

AMAZON RIVER CRUISE
A BIRDING AND NATURAL HISTORY ODYSSEY
JANUARY 20 – 28, 2007

MACHU PICCHU AND PARACAS EXTENSION
JANUARY 28 – FEBRUARY 4, 2007

The Amazon region conjures many images, but it is, above all, a realm of superlatives. The centerpiece of this vast region is the Amazon River itself, the largest river in the world. In fact, many of its tributaries rival or exceed the size of other great rivers of the world. The Amazonian region also boasts the highest diversity of both birds and plants anywhere in the world. The very word “Amazon” brings to mind images of broad, sinuous rivers, tree-lined banks, strange animals, bright butterflies, torrential rains, and glorious sunsets. Along the rivers one may see macaws and parrots and oropendolas flying overhead, ponderous Horned Screamers rising from stream banks and exotic wildlife that includes Hoatzins, Umbrellabirds, sloths, fresh-water dolphins, and monkeys coexisting in this untamed area.

We offer this relatively short excursion to the Amazon for those who want a full Amazonian rainforest and river experience without sacrificing comfort. We believe, in fact, that the classically-styled, triple-deck riverboat we’re using offers visitors the utmost in comfort, security and safety while still permitting us to visit remote and relatively unspoiled regions in Amazonia. The ship’s spacious cabins are individually climate-controlled, air-conditioned, and include private tiled bathrooms, hot-water showers, free laundry service, and bottled water available at all times. Visitors can also be assured of having waterproof ponchos, walking sticks, and extra thick boat cushions as needed for offbeat excursions. The ship features excellent food and an open-air upper deck for great wildlife viewing by day and stargazing by night. The list of amenities offered by the ship and its attendant crew is impressive. Additionally, stable, flat-bottomed boats powered by exceptionally quiet engines permit intimate exploration of small streams and lakes with ease and comfort, and a minimum of noise intrusion.

The mobility of our ship and its excursion boats will allow us to explore different habitats and streams each morning and afternoon, and provide exceptional opportunities to see birds and wildlife. Some birds will be common, widespread Amazonian species such as Black-collared Hawk, Black-fronted Nunbird, Oriole Blackbird, Yellow-rumped Cacique, and Russet-backed Oropendola. Others will be more local species such as Hoatzin, Short-tailed Parrot, and perhaps river island and river bank specialties such as Red-and-white Spinetail and Black-and-white Antbird. During the course of the trip we’ll explore small wooded streams, lakes, seasonally flooded forest (várzea), and flooded river islands. Toward the latter part of the trip, we’ll spend some time walking in tall, high ground forest where there is access to an elevated walkway through the forest. Here or nearby we

may find a fruiting tree frequented by colorful aracaries, tanagers, and honeycreepers, or an army ant swarm with its attendant antbirds and woodcreepers.

A brilliant blue Plum-throated Cotinga perched in a treetop, a pair of Blue-and-yellow Macaws winging overhead, a swirling group of Canary-winged Parakeets along the river, or a White-eared Jacamar in the morning sun—it is hard to predict which of these or many other experiences will delight you the most. We'll also fill some spare shipboard time with discussions and explanations of Amazonian natural history, as well as recaps of daily excursions in the evenings. We are confident that at the end of this extraordinary cruise you will have a greater appreciation and understanding of the Amazon region and the myriad creatures that make it the most complex ecosystem anywhere on earth.

Traveler's note: Many people harbor misgivings about visiting the Amazon, fearing excessive heat and humidity, torrential rain, hordes of mosquitoes or other insects. While it is indeed possible to experience such things, most visitors are pleasantly surprised at how comfortable travel can be even in the heart of Amazonia. The airy, breezy ship and air-conditioned cabins mitigate the effects of even the hottest days, and visitors soon discover that insects and mosquitoes, far from being the torment they are imagined, are little or no problem at all. This trip, which is based aboard a relatively small ship, the Turquesa, offers perhaps the most comfortable and luxurious way possible to explore the Amazon while still retaining the ability to visit remote regions. Visitors can be assured of a shipboard staff and crew that will respond to your every need, exciting exploratory trips mornings, afternoons, and evenings, and some of the best birding and wildlife viewing in the Amazon.

January 20, Day 1: Miami to Lima. Participants will depart the United States today en route to Lima, Peru. Most flights from the United States will arrive sometime late this evening. When making your reservation, bear in mind that you may want to arrive as early as possible in the evening because we have a very early hotel departure tomorrow morning. If time permits, we recommend arriving a day early in order to rest and to allow for flight delays that are sometimes associated with winter weather in your home areas. Participants not able to make the Sunday morning flight (Day 2) from Lima to Iquitos are at risk of being unable to reach the ship prior to its departure. After clearing immigration and customs, you will be transferred to your hotel in Lima.

NIGHT: Suissotel, Lima

January 21, Day 2: Lima to Iquitos, Peru. We will depart early this morning for our short flight of about an hour and a half to Iquitos, which is located in the heart of the upper Amazonian region. Following a short orientation and tour of the city, we will board the ship; we should be underway by late morning and take our lunch aboard ship. Today, as on most days, there will be time for a short siesta or relaxation after lunch. We plan to have our first excursion off the ship later this afternoon and should quickly begin to see the more common and more widespread birds along the river, some of these even as we leave Iquitos. These species should include Cocoi and Striated herons, Great and Snowy egrets, Turkey and Black vultures, Plumbeous Kite, Roadside Hawk, Yellow-headed Caracara, Large-billed and Yellow-billed terns, and Oriole Blackbird. Our afternoon exploration of the Amazon will begin with a short visit to a river island. All of the river islands should be flooded, or mostly so, at this time of year, which makes access to island habitats by boat relatively easy. There are more than twenty species of river island bird specialists here, almost all of which occur in one of four or five island vegetation types: tall grass (*Gynerium* spp.); willow (*Salix*) and *Tessari*; *Cecropia* and *Heliconi* spp; and mixed *Ficus* trees. Some river island habitat bird species we could see include Short-tailed Parrot; Tui Parakeet; Olive-spotted Hummingbird; Plain-breasted Piculet; Lesser Hornero (sand bars); White-bellied, Parker's and Red-and-white spinetails; Castelnau's Antshrike (mainly older islands); Leaden Antwren; Black-and-white Antbird; Brownish Elaenia; River Tyrannulet; Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant; Riverside Tyrant; and Pearly-breasted

Conebill. Other species we could see on or in the vicinity of river islands include Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture; Wattled Jacana; Canary-winged Parakeet; Greater and Smooth-billed anis; Ringed and Amazon kingfishers; Spotted Tody-Flycatcher; Great Kiskadee; Brown-chested and Gray-breasted martins; White-winged and Southern Rough-winged swallows; Orange-headed, Blue-gray, and Silver-beaked tanagers; Grayish Saltator; Red-capped Cardinal; Russet-backed Oropendola; Yellow-rumped Cacique; Yellow-hooded blackbird; Shiny Cowbird; Lesson's, Chestnut-bellied, and Caquetá seedeaters; and any of the species mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph.

NIGHT: *La Turquesa* on Rio Amazon

January 22, Day 3: Early morning birding Amazon tributaries near the junction of the Ríos Marañón and Ucayali. We will be off the ship early for exploration of river island and *várzea* (floodplain) habitat in the vicinity of the Quebrada Yarapa. A sampling of birds this morning could include most of the species mentioned yesterday as well as Wood Stork; Gray-headed and Snail kites; Black-collared and Slate-colored hawks; Pale-vented Pigeon; Dusky-headed, White-eyed, and Cobalt-winged parakeets; Greater Ani; Black-tailed Trogon; Green Kingfisher; Black-fronted Nunbird; White-eared Jacamar; Chestnut-eared Aracari; Crimson-crested Woodpecker; Pale-legged Hornero; Striped and Straight-billed woodcreepers; Barred Antshrike; White-headed Marsh-Tyrant; Short-crested Flycatcher; Masked Tityra; Bare-necked Fruitcrow; Black-capped Donacobius; Buff-breasted Wren; Black-billed Thrush; Red-eyed Vireo; Hooded and Turquoise tanagers; Thick-billed and Purple-throated euphonias; Silver-beaked and Masked Crimson tanagers; Yellow-rumped Cacique; and Russet-backed Oropendola. There is also a good possibility of seeing Pink River Dolphins and perhaps even Gray River Dolphins.

By late morning we should be back aboard ship. By mid-day we hope to reach the bifurcation of the Amazon into the Ríos Ucayali and Río Marañón. Upriver on the Rio Ucayali we will be traveling along the border of the Pacaya Samiria Reserve. We will continue to watch sand bars and river banks for new species, including such characteristic species as Pied Plover and Drab Water Tyrant. We will make our way up the Ucayali this afternoon, stopping for a late-afternoon excursion. After dinner we will be off the ship for our first (optional) night excursion by small boat on the Quebrada Supay, a tributary of the Río Ucayali. It is difficult to predict what we might see on night excursions, but Boat-billed Heron, Common and Great potoos, and Ladder-tailed Nightjar are all possible, as well as opossums or other mammals and occasionally tree boas.

NIGHT: *La Turquesa* on the Río Ucayali

January 23, Day 4: Amazon River / Río Ucayali. Today we'll spend a long morning exploring the Quebrada Supay by boat, taking our picnic breakfast with us. Along the relatively narrow and heavily forested Quebrada Supay, we should continue to see species typical of *várzea* forest, although the taller forest and narrower channel here may give us opportunities to add many new species this morning. A sampling could include almost any of the species mentioned previously, as well as Horned Screamer; Black Caracara; Hoatzin; Muscovy Duck; Ruddy Pigeon; Gray-fronted Dove; Mealy and Festive parrots; Sand-colored Nighthawk; Short-tailed Swift; Glittering-throated Emerald; Scarlet-crowned and Lemon-throated barbets; Spotted Puffbird; Cream-colored Woodpecker; Dark-breasted Spinetail; Long-billed Woodcreeper; Great and Black-crested antshrikes; Amazonian Streaked-Antwren; Plumbeous, Band-tailed and/or Black-chinned, and Silvered antbirds; Black-spotted Bare-eye; Plum-throated Cotinga; Greater Schiffornis; Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet; Forest Elaenia; Social Flycatcher; and Velvet-fronted Grackle.

Late this morning or early in the afternoon we will go ashore and explore, on foot, some regrowth habitats and secondary forest, and, if time permits, we'll also make a short visit to a school in the village. During the early afternoon, we will continue moving upstream to reposition for tomorrow morning's activities. After dinner we will again be off the ship for our second (optional) night excursion by small boat along a small tributary of the Río Ucayali.

NIGHT: *La Turquesa* on the Río Ucayali

January 24, Day 5. Río Tapiche / Río Marañon. This morning will be devoted to the exploration of the Río Tapiche, a tributary of the Ucayali. Depending upon what we have seen previously, we may use our time either inside the forest or continuing to bird and explore from small boats. Birds and mammal possibilities could be any of those mentioned on the previous days. Late morning will find us back aboard *La Turquesa*, as we prepare to retrace our route back down the Río Ucayali to the junction with the Marañon and then proceed up the Marañon. Depending upon our schedule, we may be able to disembark en route for another late-afternoon river exploration by small boat.

The list of bird and mammal possibilities in this region is large. In addition to numerous waterbirds and waders, this is a good region for parrots and parakeets, and we may see pairs or families of Scarlet Macaws along the river and perhaps other macaws overhead. A sample of birds here might include almost any of the species mentioned on days 3 and 4, as well as Capped Heron, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Green Ibis, Great Black-Hawk, Speckled Chachalaca, Sungrebe, Sunbittern (scarce), Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Black-throated Mango, up to five species of kingfishers, Gilded Barbet, Forest and Yellow-crowned elaenias, Cinnamon and White-eyed attilas, Lesser Kiskadee, and Gray-capped Flycatcher.

Primates possible here include Red Howler Monkey, Squirrel Monkey, Saddle-backed Tamarin, Black-chested Moustached Tamarin (south bank), Dusky Titi-Monkey, Brown capuchin, and perhaps even the unusual Monk Saki (scarce and retiring).

NIGHT: *La Turquesa* on Río Marañon

January 25, Day 6: Río Marañon; vicinity of La Suite del Marañon and the canopy walkway. The morning will be devoted to birding and natural history exploration of *terra firme*, or upland, forest and forest edge habitats. This site, which includes a new hotel, trails, a small lake, and a small elevated walkway (eight suspended sections) through the forest offers a good variety of activities, and we plan to spend two mornings here. This is a region of *terra firme* forest and is typically somewhat drier and better-drained than *várzea* forest. In general *terra firme* forest is biologically the most diverse ecosystem in the Amazon, with a greater diversity of birds per unit area than any other forest ecosystem on the planet. It is also one of the most challenging habitats in which to see birds, requiring our utmost concentration, but the rewards can be high. Obligate army ant-following antbirds occur here, sometimes with as many as a dozen individuals gathering and bickering as they pursue prey fleeing from the ants. Here mixed species flocks also reach their greatest diversity, with flocks forming both in the canopy and in the understory. When both groups join, as they do occasionally, one can experience an astonishing array of birds from the understory to the canopy. Birds that forage in mixed species flocks typically move rapidly through the forest, and they present an exciting if sometimes frustrating experience for human observers trying to see them. With patience and concentration, however, many species can be seen. A sample of mostly forest-based species that we may see here could include Cinereous Tinamou; Gray-fronted Dove; Squirrel and Black-bellied cuckoos; Black-tailed, White-tailed, and Violaceous trogons; White-chinned Jacamar; Lemon-throated Barbet; Many-banded Araçari; Chestnut and Red-necked woodpeckers; Rufous-tailed Foliage-gleaner; Plain-brown, Amazonian Barred- and Buff-throated woodcreepers; Plain-winged, Cinereous, and Dusky-throated antshrikes; Plain-throated, White-flanked, Long-winged, and Gray antwrens; Warbling, Scale-backed, Bicolored, Spot-backed, and White-plumed antbirds; Rusty-belted Tapaculo; White-bearded, Golden-headed, Blue-crowned, and Striped manakins; Dwarf Tyrant Manakin; Thrush-like Schiffornis; Violaceous Jay; Black-billed, Hauxwell's, and White-necked thrushes; Dusky-capped Greenlet; Fulvous Shrike-Tanager; Flame-crested, Green-and-gold, and Paradise tanagers; Buff-throated Saltator; and Slate-colored Grosbeak. Our afternoon activities may include returning to the forest or a visit to a nearby lake or small stream.

NIGHT: *La Turquesa* on Río Marañon

January 26, Day 7: La Suite del Marañon and the canopy walkway. We will spend a second morning in the vicinity of La Suite del Marañon and the canopy walkway in order to take advantage of this biologically rich area and to ensure that all participants have an excellent early-morning visit to the walkway. We will leave

before noon today for the eight- to nine-hour trip back to Iquitos. We should tie up close to Iquitos late this evening in preparation for our departure early tomorrow morning.

NIGHT: *La Turquesa* on Río Amazon near Iquitos

January 27, Day 8: Departure from La Turquesa; flight from Iquitos to Lima. We will disembark *La Turquesa* early this morning and transfer to the VIP lounge at the airport in Iquitos in preparation for our flight to Lima. After check-in and lunch at the hotel in Lima, we will depart for a short drive south of Lima to a marsh for some afternoon birding. In coastal marshes and along the seacoast, we should see a good selection of species, all of which will be different than those seen previously, including many of the following: White-tufted Grebe; Peruvian Pelican; Peruvian Booby; Olivaceous and Guanay cormorants; several egrets and herons; White-cheeked Pintail; Cinnamon Teal; Osprey; Black Vulture (hundreds); Plumbeous Rail; Common Moorhen; Peruvian Thick-knee (now scarce); Kelp; Band-tailed, Gray-hooded, Gray, and Franklin's gulls; Inca Tern (perhaps a few); Pacific Dove; Croaking Ground-Dove; Amazilia Hummingbird; Wren-like Rushbird; Many-colored Rush-Tyrant; Vermilion Flycatcher (including a dusky form in Lima; normal red ones along the coast); Long-tailed Mockingbird; and Peruvian Red-breasted Blackbird.

We will meet for dinner in the hotel this evening. Participants returning to the United States this evening will be provided day rooms at the hotel and transferred to the airport after dinner for return flights later tonight. Participants with flights to Cuzco for the extension, or those with international flights the following morning, will overnigh at the hotel.

NIGHT: Swissotel, Lima (for those on Machu Picchu extension)
DAY ROOM: Swissotel, Lima (for those departing later this evening)

January 28, Day 9: Arrive the United States. Early morning arrival in the United States for connecting flights homeward.

Due to the nature of the expedition, weather conditions or government regulations may require changes to be made to the itinerary and/or the cancellation of certain shore excursions. Every attempt will be made to adhere to the itinerary described, within the limits of safety and time. In the event of changes, passengers have no right to any refund or other compensation. Expedition fees are based on group participation. Should you choose not to take part in any activity or make use of services provided, no refund will be made.

MACHU PICCHU AND PARACAS EXTENSION JANUARY 28 – FEBRUARY 4, 2007

January 28, Day 9: Lima to Cuzco and visit to Laguna Huacarpay; short afternoon drive to Yucay. Our day will start early, with a transfer to the airport for our flight from Lima to Cuzco. Upon arrival in Cuzco, we will transfer to a bus for the thirty- to forty-minute drive to Laguna Huacarpay, followed by a drive down the Urubamba Valley to Yucay. Birds are usually numerous and relatively easy to see at Laguna Huacarpay (elevation of about 10,500 feet) and in the surrounding arid hills. Among the possibilities are White-tufted and Silvery grebes, Puna Ibis, Speckled and Puna teals, Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Duck, Aplomado Falcon (scarce), Cinereous Harrier (scarce), Plumbeous Rail, Common Moorhen, Andean Coot, Andean Lapwing, Andean Gull, Spot-winged Pigeon (irregular), Bare-faced Ground-Dove, Andean Flicker, Wren-like Rushbird, Spot-billed and Rufous-naped ground-tyrants, Andean (White-winged) Negrito, White-browed Chat-Tyrant, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, Chiguanco Thrush, Yellow-winged Blackbird, Band-tailed Seedeater, and Greenish Yellow-Finch. This also is an excellent location in which to look for the spectacular Bearded Mountaineer, a hummingbird endemic to Peru. Black-tailed and Green-tailed trainbearers are seen here occasionally, as well. We will continue down the

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Urubamba Valley, watching for Puna Hawk, Andean Gull (along river), Andean Swift, and Giant Hummingbird en route. The drive will take us along the rushing Urubamba River. Our hotel is a charming country inn, and we should arrive in time to relax, rest, or do some birding around the hotel grounds at dusk.

NIGHT: La Posada del Inca, Yucay

January 29, Day 10: Yucay to Machu Picchu. Following an early breakfast (5:45 a.m.), we will depart for the Ollantaytambo train station, where we may have some time to see this remarkable city, which is one of the most traditional Inca cities remaining in Peru. Once aboard the train, we have about two hours before we reach the Machu Picchu ruins, along a route that follows the bottom of the Urubamba River valley. Torrent Ducks, White-capped Dippers, and more tremendous views of Mt. Veronica are part of this fascinating trip. Upon arrival, we will check into our hotel, have lunch, and then start up the famous Hiram Bingham road to the ruins, some 1,500 feet higher. 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 high ridge, 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 huge mountains covered with 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 project, it humbles us as we stand before such a magnificent panorama.

After the train departs for the afternoon, 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. 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 the vicinity of the ruins, watch for White-tipped Swift; Black-tailed Trainbearer; White-winged Black-Tyrant; White-crested, Sierran, and Highland elaenias; Blue-and-white Swallow; Cinereous Conebill; Slaty and Black-throated flowerpiercers; Inca Wren (endemic); and Tricolored Brush-Finch. Andean Condors are occasionally seen above the ruins. We will have dinner this evening at the luxurious Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel.

NIGHT: Hotel Machu Picchu Pueblo

January 30, Day 11: Full day in Machu Picchu area. Some people may wish to return to the ruins this morning to enjoy their beauty in solitude, or to return in the afternoon. However, we will also be birding around the hotel and along the railroad tracks, as well, during the morning hours. Here we have the opportunity to see Torrent Duck; Fasciated Tiger-Heron (rare); Andean Guan; White-throated Quail-Dove; Plum-crowned and Red-billed parrots (irregular in occurrence); Mitred Parakeet (also irregular in occurrence); Green Violetear; Green-and-white and Speckled hummingbirds; Bronzy and Collared incas; Chestnut-breasted Coronet; Long-tailed Sylph; White-bellied Woodstar; Andean and White-tipped swifts; Highland Motmot; Crested and Golden-headed quetzals; Spot-crowned Woodcreeper; Variable Antshrike; Masked Fruiteater; White-winged Black-Tyrant; Dusky-capped Flycatcher; Smoke-colored Pewee; Mottle-cheeked and Sclater's tyrannulets; Ochraceous-breasted, Streaked-necked, and Golden-crowned flycatchers; Torrent Tyrannulet; Glossy-black Thrush; Slate-throated and Spectacled redstarts; Dusky-green Oropendola; Capped Conebill; Rusty Flowerpiercer; Thick-billed and Orange-bellied euphonias; Golden-naped, Saffron-crowned, Beryl-spangled, Silver-backed, Bay-headed, and Black-capped tanagers; Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager; Oleaginous Hemispingus; Silver-beaked Tanager; Pale-legged and Russet-crowned warblers; and Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch. There is also a reasonably good chance that we will see an Andean Cock-of-the-rock perched or flying across the railroad tracks during our walk this morning.

NIGHT: Hotel Machu Picchu Pueblo

January 31, Day 12: Morning birding, afternoon train back to Cuzco. Visitors are again welcome to return to the ruins this morning. We will also schedule a morning of birding in the area. Our activities will depend, in part, upon what we have seen during the previous days, but may include an early morning walk, with birding, to the sun gate (Inti Punku) above the ruins of Machu Picchu. Birds of the Machu Picchu ruins include White-

collared and White-tipped swifts, Highland and Sierran elaenias, White-winged Black-Tyrant, Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant, Blue-and-white Swallow, Inca Wren, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, Cinereous Conebill, Blue-capped Tanager, Cuzco and Tricolored brush-finches, Rufous-collared Sparrow (everywhere) and Black-and-white Seedeater. Higher up along the trail to Inti Punku, we will watch for White-bellied Woodstar, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, Peruvian (Crowned) Chat-Tyrant, Inca Wren, Masked Flowerpiercer, Cuzco Brush-Finch, and Saffron-crowned and Silver-backed tanagers. Less common species include Sickie-winged Guan; Fawn-breasted, Grass-green, and Yellow-scarfed tanagers; and Hooded and Buff-breasted mountain-tanagers. After returning to the hotel for a late lunch, we will board the train at 2:45 p.m. for a 3:00 p.m. departure and the approximately five-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.

NIGHT: Novotel Hotel, Cuzco

February 1, Day 13: Cuzco to Lima and connect by bus for drive to Paracas on seacoast of Peru. This morning we will take a late morning flight from Cuzco, arriving around noon in Lima. Upon arrival in Lima, we will transfer immediately to a bus for our approximately four- to five-hour drive to the pleasant seacoast city of Paracas, which is located at the edge of one of Peru's most exciting coastal reserves. There is much to see along the coast as we travel southward from Lima to Paracas. Extensive marshes a short distance south of Lima are very productive, and here and in agricultural areas we may see some of the following species: White-tufted and Pied-billed grebes; Snowy and Great egrets; Little Blue Heron; White-cheeked Pintail; Andean Duck (seasonal); Cinnamon Teal; Osprey; Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle; Red-backed Hawk; Plumbeous Rail; Least Bittern; Common Moorhen; Common Coot; Franklin's, Gray, Band-tailed, Gray-hooded and Kelp gulls; Least Seedsnipe (seasonal); Tawny-throated Dotterel (scarce in austral winter); Peruvian Thick-Knee (now becoming quite local); Croaking Ground-Dove; Pacific Dove; Coastal and Grayish miners; Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant; Short-tailed Field-Tyrant; Vermilion and Bran-colored flycatchers; Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant (austral winter only); Many-colored Rush-Tyrant; Great Kiskadee; Blue-and-white Swallow; Peruvian Martin; Long-tailed Mockingbird; Cinereous Conebill; Band-tailed, Chestnut-throated, Drab, and Parrot-billed seedeaters; Hooded Siskin; and Collared Warbling-Finch.

The coast of Peru is, for the most part, an unusually stark, barren desert—virtually a moonscape in places—and most visitors are fascinated by this desolate-looking land of sand and rock. It appears as though not a living creature inhabits such a forbidding land. However, both in the barren desert and narrow river valleys that support a few trees and tall grass, there are a number of interesting land birds. Among them are Coastal Miner, Peruvian Red-breasted Meadowlark (Blackbird), Croaking Ground-Dove, Wren-like Rushbird, Yellowish Pipit (coastal race), Grassland Yellow-Finch, and an abundance of seedeaters (mentioned above) and grassquits. Nevertheless, it is the seabirds that are the glory of the cold Humboldt current waters that bathe the coastline of Peru. These cold, rich waters teem with life. We should see a host of gulls and terns, and offshore the air is often filled with boobies and cormorants. We should arrive at our resort hotel late this afternoon. On the hotel grounds we may see Amazilia Hummingbird, Cinereous Conebill, Hooded Siskin, and Oasis Hummingbird; and at the hotel boat dock, boobies, cormorants, gulls, and a variety of shorebirds, including Ruddy Turnstones, Least Sandpiper, and Sanderling. Elegant, Royal, and Sandwich terns are often present, as well.

NIGHT: Hotel Paracas, Paracas

February 2, Day 14: All day in vicinity of Paracas Peninsula; morning trip by boat to Islas Ballestas (Ballestas Islands). This morning we will journey by boat to the Ballestas Islands, part of the National Reserve of Paracas and famous for their immense colonies of seabirds. The Ballestas have played an important role in the history of Peru, as well, for these islands were an important source of guano which has been mined at various times in the past (not presently). These islands, now a national reserve, host one of the largest and richest concentrations of seabirds to be found anywhere in the world. Among the species we may see on or around the islands are Sooty Shearwater, tens to hundreds of thousands of Peruvian Boobies and Guanay Cormorants, which nest on these islands, as well as smaller numbers of Red-legged cormorants and Inca Terns. We should also see Humboldt Penguin, Peruvian Pelican, numbers of Southern Sea Lions, and the occasional

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Surfbird. Less common around the islands are Peruvian Diving-Petrel, Swallow-tailed Gull, Wilson's and White-vented storm-petrels, Sabine's Gull, and Parasitic Jaeger. With luck, one of the rarer seabirds such as Dark-rumped Petrel, Giant Petrel, Slender-billed Prion, or even Cape Petrel might be seen. The large bay south of the hotel regularly hosts Chilean Flamingos, and there are usually hundreds of gulls, terns, and skimmers and shorebirds loafing in the shallows. This is an especially good place to find Peruvian Tern, Snowy Plover, and Black Skimmers. During northern winter months, large numbers of Franklin's Gulls winter here, around the boat docks and offshore.

After lunch we'll drive across the peninsula to some dramatic sea cliffs and look for Andean Condors, which are sometimes found here at sea level. We may also see more Humboldt Penguins and seabirds on this drive. Inca Terns and Red-legged Cormorants, each probably the most striking member of its respective family, nest on the cliffs. These high cliffs, the blue Pacific stretching away, long lines of boobies and cormorants over the water, and the roar of sea lions from the narrow beach far below, combine to make this an unforgettable spot of wild beauty. Coastal species we hope to see include Blackish Oystercatcher, Seaside (Surf) Cinclodes, and Red Knot; land birds could include Coastal Miner.

NIGHT: Hotel Paracas, Paracas

February 3 , Day 17: Early morning birding followed by drive back to Lima; afternoon at leisure and evening connecting flight to home destination. Following our mid-day to afternoon arrival in Lima, you will have the remainder of the afternoon free. Those participants returning to the United States this evening will be provided day rooms at the hotel, a final evening meal at the hotel, and transfers to the airport in time for return flights. Participants with morning flights tomorrow will be provided overnight hotel accommodations and transferred to the airport in time for departing flights in the morning.

NIGHT: Hotel Olivar, Lima

February 4, Day 18: Arrive United States. Early morning arrival in the United States for connecting flights homeward.

TOUR SIZE: This Amazon River Cruise will be limited to 40 participants. The Machu Picchu and Paracas Extension will be limited in size to 12 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Steve Hilty, David Ascanio, Paul Greenfield and Andrew Whittaker for the cruise. Steve Hilty and local guide for the extension.

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-led 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.

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 ones 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.

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.

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 great knowledge of their voices has enabled him to make several important ornithological 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.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the Amazon River Cruise is **\$4995** per person in double occupancy from Lima. This includes meals beginning with Breakfast on Day 2 through Dinner on Day 8; hotel and ship accommodations as stated in the itinerary; roundtrip airfare between Lima and Iquitos; ground transportation during the tour; group transfers and baggage handling between airport, ship, and hotel; shore excursions and river cruises as described; and services of on-board leaders and lecturers.

The cruise fee does not include airfare from your home to Lima and return; airport departure taxes; alcoholic beverages; gratuities to crew or staff of the *La Turquesa*; phone calls; laundry; excess baggage charges; international departure taxes; passport or visa fees (if applicable); accommodations, meals, and transfers prior to joining/after tour; personal and baggage insurance; and all items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for the Amazon River Cruise is **\$1495**. 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.

The fee for the Machu Picchu extensions is **\$3150** in double occupancy from Lima. This includes all meals beginning with breakfast on Day 9 through dinner on Day 17, internal Peru flights (Lima-Cuzco-Lima), lodging as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, entrance into Machu Picchu, and guide services provided by the tour leader. It does not include 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 Machu Picchu extension is **\$500**. 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.

REGISTRATION: To register for the Amazon River Cruise, please complete the application form and return it with a deposit of **\$1000** per person (check or money order in U.S. dollars). If you prefer to register by phone, a deposit must be made within 10 days or the space will be released. A second installment of **\$1000** is due six months prior to the departure date. A **\$500** deposit is required to register for the Machu Picchu and Paracas Extension. The balance of the fees for both the Amazon River Cruise and the Machu Picchu and Paracas Extension is due 120 days prior to your departure date.

The Amazon cruise is designed for persons in reasonably good health. By forwarding the expedition deposit, you certify that you do not have a physical condition or disability which would create a hazard to you or other passengers. VENT reserves the right to decline to accept or retain you or other passengers should your health, actions, or general deportment impede the operations of the expedition or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of other passengers.

CANCELLATION POLICY – Amazon River Cruise: **\$500** of your initial deposit of **\$1000** is entirely non-refundable unless your space can be filled. If we can fill your space and if written notice of cancellation is received no later than 120 days or more prior to sailing, a refund of monies paid less **\$150** fee for administration/handling will be made. Cancellations occurring between 119 and 90 days prior to sailing are subject to a cancellation fee of **\$2000**. Cancellations occurring within 89 days prior to sailing are non-refundable. Any refunds will be reduced by applicable airline cancellation penalties. 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.

CANCELLATION POLICY – Machu Picchu Extension: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before departure date, the deposit less **\$75** per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation 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. 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, as are other coverages such as terrorism protection; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details.**

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

BAGGAGE: Baggage limits for most airlines is now 70 pounds for checked luggage on international flights and 50 pounds on domestic flights, in addition to one carry-on bag. However, we request participants limit their baggage to one medium-sized suitcase of no more than 50 pounds and one carry-on, as space in vehicles and on the ship may be limited. Check with your airline for specific limits, as each airline is different.

Those participants on the Machu Picchu Extension should travel with only a small to medium-sized backpack and perhaps another hand or shoulder bag, which can be carried easily. You will be able to leave any extra luggage at the hotel in Lima. This will greatly facilitate disembarking the train at the Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, checking in to the hotel, and reboarding the train for the return trip to Cuzco. The train has very limited space for luggage; also, in some cases travelers may have to board a bus at Ollantaytambo for the last half of the return trip to Cuzco, where, again, having less luggage will be more convenient. With this in mind, all travelers will be much happier with a minimum of luggage for this portion of the trip (**please do not bring any suitcases or large duffels**).

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Peru is required. Tourist visas (small white piece of paper) are issued by the international air carrier aboard your flight to Lima. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

HEALTH: For all Amazon voyages, a Yellow Fever immunization and an International Certificate of Vaccination should be carried. In addition, malaria prophylaxis is recommended. We urge you to discuss health precautions with your physician at least six (6) weeks before you depart. Please be aware that most of the time we will be aboard the riverboat or in hotels and restaurants where food preparation and sanitary conditions are excellent and exposure to insects and disease-carrying vectors is minimized. We suggest you contact your physician or the **Centers for Disease Control** in Atlanta (**CDC**), which operates a 24-hour automated travelers' health hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP for the most updated information. You may also visit their website at www.cdc.gov.

MISC: Departure Tax – about USD \$25
Electricity – 220 volts (also 110 available on board ship); 2 flat pin or 2 round pin plugs
Language – Spanish
Time – Eastern Standard Time

SUGGESTED READING:

Our website at 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, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com, or www.buteobooks.com, which specializes in ornithology books.

AMAZON CRUISE

BIRDS – ESSENTIAL:

Hilty, Steven, and William L. Brown. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton University Press, 1986. op. A classic handbook on the birds of Colombia and surrounding areas. The recommended birding guide for this cruise.

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America: a watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*. University of Texas Press. 2005. A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity. Recommended for anyone interested in the natural history of bird communities in New World tropical latitudes.

GENERAL TOPICS:

Forsyth, Adrian & Miyata, Ken. *Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rain Forests of Central and South America*. Touchstone (Simon & Schuster), 1995. Easy to read, perceptive account of the chain of life in the rain forest. Seventeen lively, extremely well-written essays introduce habitats, ecology, plants, animals, and insects of the Amazonian region.

Goulding, Michael, et al. *Floods of Fortune. Ecology and Economy Along the Amazon*. Columbia University Press, 1996. The book, on the present status of the river, enables the reader to grasp the issues and understand the immense devastation the Amazon Region has undergone—and the global implications of that destruction. Beautiful photographs. Highly recommended.

Kricher, John. *Neotropical Companion*. Princeton University Press. An introduction to the animals, plants and ecosystems of the New World Tropics. Recommended as a general, broad-based introduction to plants and animals of Amazonia.

Insight Guide. *Amazon Wildlife*. (Geoffrey, E. ed.). APA Publications, 2002. An illustrated guide to the region and its wildlife. Covers biogeography, habitats, animal groups, and conservation.

Pearson, David L., L. Beletsky, and P. Barrett. *Peru: The Traveller's Wildlife Guide*. (Paperback; 1st American ed.) Interlink Books, 2004. Covers a wide range of topics from ecotourism in Amazonia to geography, habitats, parks, reserves, ecology, and natural history. Nice introductory sections (well-illustrated) on amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, insects, and other arthropods. Excellent introductory book on Amazonian with especially good illustrations of more common wildlife.

FURTHER READING ON BIRDS, MAMMALS, REPTILES, & AMPHIBIANS:

Bartlett, R. D., and P. Bartlett. *Reptiles and Amphibians of the Amazon*. 2003. Guide to 250 more commonly found snakes, lizards, turtles, frogs, and salamanders of the Amazon basin.

Castner, J. L., S. L. Timme, and J. A. Duke. *A Field Guide to Medicinal and Useful Plants of the Upper Amazon*. 1998. A photographic guide to identification of commoner plants with practical uses in the upper Amazonian basin forest.

Emmons, Louise and François Feer. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. University of Chicago Press, 1990. A color-illustrated field guide to the mammals of the Neotropics.

Gentry, Al. *A Field Guide to the Families and Genera of Woody Plants of Northwest South America*. University of Chicago Press, 1996. A keyed reference to the plant genera of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Illustrated with black-and-white sketches. The only book of its kind on plant identification of the region, but not always easy to use.

Henderson, Andrew et al. *Field Guide to the Palms of the Americas*. Princeton University Press, 1995.

Ridgely, Robert S., and P. Greenfield. *The Birds of Ecuador, Vol. II: Field Guide*. Cornell University Press, 2001. Also useful for this trip. Newer taxonomy than Colombia book but lacks a number of Amazonian river island birds which do not reach Ecuador.

MACHU PICCHU AND PARACAS EXTENSION

BIRDS:

Clements, J. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Peru*. Temecula, CA: Ibis Publishing Co., 2001. Easier to find than the following book, but has many shortcomings, including inferior plates, minimal text, and no maps. This is, however, the only practical work for the Paracas area.

Walker, B. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Machu Picchu*. 2001. Peruvian National Trust for Parks and Protected Areas (PROFONANPE). Lima, Peru. This is THE recommended book for the Machu Picchu area.

GENERAL:

(this is but a sample of the many books available on the Machu Picchu area and Inca History)

Beech, C. *Lonely Planet Peru*. Fifth Edition. 2004.

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

Thomson, H. *The White Rock. An Exploration of the Inca Heartland*. Woodstock, 2001.

Wright, R. M. and A. V. Zegarra. *The Machu Picchu Guidebook: A Self-Guided Tour*. 2004.

TIPPING: Your cruise charge does not include tips to ship crew and guides, and it is, of course, up to you whether you wish to tip the ship personnel and staff for their services. All other tipping, including baggage handling, is included.

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT) purchase transportation, hotel accommodations, restaurant, and other services from various independent suppliers who are not affiliated with VENT in any way. Although VENT tries to choose the best suppliers available, VENT has no right to control their operations and CANNOT, THEREFORE BE LIABLE FOR ANY PERSONAL INJURY OR PROPERTY DAMAGE which may occur due to (1) wrongful, negligent or arbitrary acts or omissions on the part of a supplier, its employees and others not under direct control of VENT, or (2) defects or failures of any aircraft, vessel, automotive vehicle or other equipment or instrumentality under the control of independent suppliers. VENT reserves the right to cancel the itinerary or any part of it, to make alterations in the itinerary as they deem necessary or desirable, to refuse to accept or retain as a member of the tour any person at any time, and to pass on to tour members any expenditure occasioned by delays or events beyond its control. VENT reserves the right to adjust their rates. On advancement of deposit to VENT, you agree to be bound by the terms and conditions found herein. By acceptance of the vessel's "Contract of Carriage" you also agree to its terms and conditions, and you are encouraged to review these terms. A copy of these terms and conditions is available from VENT for your review. Quoted tour prices include planning, handling and operational charges, and are quoted on the current rate of exchange and tariff on January 17, 2006. In the event of a marked increase in foreign exchange or tariff rates, costs are subject to revision.