

NORTHWEST ARGENTINA CHACO, ANDES AND ALTIPLANO NOVEMBER 19 – DECEMBER 2, 2007

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Argentina is an immense country and it offers some of the finest wildlife experiences in the world. Because of its size and the fact that it contains so many different habitats, it is impractical to combine them all into one natural history or birding experience. With this in mind, we offer three separate trips to Argentina: one to Northeastern Argentina which focuses on the rich variety of habitats and birds in the pampas, wetlands and forest north to Iguazu Falls. The second focuses on birds in the spectacularly scenic northwestern region of Argentina. The last samples several regions in Patagonia and end in the dramatic and unforgettably beautifully region of Tierra del Fuego. The three trips are designed so they can be combined into a month long odyssey or they can be taken separately.

The Northwestern Argentina trip begins in the Chaco, a broad desert-like region stretching from southeastern Bolivia across western Paraguay and into the heart of the northwestern part of the country. The Chaco avifauna is particularly rich, and the vast majority of Chaco birds are not well known to naturalists. To those who have visited or lived in the Sonoran Desert of the American Southwest, much of the Chaco will have a familiar feel. Many of the tree genera are shared, and the sheer abundance and exuberance of birdlife is not unlike that of the Sonoran Desert, even though the species are different.

The rest of the trip will be devoted to exploring some of the many other Andean habitats of northwestern Argentina. Nearly all visitors are surprised at the richness of the avifauna and also by the beauty of the region. From Yungas forests in the foothills near Salta, to craggy canyons and the broad sweep of the altiplano, there is a splendid palette of birds and other wildlife that await the inquiring naturalist. This is a region well-stocked with interesting furnariids--spinetails, thornbirds, canasteros, earthcreepers, miners, cinclodes, and foliage-gleaners, perhaps the most dazzling hummingbird on earth, and, on high altiplano lagoons, a spectacular assortment of flamingos and waterfowl that stretch away into shimmering mirages of pink. Rare Vicunas and Puna Rheas still roam the wilder puna regions, while flocks of yellow-finches, shy mountain parakeets and startlingly bold siskins add flecks and swirls of color to a landscape of golden puna grass and cyanine blue skies. This trip spans a vast and beautiful portion of the continent, and grips the imagination with an awesome sense of geologic and evolutionary time. From bird-rich deserts to the allure of the towering Andes, it is sure to hold some surprises.

November 19-20, Days 1-2. Fly USA to Buenos Aires. You should plan your flights to arrive Buenos Aires, Argentina (Aeropuerto Internacional Ministro Pistarini, airport code EZE) **BEFORE 8:00 AM** on the morning of Day 2. After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by our ground operator, than transferred to the domestic airport for our noon flight to Salta, than transferred to our hotel. Time permitted, we plan to do some birding after our arrival in Salta.

NIGHT: Hotel Selva Montana, Salta

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November 21, Day 3: Transfer overland from the city of Salta to J.V. Gonzalez. In Salta we will board a comfortable bus for the approximately three-hour drive to the western edge of the vast Chaco desert. Chaco is a Guaraní Indian name applied to the large semi-desert region stretching from southern Bolivia and western Paraguay to central Argentina. Our visit to the Chaco will be on its relatively dry, western side. (Eastward the Chaco is wetter.) Here it dries out almost completely, being denied moisture by the towering Andes, which block rainfall from the Pacific and being too far inland to receive rainfall from the Atlantic. The Chaco has no mountains, and few major rivers; running water is scarce. As it is likely to be hot in mid-afternoon, we will rest, and perhaps take a short evening drive into the Chaco this evening (we need go only a few miles out of town).

NIGHT: Hotel Las Lajitas, Las Lajitas

November 22, Day 4: The heart (and heat) of the Chaco. The Chaco is very "birdy" and the chorus of bird song at dawn is one of the best anywhere. The Chaco draws its birdlife from a wide variety of adjacent scrub, steppe, and woodland regions. Despite the general absence of water in the Chaco, visitors are always surprised by the abundance of birds. Though most of these birds are relatively widespread within the general Chaco vegetation communities, they are species that are not well known to birders. Among those we could find today and tomorrow are: Black-legged Seriema (relatively common, though not easy to see), White-fronted Woodpecker; Blue-crowned and Monk parakeets; Turquoise-fronted Amazon; Ash-colored Cuckoo (a summer resident here); Glittering-bellied Emerald; Blue-tufted Starthroat; Spot-winged Pigeon; Picazuro Pigeon; Checkered Woodpecker; three big woodcreepers: Great Rufous; Scimitar-billed, and Red-billed Scythebill; Chaco Earthcreeper; Short-billed Canastero; Little Thornbird; Lark-like Brushrunner; Brown Cacholote; Crested Gallito; Stripe-backed Antbird; and Olive-crowned Crescentchest. Flycatchers are an important component of the Chaco avifauna, with such interesting species as Cinereous Tyrant; Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant; Greater Wagtail-Tyrant; Plain Tyrannulet; Suiriri Flycatcher; Southern Scrub-Flycatcher; and perhaps Rufous Casiornis. Among the fringillids, Golden-billed Saltator; Many-colored Chaco-Finch; Ultramarine Grosbeak; Black-capped and Ringed warbling-finches (latter uncommon), and Red-crested and Black-crested finches occur.

Little is known about the geological history of the Chaco. Biogeographers are fairly certain that generally dry conditions have prevailed here from the Pleistocene to the present, and certainly most of the vegetation we'll see is low thorn scrub. Dominant trees are two species of mesquite (*Prosopis alba* and *P. nigra*), though many other species are present. Selective forest cutting for charcoal, firewood gathering, and cattle grazing has altered the Chaco in many places, resulting in an increase in the abundance of cacti and ground bromeliads. Where the soil is slightly less salty, the mesquite woodland gives way to a handsome and slightly taller Quebracho woodland, composed of *Aspidosperma quebracho-blanco* and *Schinopsis quebracho-colorado*. As their specific names imply, they are economically important for their beautiful woods, light- and dark-colored respectively. Those familiar with the Sonoran Desert of the southwestern United States will find a palo verde here (*Cercidium*) very similar to one that is so well known in the American southwest.

With the arrival of midday, we'll return to our hotel for a siesta, or perhaps pause for a few moments to watch one of the almost endless games of dominos in progress in the front of the hotel. Our routine on both days will consist of early morning departures, midday siestas, and then evening and perhaps dusk visits again to the Chaco.

NIGHTS: Hotel Las Lajitas, Las Lajitas

November 23, Day 5: Morning in the Chaco; afternoon drive to city of Salta. We will be up early this last morning, listening to a splendid dawn chorus of woodcreepers, furnariids, flycatchers and fringillids. The cacophony may be punctuated now and then by the loud calls of a Black-legged Seriema, the rattle of a Checkered Woodpecker, or the sweet whistles of a Stripe-backed Antbird. By now we should have seen many of the Chaco species, and we should have the opportunity to relax and enjoy this magnificent region and also spend time searching for some of the rarer species, such as Black-bodied Woodpecker, or perhaps just revisiting some areas near town, before returning for an early lunch. Early afternoon we will drive to the historic city of Salta, making some birding stops en route as time permits. Salta is a charming old city with busy streets, lots of sidewalk cafes, and an extremely pleasant ambiance, and most people enjoy a short walk around the plaza.

Alternatively, after our busy pace, a few hours of relaxation may be just the thing, as we now prepare to focus on the Andes.

NIGHT: Hotel Selva Montana, Salta

November 24, Day 6: Salta-Cachí Road with afternoon return to Salta. The trip today offers an excellent cross section of habitats up the eastern slope of the Andes. From Salta we cross the flat agriculture fields of the Lerma Valley and then turn westward into the Andes. Fields give way to patches of woodland, and the road enters the lovely green-bordered valley of the Rio Chicoana. The entrance into this valley is clothed in Yungas forest, and old, gnarled trees are thickly festooned with Tillandsia, epiphytic cactus, and bromeliads. In this river-edge Yungas forest we should see Mitred Parakeet; Scaly-headed Parrot; White-bellied Hummingbird; Cream-backed Woodpecker (scarce); Stripe-crowned and Sooty-fronted spinetail; Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner; Rufous-capped Antshrike; White-crested Tyrannulet; Plush-crested Jay; Andean Slaty-Thrush; Brown-capped Redstart; Golden-crowned Warbler; Blue-and-yellow Tanager; Common Bush-Tanager; Sayaca Tanager; Golden-billed Saltator; and Rusty-browed Warbling-Finch. In thicker patches of woodland we've seen Dusky-legged Guans and heard Giant Antshrike.

Above 1500 meters elevation the vegetation becomes scrubby and above 1800 meters we enter a portion of the valley that is subject to "rain shadow" conditions - very arid and rocky. High canyon walls are a multicolored mosaic of ochres, reds and greens. Big columnar cactus gain perch here and there on the canyon walls and invite comparisons with Arizona and the American southwest.

Tree tobacco plants along the roadside are visited here by the incomparable Red-tailed Comet. In thickets one can find Brown-capped Tit-Spinetails; White-winged Black-Tyrants; White-browed Chat-Tyrants; and Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrants. Other birds of this region and higher include Andean Tinamou; Bare-eyed Ground-Dove; Andean Flicker; Bar-winged and White-winged cinclodes; Cordilleran and Puna (Córdoba) canastero; Maquis Canastero (scarce); Rock, Straight-billed and Buff-breasted earthcreeper; Streak-fronted Thornbird; and White-tipped Plantcutter. In areas between 2000 and 3000 meters, open fields and grasslands alternate with patches of shrubs. These areas often teem with birds: ground-tyrants; Slaty Flowerpiercer; Plain-colored and Band-tailed seedeater; Greenish Yellow-Finch; Ash-breasted, Gray-hooded and Plumbeous sierra-finch; and Black and Hooded siskin. The rare Rufous-bellied Saltator has also been found in this valley. The road continues to follow the Rio Chicoana, eventually crossing a pass (at about 3000 meters elevation) at Cachipampa, and then drops into the Tin-Tin Valley, another dry, rain-shadow. It is a long and dusty drive to go that far, however, and we will probably start back to Salta well before we reach the pass.

NIGHT: Hotel Selva Montana, Salta

November 25, Day 7: Salta to San Martin via the Abra Santa Laura area. We will leave early this morning in order to reach the beautiful forested region, known locally as the Abra Santa Laura, soon after dawn. The winding, paved road cuts straight through this lovely forest and there is little traffic. Dusky-legged Guans occur here, as well as a good variety of species typical of the humid upper tropical zone of northwestern Argentina. A sampling includes Scaly-headed Parrot; Large-tailed Dove; Dot-fronted Woodpecker; Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner; Andean (White-browed) Tapaculo; Slaty Elaenia; Euler's Flycatcher; Plush-crested Jay; Masked Gnatcatcher; Mountain Wren; Slaty; Rufous-bellied, and Creamy-bellied thrush; Rufous-browed Peppershrike; Brown-capped Redstart; Two-banded Warbler; Tropical Parula; Fawn-breasted Tanager; Sayaca Tanager; Common Bush-Tanager; and Black-backed Grosbeak; Stripe-capped Sparrow; Rusty-browed Warbling-Finch; Hooded Siskin; Golden-winged Cacique; and Shiny and Bay-winged cowbirds. Although more difficult to see, Fulvous-headed Brush-Finch and Stripe-crowned Brush-Finch also are found here. We may hear the elusive Giant Antshrike, although it is more easily seen in Calilegua National Park.

Beyond the Abra Santa Laura, and still south of the city of Jujuy, the road descends into a drier, more Chaco-like zone of dry forest, and then opens into a broad region of mixed dry forest and agricultural fields. In this area, White Monjitas are often seen sitting prominently on electric poles and lines, and Crested Caracaras and Guira Cuckoos are common along roadside. There is always a chance of something less common too, such as a

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Greater Rhea or a Darwin's Tinamou crouched by the roadside. A large lake by the roadside offers an opportunity to see a number of waterfowl. With the use of telescopes here, we should see White-tufted Grebe; Silvery Grebe; Olivaceous Cormorant; several herons and egrets; Glossy Ibis; Roseate Spoonbill; Yellow-billed (Brown) Pintail; Cinnamon Teal; Rosy-billed Pochard; Lake Duck; Common Moorhen; and White-winged Coot. This afternoon we will drive straight on to San Martin, located in a broad, flat, agricultural valley notable mostly for extensive fields of sugar cane.

NIGHT: Hotel Posada del Sol, City of Libertador General San Martin

November 26, Day 8: Calilegua National Park. One of Argentina's newer parks, Calilegua encompasses some of the finest yungas forest in the country. Yungas is a seasonal cloud forest, and because rainfall is heavy only during part of the year, the total annual rainfall is often somewhat lower than true cloud forest. Trees in yungas forest are usually festooned with epiphytes, but the forest does not attain the lushness, nor is it as mossy as its equatorial counterparts. Common epiphytes on yungas trees here especially include Tillandsia, Bromelia, Ichomes, and Rhipsalis, the latter a lovely, dangling, epiphytic cactus. Forest designated as yungas only occurs in southern Bolivia and Argentina, mainly between elevations of 400 and 2000 meters.

Because of the distinctness of yungas forests, and because they are drier than true cloud forest, several birds occur almost exclusively here. Other species, typical of forests to the north, reach their southern limits in the yungas forests of northern Argentina. A fine old road winds up through the heart of Calilegua Park, providing access to splendid birding. Though reaching the higher elevations is tricky (a very narrow road, often muddy after rains), we should come away with an exciting species list here. Among the possibilities are Rufous-thighed Kite; Hook-billed Kite; Solitary Eagle (uncommon); Dusky-legged Guan; Red-faced Guan (rare and only in the highest elevations); Golden-collared Macaw (common in flight overhead); Green-cheeked Parakeet; White-eyed Parakeet; Alder (Tucuman) Parrot (this local species is sometimes numerous at the highest elevations of the park); Yungas (Large-tailed) Dove; Blue Ground-Dove; Rufous Nightjar; Blue-crowned Trogon; White-barred and Ocellated piculet; Giant Antshrike (fairly common though difficult to see); Black-capped Antwren; White-throated Antpitta (fairly common but hard to see); Ochre-cheeked Spinetail; Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher; Mottle-cheeked and Sclater's tyrannulet; Buff-banded Tyrannulet (high elevations); Two-banded and Golden-crowned warbler; Pale-legged Warbler (upper elevations only); Purple-throated Euphonia; Orange-headed Tanager; and Saffron-billed Sparrow.

NIGHT: Hotel Posada del Sol, City of Libertador General San Martin

November 27, Day 9: Morning in Calilegua National Park; afternoon drive to Jujuy. Today we will revisit Calilegua, birding some of the lower elevations and looking for species that we may not have found yesterday. We may also arrive before dawn to allow time to search for the Rufous Nightjar and perhaps other nocturnal species. After a midday picnic, we will drive westward through the city of Jujuy and to our hotel in the country which is comfortable and a good place to relax or enjoy the many birds found around the hotel. Some birds of the hotel include Plumbeous Rail (occasionally seen in tall reeds), Picui Ground-Dove; Guira Cuckoo; Glittering-bellied Emerald; Rufous Hornero; Sooty-fronted Spinetail; Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner; Cattle Tyrant; Fork-tailed Flycatcher; Bran-colored Flycatcher; Small-billed Elaenia; White-bellied Tyrannulet; Rufous-bellied Thrush; Red-eyed (Chivi) Vireo; Shiny and Bay-winged cowbird; Blue-and-yellow Tanager; Sayaca Tanager; Band-tailed Seedeater; Saffron Finch; Red-crested Finch; Stripe-capped Sparrow; and Black-and-chestnut Warbling-Finch.

NIGHT: Hotel TBA, Jujuy

November 28, Day 10: Andean foothills near Jujuy; afternoon drive to Humahuaca. This morning we will visit a small stream in the Andean foothills, where we hope to see the Rufous-throated Dipper, a bird so restricted in distribution that it occurs only in a few streams in northwestern Argentina and adjacent southern Bolivia. On previous trips here we have, at times, also seen Andean Condors; Torrent Ducks; Spotted-breasted Thornbird; and Plumbeous Tyrants, as well as one or more warbling-finches and many of the more common birds listed for yesterday. We will return to the Las Vertientes for lunch before continuing toward Humahuaca.

Our route this afternoon will take us alongside a very broad, boulder-filled alluvial valley with spectacular, colorful mountains on either side, the colors resulting from various mineral impurities in the rocks. As the road climbs between 1500 and 2000 meters, the vegetation becomes sparse with the land even rockier, and the avifauna changes. Among the new species we may encounter are Giant Hummingbird; Red-tailed Comet; Rock Earthcreeper; Creamy-breasted Canastero; White-winged Black-Tyrant; White-crested Elaenia; Brown-backed Mockingbird (Chalk-browed also still present); Chiguanco Thrush; Blue-and-yellow Tanager (a particularly beautiful subspecies here); Greenish Yellow-Finch; and Ash-breasted, Gray-hooded and Black-hooded sierra finches. Occasionally we have found flocks of Burrowing Parrots in the broad valley between Jujuy and Humahuaca. We plan to arrive in town fairly early tonight. You'll want to take your time here, as Humahuaca lies at nearly 3000 meters (10,000 feet) elevation.

NIGHT: Hotel Uquía, city of Uquía

November 29, Day 11: The highlands and altiplano from Humahuaca to La Quiaca. As the sun warms the high desert valleys surrounding the peaceful towns of Uquía and Humahuaca, we will begin our journey upward toward La Quiaca. We will travel through a variety of rocky and arid habitats along this route, and although they may appear quite barren, a surprising number of birds occur within various specialized zones here--many in fact occur nowhere else along the route of this tour. Samples of birds we may find today include Ornate Tinamou; Speckled (Sharp-winged) Teal; Puna Hawk; Mountain Caracara; Burrowing Owl; Golden-spotted, Black-winged and Bare-faced ground-doves; Giant Hummingbird; Red-tailed Comet; Rufous-banded and Common miners; Bar-winged and White-winged cinclodes; Streak-fronted Thornbird; Creamy-breasted Canastero; Chestnut Canastero; Rock, Buff-breasted and Straight-billed earthcreepers; Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail; Gray-hooded and Mountain parakeets; Andean Negrito; Tufted Tit-Tyrant; Bay-winged Cowbird; Black-hooded Sierra-Finch; and Hooded and Black siskin. The drive is not exceptionally long today, and we should arrive this afternoon with time for a much needed rest, because the elevation of La Quiaca is about 12,000 feet. A good place to take it easy!

NIGHT: Hotel Turismo, La Quiaca

November 30, Day 12: La Quiaca to Laguna de los Pozuelos Natural Monument; afternoon drive back to Jujuy. We will start early this morning, long before the sun peeks over the distant mountains to the east of town. Our destination today is Laguna de los Pozuelos, a high Andean alkaline lake that, at least until a few years ago, was home to tens of thousands of flamingos (Chilean, Andean and James in order of abundance), as well as thousands of waterfowl, Puna Plover, Andean Avocet and where the water is deeper, Giant and Horned Coots. Located at nearly 4000 meters elevation (about 12,000 feet), this broad, flat, and shimmering lagoon hosts many species that we will not see anywhere else in Argentina.

Several years of drought have greatly decreased the extent of the lake. In 1994, the numbers of waterfowl and flamingos were much reduced. Thus, we cannot predict what water levels and waterfowl will be like at this lake (the region could be experiencing a slow, cyclical climatic change), but even before reaching the lagoon we may see many species characteristic of the puna grassland and rocky canyons, including Andean Flicker; Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant; Hellmayr's Pipit; many yellow-finches; and Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch. Among waterbirds at the lake, the possibilities include (in addition to those mentioned above) Puna Ibis; Andean Goose; Puna Teal; Crested Duck; and occasionally White-cheeked Pintail. Tawny-throated Dotterel occur in grassy areas near the lagoon, as well as the increasingly uncommon Puna Rhea. We could also spot a few groups of Golden-spotted Ground-Doves and perhaps also Black-winged or Moreno's (formerly Bare-eyed) ground-dove.

The vicuña, a South American relative of the better-known camel, occurs here as well. Although on the endangered species list, vicuña still thrive in this relatively remote region, and we usually see one or more small groups near the road. Time will be short today and driving distances are long, so we will have to use our time wisely in order to see as much as possible. By mid-afternoon, we will begin the long drive back to lower elevation where we spend the night. We are not likely to reach our hotel until after 9 p.m., but soup and a light dinner will be waiting.

NIGHT: Hotel Las Vertientes, Jujuy

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December 1-2, Days 13-14: Flight from Jujiy to Buenos Aires. This morning we will do some last minute birding prior to our flight back to Buenos Aires. The tour ends this evening with dinner followed with a transfer to the Buenos Aires airport in time for flights departing between 10-12:00 PM on Day 13, arriving in the United States early the next morning. If time permits, day rooms will be provided to freshen up.

For those continuing to the Southern Argentina tour, you will overnight in Buenos Aires and have an opportunity to rest the morning of the December 2 prior to the arrival of the tour participants from the United States.

NIGHT: Hotel Lafayette, Buenos Aires (Day 13)

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

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 14 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Steve Hilty plus a local guide from Argentina

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.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$3865** per person in double occupancy from Buenos Aires, Argentina. This includes all meals from lunch on Day 2 to Dinner on Day 13, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Buenos Aires and return, internal Argentina flights* as stated in the itinerary, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

- Participants coming from the Northeast Argentina tour will receive a discount of \$95 from the price of this tour.
- Participants continuing to the Southern Argentina tour will receive a discount of \$115 from the price of this tour.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$400**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your

* Internal flights will be charged separately and will be approximately **\$750** for this tour.

deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, the deposit less \$125 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions, as well as any transfers from one tour to another. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself.*

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$125.
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available.

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, 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. The tour schedule depends closely on internal flights, which may change from the itinerary listed. If so, the itinerary will be altered, with all of the special regions still being visited.

BAGGAGE: We request that you limit your luggage to one large suitcase and one carry-on bag, if possible. As a precaution, we recommend you pack a change of clothes, your binoculars, a pair of walking shoes or boots, medications, and toiletry items in your airline carry-on bag, should your luggage be delayed or lost. Argentine airlines are quite strict about weight limits our Argentina tours include a number of internal flights which still use 44 pound weight limit. Therefore, this is VERY IMPORTANT to avoid excess baggage charges to you on our several internal flights. Excess luggage can be stored securely at the Buenos Aires hotel.

CLOTHING: Weather in Argentina in October and November and December can vary widely from sunny and mild to very cold and rainy. We may encounter snow, rain and wind. You must bring very warm clothing, including a down jacket or parka, gloves, a warm hat, and long underwear. Good raingear and rubber boots or shoes are essential. A hat, sunglasses, and suntan lotion or sunscreen is recommended for protection from the sun. Dress will be casual, but you may want a dress or jacket for our evenings in Buenos Aires.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Argentina is required. Visas are not required for entry by United States citizens. Non United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. Other items should include a flashlight, water bottle or small canteen, and alarm clock.

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HEALTH PRECAUTIONS: If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

At this time, no vaccinations are required for entry into Argentina. However, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta advise us there is a risk of malaria. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus and polio immunizations, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B. We will be at elevations of up to 13,000 feet, so please check with your doctor in advance if you have a history of problems in high elevations.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line 877-FYI-TRIP (394-8747) or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac.aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

INSECT PROTECTION: Insects are not a serious problem, though we may encounter large numbers of mosquitoes in some of the forests on the Southern tour. We recommend the use of Cutters (squeeze bottle), OFF, or similar repellents.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:

Departure Tax – \$19 USD (November 2006) subject to change without notice
Electricity – 220 volts; European type two-pin round or three-pin flat
Language – Spanish
Time – 1 hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time

SUGGESTED READING: Our website, www.ventbird.com offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from this store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You may also visit such other online stores such as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print or hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com or www.buteobooks.com which specializes in ornithology books.

Birds:

- Erize, Francisco, Jorge R. Rodriguez Mata and Maurice Rumboll. *Birds of South America: Non-passerines: Rheas to Woodpeckers*. Princeton University Press, 2006. NEW (and will be useful in Argentina).
- Harris, Graham. *A Guide to the Birds and Mammals of Coastal Patagonia*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1998.
- Harrison, Peter. *Seabirds: An Identification Guide*. Houghton Mifflin, 1991. Considered by many to be the best of the seabird books.
- Jaramillo, A. *Birds of Chile*. Princeton University Press, 2003. **Excellent plates and a good supplement for travelers in Argentina.**
- Narosky, T., and D. Yzurieta. *Guide to the Birds of Argentina and Uruguay*. **Best pocket-sized reference to Argentina birds.**
- Ridgely, R.S., and G. Tudor. *The Birds of South America. Vol.1: The Oscine Passerines*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.
- Ridgely, R.S., and G. Tudor. *The Birds of South America. Vol. 2: The Suboscine Passerines*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. This and previous volume are bulky for travel, but have superb, up-to-date references and have excellent plates. Highly recommended.
- Rumboll, Maurice and Martin R. de la Pena. *Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica*. Princeton, 2001. **Another useful book for Argentina. We recommend participants bring both this book and the Narosky book (above).**

General References:

- Bates, M. (ed.). *The Land and Wildlife of South America*. New York: Time/Life Nature Library Book, 1964. Good section on Argentina.
- Bridges, E.L. *Uttermost Part of the Earth*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1948. Excellent background on Tierra del Fuego.
- Hennessy, H. 1999. *Insight Guide Argentina*. Also see G. Leitner's *Travel Companion Argentina* and other more mainstream guides to travel in Argentina.
- Hilty, S.L. *Birds of Tropical America: A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*. Shellburn, VT: Chapters Publ. Ltd., 1994. Useful background for Argentina although focus is primarily tropical.
- Hudson, W.H. *Birds of La Plata*. New York: AMS Press, 1968. Good background. Originally published 1923.
- Hudson, W.H. *The Naturalist in La Plata*. The classic study of the Argentina Pampas. New York: Dover, 1988. Good background. Originally published in 1923.
- Hudson, W.H. *Far Away and Long Ago. A childhood in Argentina*. London: Eland Books, 1984. Good background. Originally published in 1918.
- Kricher, J.C. *A Neotropical Companion: An introduction to the animals, plants and ecosystems of the New World tropics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. Useful background for Argentina even though the focus is primarily tropical.
- Shipton, Eric. *The Fatal Lodestone*. An out-of-print classic on Patagonia and a chronicle of one of the most remarkable adventures of all. Not to be missed.

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