

# **BAJA CALIFORNIA:**

## **Among the Great Whales with Lindblad Expeditions**

### **February 21 – 28, 2009**

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*Each winter, one of the world's most exciting wildlife phenomena takes place in the bays and lagoons of Baja California's Pacific coast—an estimated 17,000 Gray Whales arrive to breed, give birth, and nurture their young. We will experience this annual event on an eight-day voyage around the coast of the Baja California Peninsula. Cruising aboard the 62-guest expedition ship Sea Bird, our journey will take us from Bahía Magdalena on the Pacific side to Cabo San Lucas at the tip, and finally to Isla Espiritu Santo in the Gulf of California. The Sea Bird is the ideal vessel for exploring this remarkable region. She can easily maneuver to follow whales or schools of playful dolphins. And where our ship can't go, our Zodiac landing craft and kayaks can, allowing for an up-close and personal view of these gentle and majestic giants.*

*We will travel with experienced ship staff and expert naturalists from a variety of disciplines, including oceanographers, botanists, and geologists, in addition to a VENT leader. Interpretation and on-board presentations from cetacean experts will offer an intimate look at the lives of these magnificent creatures. Aside from Gray Whales, we will have plenty of opportunities to see a variety of other whales, porpoises, and dolphins. The Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez) may be the best location for cetaceans in the world. Some 39 species are known from the Gulf, and we have a good chance at ten or more. Past trips have recorded blue, fin, Bryde's, humpback, and sperm whales. Common, spinner, and bottlenose dolphins and even killer whales are also possible. If we are lucky, we may observe rarely-seen behaviors such as dolphins bow-riding the great whales, life-and-death struggles between killer whales and their prey, and lunge-feeding by fin whales. Few places on earth offer such opportunities!*

*Birding should be excellent as well. From the ship we should spot Magnificent Frigatebirds, Brown and Blue-footed boobies, and a variety of terns and gulls, including the Gulf-endemic Yellow-footed Gull. The mangroves at Bahía Magdalena are rich in herons, waterfowl, shorebirds, and other waterbirds. Pelagic waters should hold Pink-footed and Black-vented Shearwaters, Least and Black Storm-Petrels, Red Phalarope, Parasitic and Pomariene Jaegers, Craveri's Murrelets, and even Red-billed Tropicbird. Shore excursions may produce a variety of wintering Neotropical migrants and desert landbirds, including the scarce California Gnatcatcher. One shore excursion around Cabo San Lucas may allow us enough time to find the three Baja endemics: Xantus's Hummingbird, Gray Thrasher, and Belding's Yellowthroat. A small wetland here is also well known as a migrant trap where out-of-range birds are found with surprising frequency.*

*Although whales and birds will be our focus, our voyage will include much more. Awake to a desert-hued sunrise; look for the green flash on the horizon at sunset; savor a beach barbecue as stars*

*move across the desert sky; snorkel in an isolated cove among playful California Sea Lions and a menagerie of colorful fish; kayak through crystalline waters and mangrove channels; walk on pristine desert islands in the Sea of Cortez and experience the raw beauty of a cactus-dominated environment—Baja California boasts 91 species of cacti, including the tallest in the world, the giant cardon. Additionally, there are some twenty endemic plant genera on the Baja California Peninsula and its islands. Herpetologists revel in the Baja California Peninsula as well, since it boasts 9 species of endemic reptiles on the mainland, plus many more on the islands. Every day of this voyage presents new sets of activities, new discoveries to make, new questions to ask, and new moments to savor. Our ship's naturalists will accompany us on every outing to share their wealth of knowledge and help unravel some of the biological mysteries of this fascinating region.*

*As we strive to make getting to and from our ships easier, we have arranged for an exclusive charter flight between Los Angeles and La Paz. To further entice you, we've decided to provide this round-trip flight to you with our compliments!*

**February 21, Day 1: Los Angeles/La Paz/San Carlos/Embark Ship.** Participants fly to Los Angeles to meet our group prior to boarding our charter flight to La Paz (flight times for the charter to be advised). Once our group is assembled, we will board our privately chartered flight from Los Angeles to La Paz and drive across the Baja Peninsula to San Carlos to board our ship.

NIGHT: Aboard the *Sea Bird*

**February 22-24, Day 2-4: Bahía Magdalena.** Bahía Magdalena is one of the main breeding and calving areas for Gray Whale. Each winter, these whales make the longest migration of any mammal—south from their Arctic feeding grounds to breed and raise their calves in these sheltered waters. Time spent in this otherworldly place will provide opportunities to not only observe these enormous yet gentle animals from the ship, but also at water level from our Zodiacs. During our many whale watching opportunities, we will hope for up close and personal encounters with mother and calf pairs.

Our whale watching takes place in an exceptional context: Bahía Magdalena is on the Pacific side of the Baja California Peninsula, a vast wilderness of sculpted sand dunes, mangrove channels and protected waters. On its western side lies Isla Magdalena, a narrow, 60-mile long island comprised of enormous dunes. Although we have seen dunes and beaches before, the particular way these sweeping desert sands meet the shoreline is unforgettable.

The birding in Magdalena Bay is excellent. Magnificent Frigatebirds will likely be a constant presence overhead, and their various plumages and buoyant flight should be a source of entertainment. We should watch for flocks of Eared Grebes, which winter on the bay and often seem to associate with feeding Gray Whales. Impressive numbers of gulls and terns occur here as well, and we may see flocks of thousands of Double-crested and Brandt's cormorants. Some of our time will be spent exploring the quieter channels in the mangrove swamps, on board the ship's Zodiacs and/or kayaks. Some 12 species of herons and ibis are likely in the mangroves, including Reddish Egret, White Ibis, and both night-herons. Neotropic Cormorants should be present as well, along with a few species of waterfowl. Other species likely to be seen in the mangrove swamps include Clapper Rail, the chestnut-headed "Mangrove" Yellow Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, and even Western Scrub-Jay. Large flocks of shorebirds winter along the mudflats of the bay, with possible species including Black-bellied, Semipalmated, Wilson's, and possibly Snowy plovers, Willet, both yellowlegs, Marbled Godwit, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Dunlin, Sanderling, Least and Western sandpipers, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, and Short-billed Dowitcher.

NIGHT: Aboard the *Sea Bird*

**February 25, Day 5: Los Cabos and Gorda Banks.** Today, we cruise past the spectacular Friars Rocks at Land's End. Shore excursions at Los Cabos will be offered, including what should prove to be a fantastic morning of birding. The option to visit the historic town center of San José del Cabo is strongly encouraged, both for the scenic qualities of town and for the wildlife watching opportunities. Adjacent to town is the famous Estero San José del Cabo, which will offer the best birding of the tour. This is the best place in the world to see the endemic Belding's Yellowthroat, which occurs in numbers in the cattails and rank growth. Gray Thrasher and Xantus's Hummingbird, the other two endemic landbirds, are also possible. The woodland and thickets here host large numbers of wintering landbirds, including several species of warblers, flycatchers, and sparrows, both Hooded and Scott's Orioles, and numerous Gila Woodpeckers. Best of all, the estero itself and fresh stream flowing into it are a magnets for waterbirds—we expect to see several species of herons, egrets, White-faced Ibis, a variety of ducks, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Moorhen, Sora, Black-necked Stilt, and possibly several gulls and terns as well. This is a great area for rarities (a Garganey was seen here on VENT's March 2006 tour)—we will be on the lookout for Tropical Kingbird and Ruddy Ground-Dove, two rare species that have recently colonized the area. While a full day here could produce over 100 species our fairly short visit is sure to amass a substantial list in a short time.

The afternoon is spent at the Gorda Banks sea mount, a gathering place for whales and dolphins. Humpback whales are often sighted here at this time of the year. Their variety of behaviors is of great interest as we watch them tail lobbing, flipper slapping and breaching.

Pelagic seabirds will be a possibility on this day, and for the next two days as well, depending on our schedule. While the waters off southern Baja California Sur can sometimes appear quite “dead” for birdlife, areas of upwelling or fish activity can suddenly bring the ocean to life and birds can seemingly appear “out of nowhere.” We will be looking closely for seabirds anytime we are in offshore waters, and what we see will largely depend on luck. There are some exciting possibilities, though. Likely species include Pink-footed and Black-vented shearwaters, Black and Least Storm-Petrels, Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers, and Red Phalarope. Rarer possibilities include Wedge-tailed and Townsend's Shearwaters, Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel, Red-footed, Masked, and possibly Nazca (very rare) boobies, Red-billed Tropicbird, or possibly something even more surprising. In the Gulf of California, we hope to see both Brown and Blue-footed boobies near nesting rocks, but we might encounter our first individuals on this day. (B,L,D)

NIGHT: Aboard the *Sea Bird*

**February 26, Day 6: Islas Los Islotes and Espiritu Santo.** With deeply indented shorelines and dramatically eroded cliff faces, Islas Los Islotes and Espiritu Santo are two of the most beautiful islands in the Sea of Cortez, lying near the entrance to Bahía de La Paz. Although considered two islands, they are more like one—separated by a narrow channel. We'll enjoy them to the fullest with a leisurely afternoon of swimming and snorkeling. Once you put on your mask and flippers, you'll experience a thrill not soon forgotten: swimming with the curious and friendly California sea lions along with an array of beautiful tropical fish.

The best way to observe the impressive geological past of these islands is from a kayak. Easily seen just a few yards from the shore are tons of compacted volcanic ash covered with solidified lava floods. It is also home to an endemic black jackrabbit. The islands offer excellent possibilities for long walks or lazy beachcombing. We'll finish the day with a relaxing beach barbecue complete with a campfire under a star-filled sky.

Birdlife on Isla Espiritu Santo itself is limited to the commoner desert species of Baja California Sur. Rock and Canyon wrens serenade from the slopes, while Black-throated Sparrows inhabit the desert scrub, and Turkey Vultures wheel overhead. Verdins are common and we may see other species such as Costa's Hummingbird, Ladder-backed and Gila woodpeckers, Northern Cardinal and Hooded Oriole. California Gnatcatcher is known from this island and will be a special target of any land birding we do. Brown and Blue-footed boobies both

### ***Baja: Endemics and Whales, Page 4***

occur at Los Islotes, along with Brown Pelicans. Yellow-footed Gulls, endemic to the Gulf of California, should be observable along the beaches, and we'll watch for shorebirds such as Wandering Tattler. Other possible birds offshore include Royal Tern, Heerman's Gull, and possibly some of the pelagic species mentioned above. The rare and local Craveri's Murrelet nests in the Gulf of California and can be seen near this island—we'll keep a diligent watch for these shy little birds. Red-billed Tropicbird could also be seen at almost any moment so we'll keep our fingers crossed that we encounter one of these elegant seabirds.

NIGHT: Aboard the *Sea Bird*

**February 27, Day 7: Exploring the Sea of Cortez.** Today is a day with the luxury of no specific plan. We may spend the morning whale watching in the waters around Isla Danzante, an area that has proven to be one of the best for finding blue whales, bottlenose and common dolphins. The Sea of Cortez is incredibly rich in nutrients, making it home to a huge variety of fish, many of them tropical. Below the surface swim King Angelfish, surgeonfish, butterfly fish, damselfish and the beautifully colored parrotfish. When diving or snorkeling in the clear waters of our anchorage, we'll observe the remarkable spectacle of fish swimming and flitting along the reef as they come and go in huge waves of brilliant color. During the day there will be time to explore one of the many lovely, uninhabited islands such as Isla San José or Isla Santa Catalina, famous for the 12-foot wavy barrel cactus and other desert plants that grow along the canyon. This will of course provide us more opportunities for birding on land, and the chance to compare the slightly different composition of land birds on these islands versus Espiritu Santo. At night, the constellations in the clear sky are entertainment enough.

NIGHT: Aboard the *Sea Bird*

**February 28, Day 8: La Paz/Disembark/Los Angeles.** Disembark after breakfast in La Paz and drive to the airport for our charter flight to Los Angeles (flight times for the charter to be advised).

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour is limited to 24 VENT participants.

**TOUR LEADERS: Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis.** The participation of VENT leaders on this expedition is dependent on the number of participants registered with VENT. In the event there are not enough participants and any or all VENT leaders are not on this departure, this will **not** constitute grounds for a refund. Should you cancel from the cruise, any cancellation penalties will apply. In the event a VENT leader is not able to go on the trip, you will have the leadership of the ship's staff.

**Michael O'Brien** is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has traveled extensively throughout North and Central America and has a passionate interest in migration, bird vocalizations, and field identification. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, writes a monthly ID column and photo quiz (see [www.birdcapemay.org](http://www.birdcapemay.org)), and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*. His illustrations have been widely published including in National Geographic's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the new *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America*. Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies and leads several "Birds & Butterflies" tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis.

**Louise Zemaitis** is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey. She is a popular field trip leader in Cape May where she leads bird and butterfly walks and teaches birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory. Louise is also coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May and curator of the Cape May Bird Observatory Art Gallery. An honors graduate at Temple University's Tyler School of Art, she enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** Prices quoted are per person based on double occupancy. All staterooms are outside cabins with two lower beds or one queen and private facilities. Cabins will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Sole occupancy cabins are available in Category 1 (all cabins) and Category 2 (all cabins) only. If you wish to share accommodations, arrangements can be made at the double occupancy rate in Category 1 and 2 only. You will be charged the single price if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you. Third person rates are available in certain categories at one half the double occupancy rate.

Category 1	Main Deck (#300-305)	\$ 4,920
Category 2	Upper Deck (#200–212, 215) Bridge Deck (#100-104)	\$ 5,460 \$ 5,460
Category 3	Upper Deck (#214, 216 ,217, 219) Bridge Deck (#105, 106)	\$ 6,120 \$ 6,120

Single Occupancy:

Category 1	Main Deck	\$ 7,220
Category 2	Upper Deck / Bridge Deck	\$ 7,860

**Price includes:** Complimentary round-trip charter flight between Los Angeles and La Paz, Mexico; all accommodations aboard ship or in hotels per itinerary; all meals; entrance fees; excursions and sightseeing; taxes, service charges, and tips (except to ship’s crew). There’s never a charge for kayaks, Zodiacs, snorkeling equipment, or the services of the ship physician and Lindblad’s expedition staff as well as Michael O’Brien and Louise Zemaitis, our VENT Leaders.

**Please Note:** At least one VENT leader will accompany this cruise with a minimum of 8 VENT registrations.

**Not included** in the cruise fee is roundtrip airfare to and from Los Angeles, alcoholic beverages; personal items such as phone/fax/email charges, baggage/accident/travel protection plan; discretionary gratuities to ship’s crew; and services provided by LEXspa.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$650**. 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 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 departure date, the deposit less **\$300** per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 119 days before departure date, no refund is available whether previously paid or not. 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.**

**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.**

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this voyage. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of brochure printing. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**AIR INFORMATION:** **Victor Emanuel Travel** is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of VENT. **Victor Emanuel Travel** will be happy to assist you in making air arrangements. Airline tickets carry restrictions due to the airfare used. You may find that your ticket cannot be reissued or exchanged for another air carrier or routing. Cancellation penalties and change fees may be assessed for any changes to the ticket. These charges are solely your responsibility. First and business class travel may be available on some flights. **All requests for travel assistance (air tickets, additional hotels, etc.) must be received no later than 60 days prior to departure date. Within 60 days, arrangements must be made on your own.**

**CONDITIONS:** In addition to information in this itinerary, please refer to the Travel Information supplement from Lindblad Expeditions which will be sent to you upon making your initial deposit. This document contains important information that will enable you to be better prepared for your adventure. Among the many topics covered is information about:

- Currency
- Health and On board Physician
- What to Pack
- The Ship
  - Communications
  - Cabin Amenities
  - Daily Programs
  - Library
  - Dining Room
  - Shipboard Expenses
  - Exercise Facilities
  - Luggage Storage
  - Shipboard Facilities
- Tools of Exploration
  - Bow Cam
  - Kayaks
  - Underwater Camera
  - Video Microscope
- Binocular Guidelines
- Photography Notes
- Swimming and Snorkeling

**Zodiacs:** Key to operation of this expedition is *Sea Bird's* fleet of Zodiacs, which are used to land on remote islands that would otherwise be inaccessible. These sturdy inflatable rubber boats are widely recognized as the safest and most versatile small boat afloat. Each Zodiac is 19 feet long, powered by outboard engines, and are capable of carrying 12 to 14 people with ease.

**CLIMATE & WEATHER:** Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions. Although the days are generally warm, with temperatures in the 60s and 70s, some extremes may be experienced. The weather in Baja California can sometimes be affected by cold fronts coming down from the U.S., in which case the temperature can drop markedly for two or three days at a time and it can be quite windy; under these conditions a heavy sweater or jacket is necessary. Even though you are traveling to a desert environment, our experience has been that people more often err by not bringing enough clothes for the cool weather that can be encountered. Also, while rain is unlikely, it is not out of the question.

**CLOTHING:** At this time of year we can expect hot and dry temperatures on shore. Although waters in the Gulf of California are quite warm, those on the Pacific side are comparatively cool and some mornings on deck are likely to be quite brisk. Be sure to bring at a least light sweater and a windbreaker since we may have windy days with temperatures in the low 50s. Participants should bring lightweight, cool, well-ventilated clothing. Biting insects are not expected to be a problem, but it would be wise to bring a long-sleeved shirt for protection against mosquitoes if any are unexpectedly encountered. Bring a hat to provide shade from the sun, and some may want sunglasses.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a day pack. 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. Sunscreen and insect repellent will be indispensable. If you are prone to motion sickness, be sure to bring seasickness medicine. Other items you should bring are an alarm clock and a camera (and film).

**SWIMMING & SNORKELING:** Good quality snorkels, masks, fins, and beach towels are available on board, but to ensure a perfect fit, you may want to bring your own mask and snorkel.

The water temperature in the Sea of Cortez varies throughout the season, and can often be quite chilly (62°F). It is important to remember that this is not a tropical environment. A wetsuit is recommended. Lindblad provides “shorty” wetsuits for snorkeling, which makes packing easier for you. Some guests simply prefer to bring their own; a short-sleeved, short-legged “spring” suit is enough for some, while others prefer a full-length suit for maximum warmth.

**DOCUMENTS:** Travel into Mexico for citizens of the United States requires proof of citizenship, which may be a valid U.S. passport (preferable) or a birth certificate with a raised seal (either the original or a copy). Additionally, a tourist card, which may be filled out aboard your flight to Mexico, is required. Both the proof of citizenship and the tourist card must be carried with you while in Mexico.

**DEPARTURE TAX:** The departure tax is now included in the cost of your air ticket (\$23 USD as of 07/20/04)). Be aware though that on occasion, people do have to pay the departure tax before being issued a boarding pass. You should probably keep \$23 handy in the event your ticket did not include the departure tax.

**HEALTH:** When traveling, becoming seriously ill is never expected nor anticipated, but is always a possibility, especially when in a foreign country. It is always recommended that tour participants keep up with standard vaccinations. In addition, vaccinations against Hepatitis types A and B should be considered. Hepatitis A is a disease of contaminated food and water. Precaution against the disease comes in the form of a two shot sequence. Hepatitis B is a disease transmitted through unsanitary needles and contaminated blood. Precaution against the disease comes in the form of a three shot sequence. NOTE: Hepatitis vaccinations are standard travel precautions. Traveling in western Mexico does not necessarily mean your chance for exposure is greater or less than anywhere else. Please contact your physician for more information. You may also contact the

## ***Baja: Endemics and Whales, Page 8***

Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta (CDC) which operates a 24-hour automated travelers' health hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP. You may also visit their website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

Always know your blood type! Standard travel items include such stand-bys as aspirin/Advil/Tylenol as well as Pepto Bristol and Imodium. Sunscreen is a necessity on this tour! Your leaders will always let you know when it is or is not appropriate to drink the local water. In places where it is not appropriate, bottle or purified water will be provided.

**MONEY EXCHANGE:** U.S. dollars are best exchanged in the U.S. before your visit to Mexico. You may not have much of an opportunity to exchange money at the airport or at other points on the trip. Large amounts of cash are not easily exchanged in Mexico. You would probably get a better rate of exchange in Mexico, but keep in mind that, once again, money is best exchanged in the USA.

**ELECTRICITY:** Each cabin is equipped with 110-volt alternating current. Electric razors may be operated with out converters from bathroom outlets. Hair dryers and other small appliances (110-volt) may be used in cabin outlets.

**SECURITY:** In order to comply with maritime requirements that apply to all ships and ports worldwide, passengers, crew, and visitors to the ship may be subject to security screening. We would like to advise you that such measures might include the inspection of the individual, as well as luggage and personal belongings. We appreciate your patience and understanding whenever such screenings are required.

**BIRDING ETIQUETTE:** To make the tour most enjoyable for yourself, other participants, and your leader, it is important to use plain common sense and show proper etiquette while in the field. Birds tend to be shy. Loud noises and bright colors can scare them. We encourage clothing with earth tones. Try to avoid colors like oranges, yellows, and reds. Always keep your voice down. Shouting is not conducive to extended looks at a given species. When looking through the spotting scope, always wait your turn and look briefly the first time so that others may have the opportunity to get a look. If you are a smoker, please do so at some distance from the group.

**TIPPING:** At the end of the voyage, if you wish to tip, a guideline for gratuities is \$12 per guest, per day. All tips are divided equally among the crewmembers on board. Lindblad Expedition's staff and the ship's officers do not expect to receive tips. For convenience, in addition to cash, gratuities can also be given using traveler's checks, a personal check (only if issued by a U.S. bank) or American Express, Discover, MasterCard, or Visa.

For other aspects of your adventure, tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel your VENT leader or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

### **MISC:**

Electricity - 110 volts; US two pin (flat) plugs are usual  
Language - Spanish is the official language  
Time - Mountain time zone

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com) offers an 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 our 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.

## **BAJA BIRDS**

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person

***Baja: Endemics and Whales, Page 10***

engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect May 20, 2008 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.