

ITINERARY
ARIZONA: BIRDING THE BORDER

I. May 7-16, 2025
II. May 16-25, 2025



The Elegant Trogon reaches the northern extent of its range in the mountains of southern Arizona. We've had great success tracking down these beautiful birds and other Arizona specialties. Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.

We include here information for those interested in the 2025 Field Guides Arizona: Birding the Border tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

Arizona's Southeast is a land of contrasts, where forested, block-fault mountains rise above the dry desert plains. Wild canyons ring the mountain ranges, carrying cool streams to the dry expanses below. This remarkable geographic diversity is reflected in the region's tremendous variety of plants and animals, especially birds. Indeed, Southeast Arizona has a greater variety of breeding birds than does any other area of comparable size in the US. And many of the birds of Southeast Arizona occur only here within the US, their ranges barely extending north from Mexico.

Our nine days of birding are planned to give us an excellent chance of seeing virtually all of Southeast Arizona's

breeding birds. Among the specialties we'll seek are Zone-tailed and Gray hawks, the elusive Montezuma Quail, ten or more hummingbird species, Arizona Woodpecker, Thick-billed and Tropical kingbirds, Sulphur-bellied, Dusky-capped, and Buff-breasted flycatchers, Greater Pewee, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Mexican Chickadee, Bendire's and Crissal thrashers, Olive and Red-faced warblers, Painted Redstart, Abert's Towhee, Rufous-winged, Five-striped, and Botteri's sparrows, Yellow-eyed Junco, and the beautiful Elegant Trogon. Southeast Arizona is also home to a number of more widespread western North American birds, with the likes of White-faced Ibis, Cinnamon Teal, Prairie Falcon, Scaled and Gambel's quail, American Avocet, Wilson's Phalarope, Greater Roadrunner, Vermilion Flycatcher, Cactus and Canyon wrens, Phainopepla, Pyrrhuloxia, Spotted Towhee, Western Tanager, and Bullock's and Scott's orioles sure to please. Additionally, we will search for any Mexican rarities that may be present, such as Violet-crowned, White-eared, and Berylline hummingbirds, Eared Quetzal, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Fan-tailed and Rufous-capped warblers, Flame-colored Tanager, and Streak-backed Oriole, all of which have been found in recent years.



*Many birds will be nesting or preparing to do so when we visit, including the Gambel's Quail.
Photograph by participant Nancy Herbert.*

Southeast Arizona boasts no fewer than twelve species of breeding owls! Our tour is scheduled at the best time of year for finding owls, and "owling" will be a high priority as we strive for good views of as many species as possible, including Whiskered and Western screech-owls, the rarely seen Flammulated Owl, Northern (Mountain) Pygmy-Owl, Elf Owl (the world's smallest owl), Burrowing Owl, and the magnificent Spotted Owl. The recently split Mexican Whip-poor-will will also be one of our targets. Nocturnal outings are also productive for seeing mammals. A few of the species we could encounter (day or night) are Collared Peccary, Mule Deer, Black Bear, Western Hognose Skunk, Ringtail, White-nosed Coati, Bobcat, and even Mountain Lion.

Mid-May is an ideal time to visit Southeast Arizona. Springtime is invigorating in the mountains, and desert regions often have not yet attained the higher temperatures of summer. Birds are conspicuous as they begin the nesting season, and migrants bound for northern climes are still moving through.

Our route forms a loop beginning and ending in Tucson with stops in the Chiricahua, Huachuca, and Santa Rita mountains, Willcox, the upper San Pedro River, the Patagonia/Sonoita Creek area, Nogales, and California Gulch. Scenery is spectacular, one-night stands are few, and the itinerary is arranged to maximize our chances for such late arrivals as Buff-collared Nightjar, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, and Varied Bunting. Join us in May for some of the finest birding in western North America!

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better-fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking (up to 3 miles per hike), some of it on paved or dirt roads, but most walking will be on uneven trails that have hazards such as protruding rocks, fallen limbs or tree trunks, poison ivy, and thorny plants. In the Huachuca Mountains, several trails are steep and narrow; our pace will be slow there. At night, we'll bird mostly along roadsides, but we may have to walk a short way over uneven or inclined terrain to reach where a bird is calling (a small flashlight or a headlamp is necessary for these occasions).
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We cover much ground on this tour, with some days requiring periods in the van of 2-3 hours with birding along the way and much getting in and out of vans.
- **PACE:** Early mornings with breakfasts usually at 5:30-6:00 a.m., with a few afternoon breaks during the tour. Optional post-dinner excursions on several days, with return to hotel usually by 9:00 p.m., but later returns a possibility if we have trouble locating a particular species of nightbird.
- **WEATHER:** Late-spring weather is warm in southeastern Arizona. Expect evening temperatures in the low 50s F in the mountains (low 70s in the deserts), with daytime temperatures ranging from the low 70s to high 90s. Rain showers are a slim possibility.
- **ELEVATION:** Most birding will take place in the deserts and at moderately high mountain elevations (6000-7000 feet), with parts of a few days spent at elevations up to about 8500 feet.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we use modern, indoor restrooms, but on occasion, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.

About the Birding Areas



Tucson Area—The open desert near Tucson is full of birds typical of the Lower Sonoran Desert and is one of the best places in the state to find the local Rufous-winged Sparrow. Numerous other species can also be found in the area, including Harris's Hawk, Gambel's Quail, Greater Roadrunner, Gilded Flicker, Gila and Ladder-backed woodpeckers, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Phainopepla, Cactus Wrens, Curve-billed Thrashers, Verdin, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, and Pyrrhuloxia. All of our birding options in and around Tucson are in flat terrain, and we'll be walking on trails or do our birding along the roadside. This is likely to be the warmest birding of the entire trip.

Chiricahua Mountains—The Chiricahuas possess a peculiar quality, a spirit if you will, that cannot be grasped, but which pervades the place and infects all who love wild places. The massive, lichen-encrusted, red-rock walls of Cave Creek Canyon, last stronghold of the Chiricahua Apaches; the warm, dry smell of pine/oak woodland; a Ringtail in the beam of the spotlight and the soft hoot of the Flammulated Owl; a Slevin's Bunchgrass Lizard in a high-elevation meadow; a fidgety Northern Pygmy-Owl, discovered by a mob of small birds; a male Elegant Trogon silently investigating a potential

nest site in an Arizona Sycamore in the still of mid-morning... these are some of the things that make the Chiricahua Mountains such a special place.

Our days in the Chiricahuas will be full ones as we explore the complete transect of habitats from low Chihuahuan Desert washes to cool spruce/fir forest at nearly 9000 feet. Foremost among the many species of birds on which we'll focus is the handsome Elegant Trogon. Other birds we'll seek in the Chiricahuas include Northern Goshawk, Wild Turkey, Mexican Whip-poor-will, Blue-throated Mountain-gem, Rivoli's (formerly Magnificent), Lucifer, and Broad-tailed hummingbirds, Arizona Woodpecker, Greater Pewee, Ash-throated, Dusky-capped, and Sulphur-bellied flycatchers, Mexican Jay, Western Scrub-Jay, Mexican Chickadee (in the US, found only here and in the Animas Mountains of New Mexico), Bridled and Juniper titmice, Bushtit, Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, Hutton's and Plumbeous vireos, Painted Redstart, Virginia's, Grace's, Red-faced, Olive, and migrating Hermit and Townsend's warblers, Hepatic Tanager, Scott's and Hooded orioles, Black-headed Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, and Yellow-eyed Junco.

The high desert on the eastern flank of the mountains will give us a good chance to seek the uncommon Bendire's and Crissal thrashers—if they have eluded us until now. Scaled Quail, Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, and migrant Lark Bunting are possible as the Chihuahuan Desert scrub gives way to open grassland dotted with mounds created by the excavations of the nocturnal Bannertail Kangaroo Rats. Their burrows are sometimes home to Burrowing Owls as well, and we will watch for them and for soaring Swainson's Hawks as the mountains loom before us.

Huachuca Mountains—From our headquarters in Sierra Vista we will have a couple of days to explore the Huachuca Mountains. The majestic Huachucas remain one of the wildest ranges in Southeast Arizona. Many of the sharp ridges and rugged canyons are reached only by arduous treks. A few of the finest canyons in the Huachucas, however, are easily accessible.

Some of these have become known as spots for viewing hummingbirds, among them Miller Canyon, site of Beatty's Bed and Breakfast, Ash Canyon, and Ramsey Canyon, well known as the home of the Nature Conservancy's Ramsey Canyon Preserve. Broad-billed, Rivoli's (formerly Magnificent), Broad-tailed, Anna's, and Black-chinned hummingbirds are regulars at this time of year, and there is a decent chance for a stray Lucifer or a Violet-crowned as well. Even Berylline and White-eared hummingbirds (both having stayed to nest in the past!) have visited the feeders here. Our visits to these areas will depend upon recent sightings of these fabulous birds. Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Scott's Oriole also frequent these canyons, and Golden Eagles have nested on the cliffs above.



Broad-billed Hummingbird is one of several special hummingbirds we'll seek. This is another species that reaches its northernmost point in Arizona. Photograph by participant Bill Thompson.

Venturing deeper into the mountains, we'll bird the mixed pine/oak and Douglas Fir forests of Garden, Sawmill, Scheelite, and possibly Carr canyons in search of Zone-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, Arizona Woodpecker, Greater Pewee, the very local Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Virginia's and Black-throated Gray warblers, Spotted Towhee, and Red Crossbill. During our visit here, we will offer an optional hike up either Scheelite Canyon or Miller Canyon. Although the paths are narrow and rather steep in places, the footing is firm, the canyons beautiful, and the birding invariably rewarding. With careful searching, at least one Spotted Owl can usually be located at its daytime roost for close, leisurely views. Northern (Mountain) Pygmy-Owl, Canyon Wren, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Painted Redstart, and Red-faced Warbler also breed in both Scheelite and Miller.

Patagonia/Sonoita Creek and Vicinity—Sonoita Creek is a permanent (albeit intermittent) stream lined with towering Fremont Cottonwoods, Velvet Ash, and Arizona Sycamores. Zone-tailed Hawk, Greater Roadrunner, Broad-billed, Violet-crowned, Costa's, and Black-chinned hummingbirds, Thick-billed and Cassin's kingbirds, three species of *Myiarchus* (Ash-throated, Brown-crested, and Dusky-capped) flycatchers, Vermilion Flycatcher, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Phainopepla, Bell's Vireo, Hooded Oriole, Lucy's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and many other species breed here. And Sonoita Creek is another good place to find Gray Hawk, pairs of which proclaim their territories with wild cries as they climb above the towering trees on mid-morning thermals.

A morning exploring the trails at nearby Patagonia Lake State Park is always fruitful, with targets such as Black Vulture, Neotropic Cormorant (as well as a variety of other waterbird species), Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Vermilion Flycatcher, Bronzed Cowbird, Varied Bunting, and sometimes the scarce Black-capped Gnatcatcher!

In the nearby Nogales area, we'll search a few water areas in the desert for Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Tropical Kingbird, Varied Bunting, numerous migrants, and avian strays from Mexico. A few other canyons in the area may yield a number of species typical of the oak-grassland hills of the area, including Rock Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Rufous-crowned and Lark sparrows, and Lesser Goldfinch.



*The Gray Hawk is an uncommon raptor that can be found in small numbers in southeastern Arizona.
Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.*

Atascosa and Pajarito mountains—Located west of Nogales, the Atascosa and Pajarito mountains are best known to birders because of the scarce and local Five-striped Sparrows in California Gulch, but they also are one of the better places to find Montezuma Quail. The grassy, scrub-oak hillsides near Peña Blanca Lake are the favored habitat of this gaudy quail, and we'll make a careful search for them very early one morning, if we haven't found it earlier in the trip. Eastern Bluebird occurs in small numbers in these oaks as well. California Gulch is a sparsely vegetated, steep-walled canyon with well-developed riparian habitat along the creek. It is prime habitat for the Five-striped Sparrow, a Mexican species that breeds within the US in but a handful of canyons in this part of Southeast Arizona. In past years, we've had excellent views of the Five-striped Sparrow within a quarter-mile walk along the ravine here. This is also a prime place to see the multi-hued Varied Bunting.

Santa Rita Mountains and Florida Wash—Less than an hour south of Tucson, the lofty Santa Rita Mountains loom above the desert and the nearby retirement community of Green Valley. This is the home of famous Madera Canyon, host to some of the best middle-elevation canyon birding in the state. We'll have part of a day to bird along the productive roadsides leading to the canyon, and we'll also have a chance to sample the birdlife of Florida Wash below the entrance of the canyon, as well as nearby Box Canyon. Nearly all of the Southeast Arizona mountain specialties are found here.



The Gilded Flicker is a resident of the Sonoran desert near Tucson. Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.

Itinerary for Arizona: Birding the Border

Day 1. Arrival in Tucson. Please plan to arrive in Tucson no later than 2:00 p.m. You may call the motel, located just two minutes away from the airport, for complimentary transportation. We plan to meet in the lobby of the motel at 2:30 p.m. to start our birding. Where we go this afternoon depends largely on what's been around, but we'll likely visit a favored watering hole in town and/or a county park where we could see the likes of Gambel's Quail, Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Cactus Wren, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Verdin, Lucy's Warbler, Rufous-winged Sparrow, and many other species characteristic of the Lower Sonoran Desert. Alternatively, we may decide to ascend the nearby Santa Rita Mountains (Madera Canyon) with a picnic dinner in tow to get our first taste of the Southeast Arizona mountain habitats and attempt a bit of owling before returning to our rooms for the night. It will be quite warm when we head out but could be cooling off at dusk if we decide to stay out for a picnic dinner. Night in Tucson.

Day 2. Tucson to the Chiricahua Mountains. We'll pack our bags this morning and set out for the Chiricahua Mountains; we'll more than likely make some stops in the mesquite grasslands near Tucson on our way east. Near the town of Willcox, we'll check some ponds for such migrants as Eared Grebe, Cinnamon Teal, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Long-billed Curlew, Baird's Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Snowy Plover, and Black Tern. We'll enter the Chiricahuas on the western side and climb over these mountains, passing through beautiful, mature streamside vegetation, oak woodland, and mixed conifer forests before reaching our accommodation set amid towering and dramatic mountains that capture the warmth of the setting sun and make this one of the most scenic spots in this range, one overloaded with great scenery. Night in the Chiricahua Mountains.

Days 3-4. The Chiricahua Mountains and vicinity. Our two full days here will give us the opportunity to visit several areas in the Chiricahuas, from the shady trails along the South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon to pinyon and juniper scrub near Portal, sparse Chihuahuan Desert flats east of the mountains on the New Mexico border, and cool conifer forests near Rustler and Barfoot parks. Temperatures may be cool in the morning hours, but they will quickly increase as the sun

rises. We'll certainly find ourselves doing some owling after dinner, either close at hand in Cave Creek Canyon, or farther afield (depending on our needs and the weather). Nights in the Chiricahua Mountains.

Day 5. Chiricahua Mountains; to Sierra Vista and the Huachuca Mountains. Our morning birding will depend on what we might still need to see in the area. Later in the morning we will make our way to Sierra Vista and plan to bird that area in the afternoon, perhaps checking some higher elevation spots in the Huachuca Mountains and visiting some hummingbird feeders known for their rarities. Night in Sierra Vista.



The Whiskered Screech-Owl is one of several owl species that we'll watch for. These owls are another essentially tropical species that reach the US in southeastern Arizona. Photograph by guide Micah Riegner..

Day 6. The Huachuca Mountains. We will spend the entire morning birding in a one or more canyons of the Huachuca Mountains, perhaps Carr Canyon, Miller Canyon or one on Fort Huachuca. The bird possibilities this morning are numerous, but Spotted Owl, Elegant Trogon, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, and Greater Pewee stand apart from the rest. If we plan to enter Fort Huachuca a photo ID, at the least, will be required to enter. We will likely head back to Sierra Vista for lunch. In the afternoon we'll visit another set of hummingbird feeders as well as check some other high-elevation areas. Depending on our success with nightbirds in the Chiricahua Mountains, we might do some owling this evening. Night in Sierra Vista.

Day 7. Sierra Vista area; to Patagonia/Sonoita Creek/Nogales area. We'll have a chance today to look for some migrants or desert grassland species as well as some of the riparian breeding birds in the Sierra Vista area. Later in the morning, we'll head to the Patagonia area for some afternoon birding in the Sonoita Creek area. Night in Nogales.

Day 8. Patagonia/Nogales area and Pajarito Mountains/California Gulch. One of our goals will be to locate Five-striped Sparrow today. Where we go will depend on recent sightings and access. We might explore Montosa Canyon, Box Canyon, or possibly make a longer excursion to California Gulch. Gray Hawk, Varied Bunting, Tropical Kingbird, and possibly, Rose-throated Becard could also be on the menu for today. In the later afternoon, we'll catch up with any species we still need to see in the area. Night in Nogales.

Day 9. Nogales area; to Tucson. Our last day of birding will depend on the species we are still looking for. We might visit sites to search for Black-capped Gnatcatcher or head directly to Madera Canyon, the best-known birding area in the Santa Rita Mountains. Madera Canyon has a long history of attracting a number of rarities, so you never know what's

going to show up! We'll bird the mountains here and the surrounding grasslands before heading north to Tucson. There may be time to check some treatment ponds before arriving at our motel. Night in Tucson.

Day 10. Departure for home. You may sleep in this morning if you wish. Please take the motel courtesy van to the airport at your convenience.

About Your Guides

Tour I:

Chris Benesh grew up birding in California. After earning his degree in zoology, Chris joined the Field Guides staff, and his life underwent a wonderful transformation. The intervening years at Field Guides have taken him to many corners of the world and across both the Arctic and Antarctic circles!

Chris's passion for education has led to his serving on the Arizona Bird Committee, leading the occasional workshop, and--we must add--thoroughly explaining in admirable detail the nuances of flycatchers to tour participants and colleagues alike. Chris's schedule includes tours to many parts of North America, Panama, Mexico, Australia, and occasionally Peru. He lives in Tucson, Arizona.

*"I would travel with **Chris Benesh** anywhere, any time. He is calm, pleasant, and good-humored. He is not only brilliant at spotting and finding birds, but equally brilliant at ensuring that every member of the group gets a great look at the bird."*
B.M., Arizona's Second Spring

Tour II:

Micah Riegner grew up exploring the Central Arizona Highlands and was fortunate to have parents who took him along on college field courses ranging from the coast of Mexico to the mountains of Costa Rica, where encounters with tinamous, barbets, and jacamars launched him into the birding world at a young age. During his time at Prescott College, he made annual pilgrimages to Amazonia, where he worked as a guide and participated in expeditions, mostly in Brazil. For his master's he studied the foraging ecology of Amazonian woodcreepers. When he's not in the field, he tries to make time to paint birds and other creatures that spark his interest.

*"**Micah** is a real bird finder and a delightful guy. He obviously knows the country and the culture well. He provided us with some really great owling, too." P.B., Central Mexico & Baja: Birds, Butterflies & Whales 2022*

Micah guided tours with Bret Whitney, John Coons, Dan Lane, and Tom Johnson before joining Field Guides full time in 2019. Micah is a generous guide with an easy laugh and is eager to share his love of birds and nature in the years to come. We know you will have a great time traveling with him, too!

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for complete tour schedules for the guides; just click on a photo.

Financial Information

FEE: \$4125 from Tucson

DEPOSIT: \$425 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: November 8, 2024 (Tour I); November 17, 2024 (Tour II)

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$700 (Singles may be limited during our stay in the Chiricahua Mountains.)

LIMIT: 7

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Caroline Lewis. Caroline will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Please plan to arrive in Tucson on Day 1 no later than 2:00 p.m. Departures may be made for anytime on Day 10. Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees. **Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$4125 for one person in double occupancy from Tucson. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 9, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through dinner on Day 9, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Tucson, airport taxes, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$700. Singles are limited during our stay in the Chiricahua Mountains. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR LIMITS: Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open. However, on occasion, we will send along a guide in training on a tour. In these cases, the guide in training will be taking a seat in the van or bus. Our guides will have a rotation system within the vehicle so that clients share the inconvenience equally. We hope this minor inconvenience will be more than offset by the advantages of having another guide along.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$425** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or or **by November 8, 2024 (Tour I); November 17, 2024 (Tour II)**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and full payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date,

50% of the full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right 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. Field Guides Incorporated

reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

30 May 2022 JC

9/24 peg; updated 10/24 peg