

fieldguides®

Birding Tours Worldwide

A Guide to Birding Brazil with Field Guides

Out on the Rio Aripuana on one of our Great Rivers of the Amazon tours. (Photo by participants David & Judy Smith)

A few years ago, Bret Whitney compiled this insider's guide to Field Guides Brazil tours. Because it has proved so useful, we present it again in updated and slightly abridged form; for the full guide and a complete listing of our Brazil tours, please check our web site.

Brazil is far and away the largest country in South America (about the size of the lower 48) and is home to one of the richest avifaunas on Earth, including some 220 endemic species, a good number of them ranking among the threatened and endangered. Brazil is also one of the top tourist destinations in the world, not only because of its wealth of beautiful places and rich cultural heritage, but also because infrastructure for tourism works in Brazil: air service is excellent, hotels and pousadas are clean and cozy, the food is fabulous, and people in the service industries and countryside alike invariably go out of their way to make things happen the way you want them to.

Field Guides remains deeply committed to advancing birding tourism in Brazil, which is why we offer 15 different itineraries there. "FIFTEEN different trips!?" you say. "Where do I begin?"

Well, the answer depends on what you're looking for, from wanting to do just one trip to Brazil that sees a wide variety of endemic and more widespread but spectacular species (Category 1), to wanting to experience many areas of Brazil and not minding if you see a good number of species on more than one trip (Category 2). You might

want to target the endemics and have fun doing it (Category 3), or you might be looking for a wilderness experience based on a comfortable river-cruising vessel or in a floating lodge (Category 4).

We're convinced that every birder in the world is in one of these categories, so we've designed tours and sets of tours to live up to the loftiest of expectations. Here are some suggestions that may help you plan to see the best of Brazil, your way.

Category 1 is easy. If you'll be doing just one birding trip to Brazil, take our rich sampler tour, titled **Brazil Nutshell: Atlantic Forest, Iguazu Falls & the Pantanal** (Mar). It's just right for seeing the highlights (outside of Amazonia) at a leisurely pace. If your one tour must include both Amazonia and the Pantanal, the two most famous birding venues in Brazil, then what you want, for sure, is **Rainforest & Savanna: Alta Floresta & the Northern Pantanal** in June. If you prefer a short tour with mostly one-site birding and rainforest and endemics are the focus of your dreams, do your one trip at **Serra dos Tucanos** (Sep-Oct) or on the **Bahia Birding Getaway** (early Feb). And of course, we also have our **Jaguar Spotting: Pantanal & Garden of the Amazon** itinerary for a great chance to see the fabulous big cat with a nice taste of southern Amazonian birds. Just don't be surprised if one of these makes you change your mind about coming back to Brazil!

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Birding Brazil with Field Guides: A Guide

Continued from page 1

Category 2 is the toughest because there are many satisfying solutions. Let's pick three or four tours, which is about the average that most folks traveling with us to Brazil will take. Assuming you didn't start with one of the above trips, or even if you did, you should begin with either **Safari Brazil: The Pantanal & More** (Sep-Oct) for an in-depth cross-section of the special habitats and birds from near the Bolivian border in the southern Pantanal through the cerrados and gallery forests of the Brazilian Planalto and the Atlantic Forest in Minas Gerais—or **Nowhere but Northeast Brazil!** (Jan-Feb), for a delightful sojourn through a little-known region of Brazil that introduces you to both seasonally dry and humid Atlantic Forest habitats loaded with both widespread and rare endemic species against an interesting cultural backdrop.

Then you'll face a fork in the road through a verdant, emerald world. Go left and you're headed for Amazonia. That means **Rio Negro Paradise: Manaus** (Sep) in northern Amazonia, where you'll learn to love the Rio Negro and the Rio Amazonas in live-aboard luxury as you enjoy the hunt for rarities among the hundreds of more common birds, or **Brazil's Rio Roosevelt** (Jun) deep in southern Amazonia, for a comfortable immersion in an endemic-rich site with a mile-long birdlist. We've also added a variation on the Alta Floresta theme with our **Brazil's Cristalino Jungle Lodge** (Oct-Nov) itinerary featuring a longer stay at wonderful Cristalino. And in 2016 we inaugurated **Brazil's Mouth of the Amazon: Mexiana Island, the Lower Xingu & Carajas** (Aug) for an exploration of several little-visited sites in the complex easternmost watershed of the mighty Amazon. Or you may choose to go right...

Category 3 is, for many folks, an inescapable, craving continuum from *Category 2*. Memory banks overflowing with Brazilian wonders (of all kinds), and having gained an increasingly comfortable knowledge of the habitats and special birds of Brazil, the *Category 3* fan now builds on the foundations of Safari and Northeast, embarking upon that epic journey known as **Spectacular Southeast Brazil** (Oct-Nov; in two parts that may be combined, offered every other year). Or not. In fact, many have taken the *Category 2* and *3* recommendations in somewhat random order and appear to have come out none for the worse, all for the better!

Category 4 is one we inaugurated in 2015 and operate as every-other-year itineraries. The concept? A remote wilderness experience based for a week to twelve days either on a comfortable Brazilian river boat with air-conditioned cabins and a canopied upper deck, allowing us to stop wherever we wish in areas that few if any other birders have explored, or in a luxurious floating lodge in a remote, undisturbed setting deep in Amazonia. In this category currently are three itineraries. Our two boat-based tours are **Great Rivers of the Amazon I: Exploring the Rio Aripuana** and **Great Rivers of the Amazon II: Birding the Madeira-Tapajos Interfluvium**, while our floating-lodge-based trip is **Brazil's Remote Rio Tapajos**. The prizes? Of course, a great diversity of Amazonian birds and other wildlife, with an added dimension of pursuing new species only recently described to science and exploring unknown sectors of the Amazon basin to simply find out what is there!

For full details on all of these popular tours, visit the tour pages on our web site, where you may view past triplists and download a current itinerary.



From the top: Our comfortable, air-conditioned accommodations for several of our river trips (Rick Woodruff); Hooded Visorbearer, a spectacular, endemic hummingbird found only in northeast Brazil (Marcelo Barreiros); below the visorbearer, Green-headed Tanager, an Atlantic Forest endemic that may be seen on our Southeast Brazil and Tucanos tours as well as Brazil Nutshell and Bahia Birding Getaway (Marcelo Padua); Rufous Potoo, this photo from a Manaus tour, also possible on Brazil's Rio Roosevelt and Great Rivers II tours (Peggy Keller); Ferruginous Antbird, another Atlantic Forest endemic (George Nixon); and Jabiru, a huge stork that may stand as tall as five feet and is a near certainty on any tours that visit the Pantanal (Bill Byers).

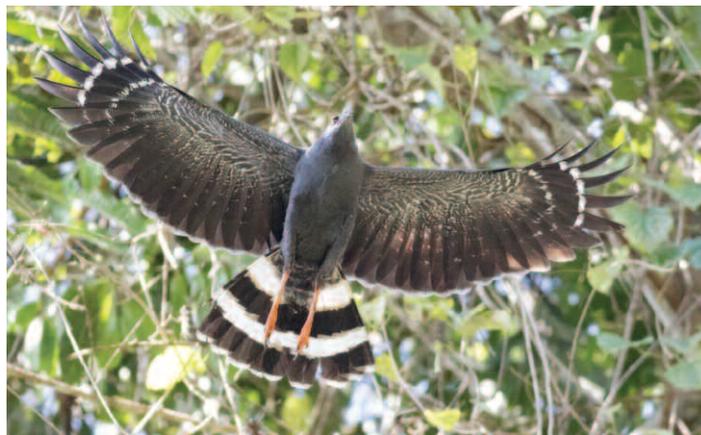


Costa Rica from Top to Bottom

Costa Rica: Birding the Edges, a tour in two parts, visits some of the country's outlying areas that aren't covered in most standard Costa Rica tours. Tom Johnson has put together these photos from last year's tours that he guided with Cory Gregory. He begins with a lovely hummingbird—one of 28 hummingbird species on Part 1—and ends with a mouthwatering description of an ant swarm the group encountered near Los Cusingos, the home of the late, renowned naturalist Alexander Skutch.

Snowy-bellied Hummingbird

These two tours are wonderful for hummingbirds—on Part 1 alone this year we saw 28 species of hummers in just a week, including some specialties like this Snowy-bellied Hummingbird, which put on a good show in the mountains at Bosque del Tolomuco. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.



Crane Hawk

Guide Cory Gregory's eyes almost popped out of his head when this stunning Crane Hawk swooped in and perched above us at the base of the Osa Peninsula on Part 1 of the 2017 Costa Rica Edges tour. This hawk is fairly unusual in its long-tailed, long-legged shape and slaty plumage, but it's the red eyes that really caught our attention this time. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.

Red-headed Barbet

Birds attracted to fruit feeders prove to be wonderfully cooperative. This Red-headed Barbet came in close and showed off his incredible color scheme in the hills just north of San Jose. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.



Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher

The time we spend in the mountains of Bosque de Paz on Part II allows us to enjoy beautiful mid-elevation specialties like this Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher. This year, we found a small colony on the lodge grounds that was comprised of at least three active nests within about 50 feet of each other! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.



Bicolored Antbird

When walking forest trails in the tropics, we use all of our senses to search for birds. While a swarm of army ants is a top prize in a Neotropical forest, the swarm can be difficult to detect. As we slowly paced down the trail at Los Cusingos on Part 1 of the Costa Rica Edges trip, we began to hear leaves shuffling and the short, excited calls of Bicolored Antbirds. We rounded a corner, and a wide ribbon of army ants was visible, rippling across the trail in an odd, jerky, almost "stop-action animation" flow... and the birds followed.



For nearly half an hour, we stood still, watching Bicolored Antbirds (one shown here sitting uncharacteristically still), Tawny-winged Woodcreeper, Blue-crowned Manakin, White-throated Thrush, and Gray-headed Tanagers just a few meters away as they pursued insects flushed by the marauding ants (not the ants themselves, though!). The birds were totally unconcerned about our presence as they had lots of food to watch out for. This was our own little window into the foraging ecology of a flock of ant-following birds, and we soaked it in until the swarm and its birds faded away into the forest. What a spectacle! I'm shaking a little just thinking about the experience of watching this swarm.

2018 dates

Part I: The Deep South, January 6-15, 2018 with Tom Johnson and Cory Gregory
Part II: The Far North, January 14-23, 2018 with Tom Johnson and Cory Gregory

For details, please check the tour page on our web site where you will be able to download a tour itinerary.

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Those birding with Willy Perez on **Ecuador's Wildsumaco Lodge** tour were treated to a magnificent, red-eyed Crested Quetzal (left), swimming and flying Torrent Ducks, and a surprise Blue-rumped Manakin, after first getting lucky at the paramo platform at Antisana—best place in Ecuador for Andean Condor. (Photos by participants Charlotte & Bill Byers)



Highlights like Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (left), Red-billed Pigeon, the rare Rose-throated Becard (far right), and a cryptic Common Pauraque might raise the question, "Did Chris Benesh miss *any* of the **South Texas** specialties on this tour?" To answer that, you'll have to examine his triplist on our web site, replete with some two-dozen of the others! (Photos by guide Chris Benesh)



Tom Johnson, Doug Gochfeld, and their recent tour group made **Puerto Rico** work big time, scoring all the island's lovely endemics—including the Tody (bottom left), the Nightjar (left), and the endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird—while taking time off to marvel at a couple of voracious Brown Boobies putting on a spectacular show as they fished in front of them for a full 30 minutes! (Photos by guides Tom Johnson & Doug Gochfeld and participant Beth Branthaver)



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This iteration of our [Panama's Canopy Tower & Lodge](#) tour, guide John Coons reported, was thrilling for some of the Neotropical prizes not always seen so well on the tour: from left, Streak-chested Antpitta in the scope along Pipeline Road, Pheasant Cuckoo sitting five feet off the ground as it sang its quite loud song, Cinnamon Woodpecker from the top of the Canopy Tower, and Spectacled Owl, a top highlight seen perched over the road on a night drive! (Photos by participants Bruce Palmer & Dan Ellison)

Jesse Fagan's variation on our [Western Panama](#) tour introduced two new sites at which to base our two trips there; in addition to the pleasures of awesome lodge experiences and standout birds—among them Black Guan, Resplendent Quetzal, Spotted (right) and Dull-mantled antbirds, Three-wattled Bellbirds “belling” away, and Snowy Cotinga—this variant produced fine studies of violet hummers, Violet Sabrewing (above) and Lesser Violetear, along with some 320 additional species to keep the group beaming. (Photos by participants Mary Lou Barritt & Max Rodel)



As always, [Brazil Nutshell](#), guided this year by the two Marcelos—Marcelo Padua and Marcelo Barreiros—proved brilliant in its diversity; from the southern Atlantic Forest and Iguazu Falls to the Pantanal, species as varied as Wing-barred Piprites (left) and Spot-winged Wood-Quail (below) to Red-legged Seriema and Rufous Hornero capture birders' attention. That view of the Wood-Quail can't be duplicated on every tour! (Photos by participants David & Susan Disher)



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Masses of pied American Avocets, most in warm alternate plumage and mingled here with the occasional Snowy Egret, are among the many shorebird migrants guide John Coons relished again this year on his [Texas Coast Migration Spectacle](#); of course, warblers, like this Yellow-throated, are a primary target among the many colorful passerines, as are the long-legged waders in breeding plumage, like this Roseate Spoonbill that the tour enjoyed this year. (Photos by guide Micah Riegner and participant Dennis Rabon)



Our two [Colorado Grouse](#) tours, this year with Chris Benesh and Dave Stejskal on the first tour (shown here at Dragon Point) and Tom Johnson and Cory Gregory on the second, concentrate on "chickens" of course—like this Greater Prairie-Chicken displaying at the lek—but the avian wonders of the state don't stop there, as the fancy Lewis's Woodpecker (left of the prairie-chicken) and bizarre Red Crossbill attest. In addition, the scenic splendor and the tour's mammal list are among the country's finest. (Photos by participants Dave Harvey, Herb Fechter & Kurt Schwartz)



Among birders, [Hawaii](#), our tour guided this year by Dan Lane and Doug Gochfeld, is known for its seabirds and some thirty endemic species, many of which are Vulnerable or Endangered. The Newell's Shearwater (bottom left) and the Akiapolaau (far right) are among the most splendid prizes, as is the more common yet brilliant liwi (right), often a favorite passerine, as it was with this year's group.



The handsome Pacific Golden-Plover, pleasantly plentiful as a migrant, is just coming into its snazziest plumage while we're there. (Photos by guide Doug Gochfeld and participant Jim Jackson)



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There were many favorites for our **Ghana** tour group this year, but according to guide Phil Gregory the White-necked Rockfowl (far left) and Egyptian Plover (near left) were at the top of the list. The rockfowl received special attribution because it was so accommodating, coming into view within minutes of the group's arrival and then hanging around for almost an hour. Other, more colorful and more common sightings included Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu and a knockout Northern Carmine Bee-eater. (Photos by participant Chuck Holliday)



The sight of three Jocotoco Antpittas in one spot is hard to process, but here they are, within a few feet of participants on Mitch Lysinger's **Southwest Ecuador Specialties** tour. If this weren't enough, the group also saw—after performing what Mitch calls "trail Twister"—the rare Crescent-faced Antpitta. And then there's the Long-wattled Umbrellabird, left, showing off his seeing-is-believing wattle; Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, one of the most beautifully patterned toucans; and a range-restricted Gray-backed Hawk, perched at close range. (Photos by participant Kathy Brown)

Our recent **Costa Rica** tour with Jay VanderGaast and Cory Gregory saw many, many birds, and there was something for everyone. Pictured here from bottom left, a sparkling Fiery-throated Hummingbird; a pair of Golden-hooded Tanagers, common at feeders; a lovely, male Green Honeycreeper; excellent views of Emerald Toucanets; and finally, a Rufous-browed Peppershrike, not as flashy as these others but a cheerful bird with a great personality. (Photos by guide Cory Gregory and participants Jan Wood & Nancy Herbert)



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The endemic Santa Marta Antpitta (left) was a prize on Richard Webster and Cory Gregory's recent **Colombia: Santa Marta Escape** tour, but as Richard describes it, the bird was almost secondary to the experience of chancing upon a young Colombian woman who had just begun feeding antpittas and being the first group to benefit from her efforts. The Blue-naped Chlorophonia, above right, was seen regularly coming to feeders at El Dorado Lodge, as was the Crowned Woodnymph, which

was fun because the species is so spectacular. The Black-throated Tody-Tyrant is a charming little bird, and though less glamorous than some others here, proved uncharacteristically accommodating. (Photos by guides Richard Webster & Cory Gregory)



There are so many endemics on the island of **Jamaica** that we're able to feature just a handful of those seen on our two recent tours, one with Jesse Fagan and the other with Eric Hynes. Does anyone ever tire of seeing Red-billed Streamertails? We hope not, because they show up frequently on these pages and are a highlight for our tours. Jamaica has two endemic parrots, Black-billed (right), the more common of the two, and Yellow-billed. Orangequit, left, widespread and lovely, and Jamaican Woodpecker, known simply as "woodpecker" in Jamaica, round out the group. (Photos by guide Eric Hynes and participant Brian Armstrong)



Megan Crewe's recent **Borneo** tour "...came face to face with a wonderful variety of the creatures that call the island home." A few of these would include this Diard's Trogon (left below) perched low in a tree along the trail; a Plain-throated Sunbird (top, near

left) that was fairly common in open places, which was nice for those trying to see him; next to the sunbird, the "bird of the trip," an eleventh-hour Whitehead's Broadbill; a little Rufous-backed Dwarf-Kingfisher; and Green Iora in the canopy. There were also very special mammals—Proboscis Monkeys and Orangutans—and an unexpected Clouded Leopard found consuming a mouse deer under the walkway. (Photos by participant Raymond Jeffers)



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In addition to such regular sightings as Colima and Golden-cheeked warblers, the Greater Roadrunner pictured above, a pretty Marbled Godwit shown at left in flight, and millions of Mexican Free-tailed Bats exiting a Hill Country cave at dusk, Chris Benesh, Doug Gochfeld, and their **Texas's Big Bend & Hill Country** tour group, here on the Pinnacles Trail in the park this spring, had the good luck to spot an apparently wild Aplomado Falcon (top left) at Lake Balmorhea, a rare sight indeed in West Texas these days. (Photos by guide Doug Gochfeld)



According to guide Richard Webster, beautiful **Bhutan** was again wonderfully rewarding for birds, rhododendrons, breathtaking vistas, and cultural richness. Among the birds pictured here, three on everyone's most wanted list— Ibisbill (middle below), a distinctive, monotypic family of shorebird; to the right of the Ibisbill, a simply stunning Ward's Trogon; and another stunner, Blood Pheasant. This is not to ignore the little Hoary-throated Barwing, which, though it doesn't get top billing, was much appreciated by the group for its subtle beauty as well as the great looks it afforded them. (Photos by participants David & Judy Smith)



Where can you see Flammulated Owl (above left), Buff-collared Nightjar (above), and Western Screech-Owl all on one five-day trip? How about our **Arizona Nightbirds & More** tours, two this year guided by Tom Johnson (with new guide Micah Riegner) and Dave Stejskal. In addition to a surfeit of nightbirds, tour participants enjoyed other birds of the region as well as visitors from the South, including a fine Slate-throated Redstart and Tufted Flycatcher. (Photos by guide Micah Riegner and participant Ed Eder)

Upcoming TOURS

For details, please contact our
office or check our web site.

September 2017

France: Camargue & Pyrenees I & II—September 2-12, 2017 with Megan Edwards Crewe & Marcelo Padua and September 6-16, 2017 with Jay VanderGaast. Two of Europe's finest birding destinations combined in this wonderful eleven-day tour, with varied highlights and some great French food.

Ecuador: Rainforest & Andes—September 3-17, 2017 with Willy Perez. Highlights of the best of Ecuador's rainforest birding at Sacha Lodge combined with two exciting destinations in the Andes, the Mindo/Tandayapa area and San Isidro.

Slice of California: Seabirds to Sierra I & II—September 7-16, 2017 with Chris Benesh and September 12-21, 2017 with Tom Johnson. A diverse mix of West Coast specialties, montane species, and pelagics in rugged and scenic sites.

Rio Negro Paradise: Manaus, Brazil—September 9-23, 2017 with Bret Whitney & Dan Lane. Bird the rainforests and rivers of the mighty Amazon and Negro in an unforgettable mix of forest hikes and live-aboard luxury.

Morocco—September 11-27, 2017 with Jesse Fagan. Endemic, rare, and specialty birds from coastal wetlands and towering cliffs to the Atlas Mountains and the northwest corner of the Sahara.

NEW/Papua New Guinea & New Britain in Style—September 16-October 3, 2017 with Phil Gregory. A new itinerary with Phil Gregory to explore the endemic birds and specialties of New Britain in addition to numerous highlights on the main island of New Guinea itself.

Ecuador's Shiripuno Lodge: Heartland of the Waorani—September 21-30, 2017 with Mitch Lysinger. A tour to Shiripuno Lodge, gateway to the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve in Ecuador's Amazon region.

Cape May Megan's Way—September 23-29, 2017 with Megan Edwards Crewe. See bird migration in action at one of the country's top migration hotspots.

Safari Brazil: The Pantanal & More—September 23-October 8, 2017 (Brazilian

Merganser Extension) with Marcelo Padua & Willy Perez. The spectacular wetlands of the Pantanal, with Hyacinth Macaws and Jabirus, combine with the many specialties of Brazil's Planalto Central to make for the perfect first birding trip to Brazil.

NEW/Alaska Fall Goldmine: Ross's Gulls in Barrow & Rarities on St Paul—September 30-October 9, 2017 with Tom Johnson & Doug Gochfeld. A cool-weather fall adventure to the far north. We'll start with a treasure hunt for Asian migrants (and American ones too!) on St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea before spending several days at Barrow above 71 degrees North latitude, the US's northernmost point, looking for the legendary Ross's Gull, loons, eiders, and possibly even Polar Bear and Ivory Gull.

NEW/Brazil's Remote Rio Tapajos—September 30-October 11, 2017 with Bret Whitney. Nine days of explorations on the upper reaches of a major tributary of the Amazon based on a luxurious floating hotel.

October 2017

New Guinea & Australia I & II—October 8-26, 2017 and October 27-November 14, 2017 with Jay VanderGaast. A rich and diverse sampler of the best birding of New Guinea and Australia.

Australia—October 9-29, 2017 (Part I) with Chris Benesh & Jesse Fagan and October 27-November 11, 2017 (Part II; Tasmania Extension) with John Coons & Tom Johnson. In two parts for those with limited time. Part I covers the environs of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, southwest Australia, and Alice Springs. Part II begins in Darwin and continues to Queensland (Cairns, Atherton Tableland, Outback Queensland, and O'Reilly's Guest House). Both parts combine for a complete birding tour of Australia.

Namibia & Botswana—October 10-29, 2017 with Terry Stevenson. Southwestern Africa's bird specialties, striking scenery, wilderness, and the famed game of Etosha and the Okavango Delta.

Peruvian Rainforests of the Tambopata: Macaw Lick Extraordinaire—October 12-23, 2017 with Dave Stejskal. Three-site tour to the most species-rich rainforest on Earth. Largest known macaw lick, canopy walkway and towers, eagles, and monkeys.

Serra dos Tucanos, Brazil—October 23-November 2, 2017 with Marcelo Padua. A short but rich immersion in the avifauna of the Atlantic Forest, based at one lovely site near Rio.

Louisiana: Yellow Rails & Crawfish Tails I & II—October 26-30, 2017 and November 2-6, 2017 with Dan Lane & Cory Gregory. Late-autumn tour on the Gulf Coast targeting

Yellow Rails and other migrants and wintering species of the region.

Great Rivers of the Amazon I: Exploring the Rio Aripuana—October 30-November 14, 2017 with Bret Whitney. A rarissimo opportunity to bird the magnificent yet poorly known Aripuana River, including several sites never before visited by ornithologists except on our previous, inaugural trip; expect surprises!

November 2017

Vietnam—November 3-23, 2017 with Dave Stejskal & local guide. Intriguing survey tour to bird-rich but poorly known Vietnam.

Brazil's Cristalino Jungle Lodge—November 4-15, 2017 with Marcelo Padua. A week of exciting birding in climax rainforest on the beautiful Rio Cristalino while comfortably accommodated at the Cristalino Jungle Lodge.

Madagascar—November 4-27, 2017 (Extension: Seychelles Islands) with Phil Gregory & Doug Gochfeld. In-depth coverage of the accessible parts of Madagascar: many endemic birds, striking lemurs, bizarre flora and chameleons, fascinating culture. Optional extension to Seychelles Islands will add yet more endemics.

Chile—November 5-25, 2017 with Willy Perez & Megan Edwards Crewe. Comprehensive survey tour of this visually spectacular and tourist-friendly country.

Colombia: The Llanos & More—November 11-19, 2017 with Jesse Fagan & local guide. A short but bird-rich small-group tour to the llanos of eastern Colombia for Crestless Curassow, Pale-headed Jacamar, and White-bearded Flycatcher, among others, plus several sites near the capital city of Bogota for a fine variety of endemics and specialties.

New Zealand—November 15-December 3, 2017 (Hauraki Gulf Pelagic Extension) with Dan Lane & local guide. Beautiful landscapes as a backdrop for nearly 50 endemic birds plus a great selection of seabirds.

Colombia: Cali Escape: Cloud Forests of the Central & Western Andes—November 18-27, 2017 with Richard Webster & local guide. Cloud forests of two Colombian cordilleras and their rich assortment of hummingbirds and tanagers are highlights of this Thanksgiving Escape across the Caribbean to tropical Colombia.

Mexico: Yucatan & Cozumel—November 18-27, 2017 with Chris Benesh & Cory Gregory. A tour for the most interesting birds of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula amidst its attractive Mayan sites and only a short flight from the US.

Holiday at San Isidro, Ecuador—November 18-27, 2017 with Mitch Lysinger. A bird-rich holiday escape based primarily at the very comfortable San Isidro Lodge.

Jamaica—November 19-25, 2017 with Jesse Fagan & local guide. A quick adventure in search of Jamaica's 27 endemics and numerous regional specialties at Green Castle Estate.

December 2017

Oman & the UAE: Birding Arabia—December 7-23, 2017 with Phil Gregory & local guide. Some of the best Arabian Peninsula birding in two friendly and scenic countries; many regional endemics and specialty birds, including a chance for the Hypocolius.

Western Panama: Chiriqui & Bocas del Toro—December 8-17, 2017 with Jesse Fagan. A tour to two new Panamanian destinations located in the Chiriqui highlands and Caribbean lowlands at Bocas del Toro.

Holiday Costa Rica: Rancho Naturalista I & II—December 19-27, 2017 with Jay VanderGaast & local guide and December 29, 2017-January 6, 2018 with Jesse Fagan & local guide. One-site holiday tour based at the comfortable Rancho Naturalista Lodge, with excursions to other habitats on Costa Rica's bird-rich Caribbean slope.

Mexico: Oaxaca—December 23-30, 2017 with Dan Lane & Doug Gochfeld. Superb birding with two dozen Mexican endemics and fascinating ruins while based in lovely Oaxaca City.

Arizona Winter Specialties—December 27, 2017-January 2, 2018 with Tom Johnson. Exceptional winter birding on a short tour with numerous specialties and potential rarities.

Ecuador's Wildsumaco Lodge—December 28, 2017-January 7, 2018 with Willy Perez. Exploring the riches of the eastern Andean foothills of northern Ecuador for numerous specialties at Wildsumaco Lodge.

Panama's Canopy Camp: Lowland Darien—December 29, 2017-January 6, 2018 with John Coons & local guide. A tour to a remote part of Panama with many specialties seen nowhere else in Central America.

Trinidad & Tobago—December 29, 2017-January 7, 2018 with Megan Edwards Crewe & local guide. Wonderful introductory tour to South America's bird riches, including bellbirds, toucans, manakins, and motmots.

Panama's Canopy Lodge: El Valle de Anton—December 30, 2017-January 6, 2018 with Chris Benesh & local guide. A superb introduction to Neotropical birds or a complement to your broader Middle American birding, all based at a charming lodge.

FIELD GUIDES TOURS IN YOUR WORDS

Our thanks to the hundreds among you who have sent us post-tour evaluations recently. We read every one and take your comments seriously. And we're pleased that, overwhelmingly, you report excellent tour experiences and interactions with our guides and Austin office staff. We'll keep working hard to earn your confidence this year and beyond. Below are a few of your recent remarks.

Colombia: Santa Marta Escape with Richard Webster and Cory Gregory

"The tour couldn't have been better. The accommodations were perfect everywhere, but of course El Dorado was a special place like none of the others. The food was superb and the birding out of this world...Richard is sooooo knowledgeable, well spoken, and willing to do whatever it takes to help everyone have the best experience possible. I appreciated his willingness to take a chance on the Santa Marta Antpitta show as it was one of the highlights for me. I was also impressed with Cory, who was new to the tour. He's very personable and knowledgeable...I was very sorry to see it end!" —M.H.

Texas Coast Migration Spectacle with John Coons

"What were the best features of this tour for me? Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, Day 4, Day 5, and Day 6!" —D.R.

Brazil Nutshell: Intervalles, Iguazu Falls & The Pantanal with Marcelo Padua and Marcelo Barreiros

"I just loved the Brazil Nutshell trip: everything about it. The three very different birding sites. The chance to see Iguazu from both the Argentina and the Brazil sides and the early morning walk on the Falls boardwalk before the other tourists started arriving. Very special. The Intervalles visit was outstanding, and my favorite part of the trip! What a spectacular, remote place for birding! The birds, the place we stayed, and the dining facility were my idea of a remote birding adventure! The two Marcelos are perfect!" —D.T.

Spring in South Texas with Chris Benesh

"We kept thinking we should try to think of some improvements we could suggest to you for this tour, but we just couldn't come up with any. It ran very smoothly from beginning to end, gave us lots of lovely looks at lots of lovely birds (lifers and not), and was just a great 10-day break. Chris was super as ever. I've written too many brilliant reviews for him in the past to think of anything new to say. He just gets better and better. Any time, anywhere, any birds." —B.J.M.

Western Panama: Chiriqui & Bocas del Toro with Jesse Fagan

"We were interested in the Western Panama because we had heard from several people that it had good birding and excellent accommodations. We loved going to the Canopy Tower and Lodge, and were ready to try other venues in Panama. The two lodges we stayed in had fabulous food and drink and genuinely interesting and warm hosts and staff—and wonderful birding nearby. We enjoyed being on the water so much on the first part of the tour, and (not to sound like a pampered gringa) the fact that Panama's tap water is drinkable. This was our first tour with Jesse, and we can't wait to see him again. He is excellent in the field and also excellent at the dinner table—kind and thoughtful and patient." —H.C.

Colorado Grouse with Chris Benesh and Dave Stejskal

"The Wray lek (where we saw Greater Prairie-Chicken) was magical, probably one of the ten best birding experiences I'll ever have. Wow! Just one step down, but still very special, were the Greater Sage-Grouse lek and the Dusky Grouse we found in Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. I loved the lunch and street fair in Palisade. And I liked our group—they were fun, interesting, and good companions." —J.R.



Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird in Colombia (Cory Gregory); shorebirds and waterbirds line the Texas Coast (Micah Riegner); a Red-and-white Crake in the open at Brazil's Intervalles State Park (David Disher); Ringed Kingfisher in South Texas (Chris Benesh); Golden-collared Manakin lights up the understory in Western Panama (Max Rodel); and Colorado Grouse tour participants viewing Gunnison Sage-Grouse at daybreak. (Terry Harrison)



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