Mouse-colored, and Eastern Slaty antshrikes; Ferruginous-backed, Black-throated, and Black-headed antbirds; Helmeted Pygmy-tyrant; Screaming Piha; Black-tailed Tityra; Pompadour Cotinga; White-bearded, Golden-headed, and White-throated manakins; Musician Wren; White-breasted Wood-Wren; Cayenne Jay; Buff-cheeked and Tawny-crowned greenlets; White-necked Thrush; Purple and Red-legged honeycreepers; Golden-sided and Violaceous euphonias; and Flame-crested and Turquoise tanagers.

A few of the less common species that occur here (all of them notably local and difficult to find) include the Black-throated Antshrike; White-throated Pewee; White Bellbird; Capuchinbird; Guianan Red-Cotinga; Sharpbill; Blue-backed Tanager; Red-billed Pied-Tanager; and Red-and-black Grosbeak. Any group would be very lucky to see even one or two of these species on a day visit. Most groups that visited the Brownsberg Plateau on our previous cruise saw Gray-winged Trumpeters, a prize species that suffers from hunting in many areas. Black Curassow also is possible on the plateau.

NIGHTS: On board *Clipper Adventurer*

**October 24, Day 13. Departure for home.** This morning we will disembark the *Clipper Adventurer* in Paramaribo and transfer to the airport for flights home. Please be advised that very few flight options exist for transport out of Paramaribo. *Bwai West Indies Airways* offers an early flight this morning that connects through Port-of-Spain and continues on to Miami.

**EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS:** Should you wish to make arrangements to extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least **two months** prior to your departure date. These arrangements may range from an extra night at the initial hotel of the tour to a week or more extension including accommodations, sightseeing, and transportation. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 90 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** David Ascanio, Mike Braun, Victor Emanuel, Peter English, Andrew Farnsworth, Paul Greenfield, Steve Hilty, Robert Ridgley, Andrew Whittaker, Kevin Zimmer.

**David Ascanio**, a young Venezuelan birder and naturalist, has spent the last 20 years guiding birding tours throughout his native country, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, northern Peru, and western Ecuador. He is especially interested in bird vocalizations, and has a private library containing sounds of more than 70% of all the birds of Venezuela, including some which are the only recordings known to science. David speaks excellent English and combines superb birding skills with an astonishing command of bird vocalizations. He has published several manuscripts about the birds of the llanos (plains) and the tepui endemics for which he has become an authority. He 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 the most popular naturalist/guide in his country.

**Mike Braun** grew up in Houston enthralled by the natural wonders of the Texas Gulf Coast and Hill Country. He began birding in high school, and roamed Texas and Mexico in the 1970s with family and friends of the birding community. His love of nature led him to study science as an undergraduate at Cornell University, and to pursue a doctorate at Louisiana State University exploring the evolutionary genetics of birds. After postdoctoral studies at the National Cancer Institute and a year on the faculty of the University of Cincinnati, Mike moved to the Smithsonian Institution in 1988 where he founded the Laboratory of Molecular Systematics. His research work uses molecular genetic data to explore the evolutionary relationships and diversification of birds and other organisms. One major current project is "Early Bird," a consortium effort with five other labs to reconstruct the family tree of all living bird groups. He also is involved in a long-term inventory of the avifauna of Guyana. Mike has led occasional bird tours to North and South America since his days in graduate school, and loves to share his knowledge of nature and science with others. He lives near Annapolis, Maryland with his wife Kirsten and their two daughters.

**Victor Emanuel** started birding in Texas 57 years ago at the age of eight. His travels have taken him to all the continents, with his areas of concentration being Texas, Arizona, Mexico, Panama, and Peru. He is the founder and compiler for 40 years of the record-breaking Freeport Christmas Bird Count, and served a term as president of the Texas Ornithological Society. Birds and natural history have been a major focus throughout his life. He derives great pleasure from seeing and hearing birds, and sharing with others these avian sights and sounds, both the common ones and the more unusual ones. He initiated the first birding camps for young people, and considers that one of his greatest achievements. Victor holds a B.A. in zoology and botany from the University of Texas and an M.A. in government from Harvard. In 1993, he was the recipient of the Roger Tory Peterson Excellence in Birding Award, given by the Houston Audubon Society in recognition of a lifetime of dedication to careful observation, education, and addition to the body of avian knowledge. In 2004, he received the Roger Tory Peterson Award from the American Birding Association, and the Arthur A. Allen Award from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Victor is a member of the board of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

**Peter English** became interested in birds while in the fourth grade. He graduated from Williams College in 1988 and received his Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1998. While still an undergraduate, Peter got his first experience with South American birds by spending a summer in Peru's Manu National Park. After graduating, Peter spent two years working with conservation organizations in Central and South America as a Watson Fellow. While in Ecuador, he worked with Bob Ridgely to help preserve the habitat of the El Oro Parakeet and discovered the first nests of the Zigzag Heron. Soon after, he produced the *Birds of Eastern Ecuador* cassette with the late Ted Parker, and later was co-author of *Voices of Amazonian Birds*, a series of three audio CDs, all with the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Peter has spent years living and working in Ecuador, and received a Fulbright Scholarship to support his dissertation research on mixed-species understory flocks in Amazonian Ecuador. Most recently he was a driving force behind the construction of the Napo Wildlife Center, a community-based ecotourism project in Eastern Ecuador. Since 1987, Peter has led tours for VENT in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the West Indies, Panama, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, and throughout the United States.

**Andrew Farnsworth** developed a keen interest in birds at a young age, and by age five he was birding around his home in Rye, New York. Since that time he has traveled extensively in Europe and the Americas, eventually meeting Victor Emanuel in 1986 at the first Camp Chiricahua in southeastern Arizona. He received his B.S. in natural resources from Cornell University in 1995 and his M.S. in zoology at Clemson University in 2001, using surveillance radar and acoustic sensors to study nocturnal bird migration for his thesis research. At present, Andrew lives in Ithaca, New York where he recently started a Ph.D program at Cornell University in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology; his main research interest continues to be bird migration, specifically the function of nocturnal calling in migrating birds. Andrew has co-lead several VENT tours in North and South America. Although birds are his true passion, Andrew is also a performing musician and has released three CDs to date with his band, Mectapus.

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

**Steve Hilty** is the senior author of *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*, and the recently published *Birds of Venezuela*, both by Princeton University Press. Other credits include *Birds of Tropical America, A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*, which has just been republished by the University of Texas Press. He has also written a number of scientific papers on birds and plants, and is presently preparing the text and species accounts for the tanagers for a forthcoming volume of the acclaimed *Handbook of Birds of the World*, published by Lynx Press in Barcelona. 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, as a consultant to The Nature Conservancy, and as a stockbroker. He is currently a research associate at the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History. Since 1975, he has led tours throughout North and South America, and co-lead trips to India, the Orient, and Australasian regions. With three 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 college age daughters.

**Robert Ridgely** has made an enormous contribution to Neotropical ornithology. He is the author, with John Gwynne, of *A Guide to the Birds of Panama*, still one of the finest field guides ever published. During the last three decades he has traveled to virtually every part of South America, and has become recognized as one of the top experts on South American birds. In the early 1980s, he and his friend, Guy Tudor, began the monumental task of producing a series of volumes covering all the birds of South America. The first volume, *The Birds of South America: The Oscine Passerines*, was published in 1989. It contains a magnificent set of plates by Tudor as well as Ridgely's concise, readable, and informative text. Only two veteran South American field men who had studied so many of these birds in life could have produced such a book. The second volume, *The Suboscine Passerines*, was published in 1994. Bob continued his publishing blitz with the appearance in 2001 of the two-volume *The Birds of Ecuador*, with Paul Greenfield. In late 2001, Robert made the decision to leave his "home" of 20 years, the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, to join the staff of the National Audubon Society. In late 2003, the lure of New Hampshire became too much, and Bob and his wife Peg (together with the lovely "Lola," their Chestnut-fronted Macaw) made the move to their beloved house in the North Woods. Bob also shifted jobs, and now is the American Bird Conservancy's Vice President for Endangered Bird Conservation. Peg continues with her natural history-based sculpture.

**Andrew Whittaker** grew up in England where he started birding at the early age of seven, thanks to his father. Andy's great passion for tropical rainforests began in Borneo, which led him to move to the Amazonian

rainforests of Brazil where he has spent the last 19 years. Working in the rainforest for the World Wildlife Federation and Smithsonian Institution has made Andy an authority on Amazonian birds and the region's natural history. He was a consultant for the prestigious *Life of Birds* series by David Attenborough, and has authored many technical publications on Neotropical birds. Andy speaks fluent Portuguese and is an experienced tour leader and excellent tour organizer, having led tours throughout South and Central America and the Antarctic for the past 17 years. His enthusiasm for showing and sharing with others his fascination for Neotropical birds and animals is contagious. Andy's special interest is Neotropical bird vocalizations; his knowledge of their voices has enabled him to make several exciting discoveries and add 16 species to the Brazilian list. Andy lives in Manaus with his wife Nadime, their son Steven, and daughters, Luana and Suzana.

**Kevin Zimmer** has authored three books and numerous papers dealing with field identification and bird-finding in North America. His book, *Birding in the American West: A Handbook*, deals with finding and identifying birds in the western United States. Living in Alaska contributed to his affection for the Far North, where he has anchored VENT's tour program since 1986. For the past 16 years he has concentrated his attention on the Neotropics, particularly on Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela. He has directed VENT's Brazil program since 1991. Kevin has a PhD in biology (research emphasis in Avian Evolutionary Ecology) from New Mexico State University, and is currently a research associate of Cornell's Library of Natural Sounds and the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. He has authored numerous technical papers on the taxonomy, distribution, and behavior of Neotropical birds, particularly those of the Amazon basin. He recently completed (with co-author Mort Isler) the major chapter on the *Thamnophilidae* (antbirds) for the prestigious *Handbook of Birds of the World* series. He and Andrew Whittaker are currently at work on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil, to be published by Princeton University Press. Kevin lives in Atascadero, California with his wife Susan. Their daughter Marina is in graduate school at Dominican University in San Rafael, California.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** Cabin prices quoted are per person based on double occupancy. All staterooms are outside cabins with two lower beds and private shower and toilet. Cabins will be reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis. Those single travelers who wish to share their cabin room will be guaranteed the double occupancy fare, whether or not a cabin-mate is available.

Category 1	(Located A-Deck)	<b>\$ 6,495</b>
Category 2	(Located on A-Deck)	<b>\$ 6,745</b>
Category 3	(Located on Main Deck)	<b>\$ 6,995</b>
Category 4	(Located on Main Deck)	<b>\$ 7,245</b>
Category 5	(Located on Promenade Deck)	<b>\$ 7,495</b>
Deluxe	(Located on Promenade and Boat Decks)	<b>\$ 7,995</b>
Suites	(Located on Boat Deck)	<b>\$ 8,495</b>
Owner's Suite	(Located on the Boat Deck)	<b>\$ 8,995</b>
Single Occupancy (Based on Categories 1-4) Add		<b>\$ 750</b>

**Price includes** one precruise night in Trinidad, eleven nights aboard the *Clipper Adventurer*, in outside staterooms with lower beds, individual temperature controls, and private bathroom facilities; all meals during the cruise, beginning with dinner on October 13, and ending with breakfast on October 24, served at single leisurely seatings and prepared to order by chefs trained at some of the most prestigious culinary institutes in America; all shoreside exploration and Zodiac excursions, as per the itinerary; all onboard gratuities; all port charges; all transfers between airports, hotels, and ship; services of VENT leaders; experienced expedition leader, services of Clipper's hospitality staff, including cruise director and hotel manager on board; Captain's welcome aboard and farewell receptions and dinners; physician on board throughout the voyage.

**Not included** in the cruise price is air transportation from the passenger's home to Trinidad and return from Suriname; meals in Trinidad; excess baggage charges; international and domestic departure taxes; passport or visa fees (if applicable); beverages, wines, liquors or refreshments additional to meals provided; personal and

baggage insurance; accommodations, meals, and transfers prior to joining/after leaving the group; and all items of a personal nature.

**Because of the agility required for cruises on board an expeditionary vessel, travelers with disabilities, heart and/or respiratory problems, or other significant physical limitations or conditions are advised not to participate in expeditionary cruises. Please be advised that medical conditions that are discovered at any time during or prior to boarding and which, in the sole and reviewable opinion of the Captain, may jeopardize the health or safety of the Passenger or any other individual, will be grounds to deny the Passenger permission to board the ship at the point of embarkation, and/or to require the Passenger to leave the ship and terminate his or her continued participation in the cruise. By forwarding the deposit for this cruise, the Passenger certifies that he or she is in good physical health and capable of performing normal activities on this expedition.**

**REGISTRATION:** To register for this cruise, complete the application form and return it with a deposit of **\$1000** per person. If registering by phone, the deposit must be received within 10 days or the space will be released. An interim deposit of **\$2000** per person is due by January 1, 2006. Final payment is due no later than June 1, 2006. Checks should be made payable to Victor Emanuel Nature Tours.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** All cancellations, for any reason, must be received in writing. The initial \$1,000 deposit is nonrefundable unless your space can be filled from our waiting list. In that case, if cancellation is received prior to January 1, 2006, your deposit will be returned less a \$200 per person service fee. Cancellations received between January 1, 2006 and June 1, 2006 are subject to a fifteen percent (15%) of total trip cost cancellation fee per tour participant. Cancellations received after June 1, 2006 will result in full forfeiture of the entire cost of the trip. No refunds will be made in the event of “no shows” or cancellations made on the day of sailing. **We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance and/or travel insurance to protect yourself.**

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

**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:** Please take note that Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. We will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements for you.

**CLIMATE:** Warm and humid conditions will dominate during your adventure. Though exact temperatures and weather conditions cannot be forecast, average Fahrenheit temperatures may range through the 80s to near 90 during the day, and cool slightly into the mid or upper 70s in the evenings and overnight.

**Average Fahrenheit temperatures during your trip are:**

	<b>High/Low</b>
Port of Spain, Trinidad	87/74
Orinoco River, Venezuela	89/78
Essequibo River, Guyana	88/78
Suriname River, Suriname	90/75

Current weather forecasts for many cities worldwide can be found at [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and [www.weatherbase.com](http://www.weatherbase.com).

**WHAT TO WEAR/WHAT TO PACK:** To better prepare for your trip we strongly recommend that you check local weather forecasts for your destinations shortly before your departure. The following additional clothing suggestions will assist you in preparing for your trip. You may, of course, want to modify the list to suit your individual thermostat, needs, and tastes.

*General Packing:*

- Wash-and-wear, light, breathable tropical-weight clothing—for women, this includes slacks, shorts, blouses, knit tops, etc. For men, slacks, shorts, and cotton shirts are suggested (natural fibers recommended).
- Sun protection—wide-brimmed hat with a chin strap, sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher), sunglasses, and lip protection. If you are sun-sensitive, bring long-sleeved, long-legged, and lightweight clothing.
- One pair of comfortable hiking shoes or boots.
- One pair of rubber boots are **strongly recommended**.
- One pair of deck-type, rubber-soled shoes.
- Beach sandals, Tevas, or “reef walkers” to protect feet during wet landings (or a pair of old tennis shoes that you don’t mind getting wet and muddy).
- Lightweight, water-resistant jacket, or windbreaker.
- Swimsuit(s). Please note: Beach towels are available on board.
- Some type of hat.

*Other Items:*

- Backpack to carry extra clothing or camera gear during all excursions and wet landings. This item is extremely useful for transferring ashore via the ship’s landing craft. It allows you to keep your arms and hands free while embarking and disembarking.
- Ziploc bags to keep your things dry. Use them inside your backpack to protect anything you do not want to get wet. You should bring several bags in a variety of sizes.
- Insect repellent with “DEET”—Note: If you have not used insect repellent that contains “DEET” before, you should contact your physician prior to use.
- Good pair of binoculars (absolutely essential).
- Notebook and pen.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.
- Electrical converter, with adapter plug set. The electric current aboard ship is 220 volts. For your convenience, the ship has special outlets for 110-volt razors and provides hair dryers. If you plan to bring other appliances, you will need dual-voltage appliances or a lightweight, all-purpose transformer to convert the current for 110-volt use. You will also need a set of universal adapter plugs that include the three and two-prong variety.
- Address book.
- Travel alarm clock.
- Pocket calculator for currency conversion.

*Pack the following in your carry-on bag:*

- Change of clothing (in case of luggage delay).
- Any medication you might need during the trip. If you are taking prescription drugs, take along a prescription signed by your doctor in case you need an emergency refill. A personal medical kit with medication for possible upset stomach; aspirin and allergy medicine may also be useful.
- Extra pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses.
- Your favorite toiletries.

- Camera, flash, extra batteries, and plenty of film—**do not pack it in your checked luggage.**

**DOCUMENTS:**

**Requirements for U.S. citizens on this trip:**

- **Valid passport (must be valid for at least six months beyond trip return date).**
- **Visa for Suriname (Victor Emanuel Nature Tours will supply participants with materials and information for obtaining these visas).**
- **Proof of yellow fever vaccination.**

The above-listed documentation requirements are for U.S. citizens only. Citizens of other countries should contact local consular offices for current documentation requirements for their entire itinerary.

**CURRENCY:** Although your adventure includes many items of necessary expense, including all meals on board the ship, you will need money for personal spending: gifts, tips, laundry, beverages, telephone calls, and any other personal items. The actual amount will, of course, vary depending upon your personal spending habits. For safety and convenience, you may choose to carry your money in traveler's checks (American Express, Bank of America, First National City Bank, Cooks). It is also a good idea to take approximately \$300 in U.S. \$1, \$5, \$10 and \$20 denominations for miscellaneous use when only a small amount of currency is needed. ***Please Note: ATM machines will NOT be available during your journey. Do not plan to use your ATM card to withdraw cash while on the ship.***

**HEALTH PRECAUTIONS:** Please remember that the *Clipper Adventurer* is an expedition ship, whose itineraries require a generous amount of adventurous spirit and a fair amount of fitness and mobility to be fully enjoyed.

As on any seagoing vessel, some marked motion may be anticipated in certain areas, dependent upon the weather, season, etc. It is recommended that passengers bring anti-motion sickness medication just in case, even if you have never experienced motion sickness in the past. Please consult your physician should you have any questions as to what would be most appropriate for you.

A certified physician travels aboard the *Clipper Adventurer* at all times, and an onboard treatment room is available. It is very important that you list all medications you currently take, as well as providing an honest assessment of your physical condition on the "Passenger Information Form" that will be provided to you approximately 6 months prior to trip date. Bear in mind that the Passenger Information Form **MUST** be returned to VENT in a timely manner so that we are able to forward it onto Clipper's Medical staff. In the event of an emergency, he or she will then be able to act appropriately. Any applicable fees for services rendered on board will be debited to your account and presented for settlement at the end of the cruise.

**Note:** Health information provided is for U.S. citizens only. For individual concerns, VENT recommends that you contact your physician for advice on travel immunizations.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded "Travelers' Health Hotline"—888-232-3228—and maintains a "Travel Information Page" which can be accessed at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

- A Yellow Fever vaccination is **REQUIRED** for travelers on this adventure. **Be sure to bring proof of your vaccination with you, as it is required to embark the ship.**
- Malaria prevention is strongly recommended for your cruise.

- VENT strongly recommends that you consult with your personal physician concerning health risks involved in your international travel.

**Malaria Prevention:** No vaccine against malaria is available, but travelers can protect themselves by avoiding mosquito bites and by taking drugs to prevent malaria. There are four types of malaria, and several types of malaria prevention drugs are available. Therefore, each traveler is urged to seek the advice of a physician in choosing the right protection for this region well before departure.

**Avoiding Mosquito Bites:** The CDC advises travelers to avoid mosquito bites in the following ways:

- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin. Take an ample supply of repellent containing 20% to 35% of the active ingredient “DEET.” These repellents can be found in most drug stores.
- Wear long-sleeved clothing and long pants if you are outdoors at night.
- Spray insecticide or repellent on clothing, since mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing.
- Avoid wearing perfumes/colognes; they attract mosquitoes.

*Note: Ultrasound devices do not prevent mosquito bites.*

Questions concerning the consumption of local food and water while in foreign ports often arise. As the conditions of the food and water vary from port to port and change frequently, VENT recommends that passengers use caution and common sense when eating and drinking off the ship.

**A Note Regarding Physical Limitations:** Facilities for travelers with disabilities and/or for those who use wheelchairs will not be available on this journey. We request that passengers contact VENT at 800-328-VENT (8368) immediately concerning any physical limitation that may be of concern.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours and Clipper Cruise Line reserve the right to deny passage to passengers whose physical limitations and/or lack of assistance could disrupt group operations or make it unfeasible to accompany the group.

**BAGGAGE:** Luggage limits are not mandatory aboard the *Clipper Adventurer*; however, each airline has independent luggage limits, and we advise each participant check with their chosen airline regarding specifics. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours requests you do your best to keep your luggage limited to one large bag (duffel or soft side preferred) and one carry-on. Also, as a precaution, we recommend packing your binoculars, walking shoes, a change of clothes, personal medications and toiletries, and your travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.

**DEPARTURE TAX:** From Suriname is U.S. \$10 per person.

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website at [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 the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and, for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com), which specializes in ornithology books.

***Birds:***

**Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Venezuela*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. This is the most appropriate book for this trip. It treats and illustrates all of the species you will see.**

Hilty, S.L. and W.L. Brown. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. This covers most of the birds found in Venezuela and has many of the same plates, but goes further into comprehensive accounts of behavior, song, and separating difficult species.

Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Tropical America. A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd., 1994.

Ridgely, R. S. and G. Tudor. *Birds of South America. Vols. I and II*. Austin: University of Texas Press. Vol. 1 (1989) is subtitled *The Oscine Passerines* and Vol. 2 (1994), *The Suboscine Passerines*. Excellent references and superb plates, but these volumes are too large to carry in the field.

**Ecology:**

Forsyth, Adrian and Michael Fogden. *Portraits of the Rainforest*. Canada: Camden House, 1990.

Forsyth, Adrian and Ken Miyata. *Tropical Nature*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984. Excellent introductory reading on tropical natural history.

Kricher, J.C. *A Neotropical Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. Good coverage of tropical natural history.

Beebe, William. *High Jungle*. New York: Duell, Sloan, Pearce, 1949. In part, relates to Beebe's experiences at the Rancho Grande Biological Station. Out of print. Check your local library.

**History:**

Moron, Guillermo. *A History of Venezuela*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964. A not-quite-unopinionated history of Venezuela by a Venezuelan, but nevertheless worth reading for an overview on Venezuela's interesting past.

Vigneras, Louis-Andre. *The Discovery of South America and the Andalusian Voyages*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976. An account of the various Spanish voyages of exploration, beginning with the third voyage of Columbus, and most of those which centered on the Venezuelan coast.

**Mammals:**

Emmons, L.H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals. A field guide*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. Paperback. Very good.

**Recording:**

*Birds of Eastern Ecuador* by Peter H. English and Theodore A. Parker, III. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 1992.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. and/or their 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. They 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 another leader for the first leader on any tour. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect April 20, 2005, 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.