ITINERARY

Chile: The Classic Tour

November 16 – December 6, 2026

The spectacular Magellanic Woodpecker is a near-endemic, confined to the temperate forests of Chile and southern Argentina. They depend on mature and old-growth trees for breeding, but are known to go into recently burned areas in search of insect larvae in the dead trees. Photograph by guide Willy Perez.

We include here information for those interested in the 2026 Field Guides Chile *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 website)
- 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

From the Atacama Desert and the Puna grasslands below the snow-mantled peaks of the highest Andes, to the rich waters of the Humboldt Current and the ancient forests of Nothofagus beech, and on to the wilds of Patagonia and the Strait of Magellan - Chile is a land of extraordinary beauty and home to an avifauna largely restricted to the southern latitudes of South America, from the reigning Andean Condor to the endemic Crag Chilia.

Chile has a broad appeal to both first-time and veteran birders in South America. To veterans, the attraction is, of course, Chile's endemics. To novices, it is a comfortable and spectacularly beautiful place to experience many typical Neotropical families—without being overwhelmed. Chile is also a wonderful country in which to travel. The capital, Santiago, has been called the most attractive city in South America, and smaller cities and towns throughout the

country—from modern seaside resorts to little pueblos in the interior—are clean and safe. The international and local airlines are as fine as we have found anywhere. A model national park system spanning the country's entire (4200 km!) length preserves a complete range of natural habitats. We will visit a number of Chile's twenty-two major parks and reserves as we bird each of the distinctive vegetational and altitudinal zones from near the Peruvian-Bolivian borders toTierra del Fuego the tip of the continent.

Our tour will record approximately 270 species of birds, a manageable number even for those new to the Bird Continent. Among these are widespread southern species, but also several in the ranks of the most unusual on the continent and many others that are little known or of very local distribution, such as Lesser Rheas (of both races/species?), Chilean Tinamou, Giant Coot, Rufous-chested Dotterel, Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, Magellanic Plover, Chilean Pigeon, Slender-billed Parakeet, White-sided Hillstar, Chilean Woodstar, the huge Magellanic Woodpecker, Creamy-rumped Miner, White-throated, Patagonian Forest earthcreepers, Des Murs' Wiretail, Black-throated and Chestnut-throated huet-huets, Moustached Turca, White-throated Tapaculo, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant (and seven other breeding ground-tyrants), Patagonian Tyrant, Ticking Doradito, Rufous-tailed Plantcutter, Greater Yellow-Finch, and White-throated Sierra-Finch.

Waterfowl are a highlight of southern South America, and we should see a lot of Black-necked Swans and smaller numbers of Coscorobas, as well as Andean, Ashy-headed, Ruddy-headed, and Upland geese, Flightless and Flying steamer-ducks, Red Shoveler, Torrent Duck, and many more. We'll also take a boat trip into the pelagic waters of the Humboldt Current, one of the world's top seabirding destinations, where we may see several species of southern albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters, and other oceanic birds.

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, much of it on paved roads or well-groomed tracks or trails. No single walk exceeding 3 miles in distance round-trip, most much shorter. Walks in steep terrain are few and taken slowly, and those at high elevation are short and slow. All walks are optional.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES**: We cover much ground on this tour, and many days will feature long periods of time in the bus and roadside birding, with much getting in and out. Altitude sickness affects some visitors to high elevations, and physical or health problems can be exacerbated. We will take care to move at a slow pace, but participants must be aware of their limitations and the challenges that high altitudes present. We bird from a boat on at least one occasion; seas can be choppy, and salt spray is likely.
- **PACE**: Early morning (5:00-6:30 a.m.) breakfasts followed by birding, with a break for lunch (often a picnic, sometimes in a restaurant). In the afternoons, we often bird again or travel to our next destination. On several occasions, we take a post-lunch break before birding again. Dinners are served rather late (7:00-8:30 p.m.).
- **ELEVATION**: We will have a few days at sea level and in lower elevations, but much of our birding is in foothills or mountains. We bird at high elevation in El Yeso area in the Andes of Santiago (to 10,000 feet) and in Lauca National Park (perhaps to above 15,000 feet, though our lodge is at 11,000 feet). *Those prone to altitude sickness should take precautions.*
- **WEATHER**: Temperatures are often chilly in higher elevations (low 40s F), whereas the lowest elevations can be rather hot (90s F). Rain showers are a possibility.
- **VEHICLE SEATING**: So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion, though with a full-sized bus, this is not difficult. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS**: Whenever possible, we use modern, indoor restrooms, but in remote areas, 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.

Our tour is a survey tour of Chile, focusing on Chilean specialties (endemics and near endemics as well as well differentiated subspecies). We have tried to balance our goal of seeing a broad cross section of Chile's birds and landscapes with reasonable logistics and tour length, minimizing one-night stays where possible.

Chile is a country where the restaurants typically open later than most birders would prefer, often at 9:00 p.m. To allow earlier dinners, it is necessary to pre-arrange a set menu. This facilitates the evening meal immensely as well as allowing us to sample a broad selection of Chile's cuisine over the course of the tour. Even so, we still are unlikely to eat dinner any earlier than 7:00 p.m., and sometimes 8:00 p.m. is the earliest. Special dietary concerns will be forwarded to the hotels before the tour. Many, but not all, of our hotels offer a morning buffet breakfast. Lunches will vary from sit down at restaurants, to picnics made by the guides, or box lunches provided by hotels. Be warned that there is a seeming glut of ham and cheese in Chile and coffee is often instant, not perked! We will do our best to avoid the abundance of ham and cheese and offer you a pleasant variety for our lunches.

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 one of the guides.

About the Birding Areas

Arica area—Arica is situated on the coast at the mouth of an oasis valley in the driest desert on Earth: the Atacama. With the cold Humboldt Current just offshore, Arica enjoys a comfortable climate and is a resort area—Chileans know it as the city of eternal spring. The immediate coast teems with waterbirds and shorebirds, from such typical Humboldt Current species as Peruvian Pelican, Blackish Oystercatcher, Kelp, Gray, and Belcher's gulls, to such wintering North American shorebirds as Whimbrel, Willet, Ruddy Turnstone, and Surfbird. And in some years, there are tens of thousands of wintering Franklin's Gulls and Elegant Terns. Offshore, the seas can be filled with birds that are feeding on cyclical, high populations of small fish, with the pelicans, Guanay Cormorants and Peruvian Boobies making up the bulk of the birds. Other smaller marine species that are tied to the rich waters include Markham's and Elliot's Storm-Petrels and Peruvian Tern which are sometimes present.

The surrounding countryside is a picture of stone-sprinkled, sandy plains that rise steeply to rolling dunes in the shadow of the stark coastal hills. In a few places these desert sands are dissected by flowing or intermittent streams choked with ribbons of riparian growth creating oases in the arid landscape. Such are the valleys of the Rio Azapa and the Rio Lluta, the latter descending some 12,000 feet from the heights of the Andes through a dramatically winding, steep-walled valley. Small oases of willows, peppertree, giant horsetails, and flowering shrubs tend to concentrate birds of this arid region, among them Peruvian Thick-knee, Croaking Ground-Dove, West Peruvian Dove (now a separate species from the White-winged Dove), Oasis Hummingbird, Chilean Woodstar (becoming increasingly rare and now extremely hard to find although we have a good site), Peruvian Sheartail, Andean Swift, Slender-billed Finch, Chestnut-throated Seedeater, Cinereous Conebill, Tamarugo Conebill (very local and rare), and Peruvian Meadowlark.

Putre area—Ascending the valley of the Rio Lluta (by good, paved highway for the entire way) toward Putre, we pass through a zone of bizarre, candelabra-shaped cacti (*Browningia candilaris*) before reaching the high shrub zone of these dry mountains. Here we could encounter Guanacos, close relatives of the llamas and alpacas. The Guanaco's camelid profile is characteristic of the southern Andes.The snow-capped Nevados de Putre, a massive pair of ancient volcanoes,

form an impressive backdrop for the village of Putre, at 11,000 feet in the high temperate zone of the Andes. The area is characterized by dry hills and gullies sparsely covered with *Polylepis*, shrubs, grasses, and cacti. This type of habitat and the irrigated terraces around town support a number of interesting birds such as Variable (Red-backed) Hawk, Bare-faced and Black-winged ground-doves, Giant Hummingbird (at nearly nine inches, the largest of all hummers), Andean Hillstar, Buff-breasted Earthcreeper, Streaked Tit-Spinetail, Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant, White-browed Chat-Tyrant, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, Chiguanco Thrush, Mourning and Ash-breasted sierra-finches, Greenish Yellow-Finch, and Hooded Siskin. Some of the local specialties of this zone are, Creamy-breasted and Canyon canasteros, White-throated and Straight-billed earthcreepers, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, Golden-billed Saltator, and Black-hooded Sierra-Finch. The Andean Deer, or Taruca (*Hippocamelus antisensis*), is occasionally seen on the brushy slopes in this area as well

Lauca National Park—Parque Nacional Lauca, declared a Biosphere Reserve in 1981, lies in one of the finest accessible regions of Puna and Altiplano in the Andes. The park protects 460,000 acres of mountains, valleys, lakes, and bogs that span an altitude range of 10,000 to 20,000 feet. In fact, there are ten peaks within the park that exceed 16,000 feet. After a five-mile climb by road above Putre, one enters the Altiplano, a vast rolling plain of *Festuca* and *Stipa* grasslands and bogs, punctuated by shimmering lakes and snow-capped peaks. At Lauca the scenery is dominated by the towering cones of the twin volcanoes, Los Payachatas (Pomerape and Parinacota), which surge to over 20,000 feet. A few miles to the south is the smoking summit of active Guallatiri. Glacial melt water from the great volcanoes feeds the dark blue depths of huge Lago Chungará, considered the highest lake in the world.

In this high Puna zone lives an exciting variety of wildlife, virtually all of which is viewable from the main park road. Grassy expanses support Ornate and Puna tinamous and the rare and endangered “Puna” Rhea, *Rhea pennata tarapacensis*, perhaps a full species distinct from the “Darwin’s” Lesser Rhea, *R. p. pennata*, of the southern lowlands. In and around the numerous lakes and streams is an abundance of waterfowl and shorebirds, including Silvery Grebe (the northern *juninensis* form), Andean Goose, Crested Duck, Yellow-billed (oxyptera) and Puna teal, Puna Ibis, Andean Lapwing, Puna Plover, Andean Avocet, and Andean Gull. Ever-changing salt flats are frequented by shifting populations of Chilean Flamingos (often with a few Puna and Andean flamingos), varying year to year in number from but a few to many hundreds. Pairs of Giant Coots maintain their huge mound nests of aquatic vegetation in shallow ponds beside the road and seem oblivious to passersby. A classic picture of Chungara is the blue lake with Parinacota Volcano in the back and hundreds, maybe even thousands of these huge Giant Coots and their nest mounds in the foreground. The wild, bugling cries of courting pairs are a wonderful sound.

Chilean Flamingos are the most common of the three species we might see.
Photograph by participant Debra Ford.

Among the land birds we seek at Lauca are Rufous-bellied and Gray-breasted seedsnipes, Andean Swallow, Andean Flicker, Puna Miner, Cream-winged and White-winged cinclodes, Cordilleran Canastero, White-tailed (rare) and Black-billed shrike-tyrants, Puna, Rufous-naped, and White-fronted ground-tyrants, Andean Negrito, Plumbeous and White-throated sierra-finches, Glacier Finch, Bright-rumped Yellow-Finch, and Black Siskin. And don't forget to look up, for the park is home to a small population of magnificent Andean Condors.

The high puna is also favored by another camelid, the Vicuña, which has become quite rare in most parts of its range. Under the protection of the park (with curtailment of hunting and indiscriminate shooting), the Lauca population now numbers nearly 20,000 animals. Talus slopes and other rocky areas are frequented by Mountain Vizcachas, large rodents with soft, dense fur, long ears and tail, and big dark eyes.

The central coast and the Humboldt Current off Valparaíso—The cold Humboldt Current that sweeps up the Pacific coast of northern Chile and Peru not only delivers planktonic riches that support an entire oceanic food chain of remarkable biomass and diversity, but the chilled airmass above it robs the westerlies of their moisture, thus creating the coastal Atacama Desert. The effects of the Humboldt Current are still felt—although slightly ameliorated—along the central Chilean coast. Near Viña del Mar many of the Humboldt Current specialties (including Humboldt Penguin, Guanay and Red-legged cormorants, and Inca Tern) can be conspicuous right along the road that winds along the arid hills overlooking the rocky coastline. Here too is the endemic Seaside Cinclodes.

From the port of Valparaiso, we'll take a boat trip a few miles offshore where we should see the Humboldt Current species mentioned above as well as Peruvian Booby and Peruvian Diving-Petrel. The list of possibilities includes, as well, a number of ocean wanderers of the highest order, breeding in Antarctic and subantarctic regions around the globe. Although many of the southern tubenoses will have returned to their subantarctic breeding islands by November, some subadults and nonbreeders stay north in the Humboldt Current. Among the possibilities are Black-browed, Salvin's, Chatham, Buller's, and Northern Royal albatrosses, Southern (Antarctic) and Northern (Hall's) giant-petrels, White-chinned, Westland, Masatierra (Defilippi's) petrels, Pink-footed and Sooty shearwaters, Wilson's storm-petrels, Peruvian Diving-Petrel, Red Phalarope, Common and Arctic terns, Chilean Skua, and Parasitic Jaeger.

The beautiful Inca Tern is a Humboldt current specialty that we'll see along the coast near Viña del Mar. Photograph by participant Valerie Gebert.

Central Chilean foothills and lowlands—Situated west of Santiago are the coast ranges ranging from arid, stony hillsides with thorny Matorral habitat (shrubby thorn forest) and cacti to strips of riparian woodland. It is a birdy place in the early morning, where we could find, among others, the endemic Chilean Tinamou, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle,

Chilean Flicker, Striped Woodpecker, Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail, Dusky-tailed Canastero, Great Shrike-Tyrant (rare), Fire-eyed Diucon, Tufted Tit-Tyrant, "Chilean" White-crested Elaenia, Chilean Swallow, Austral Thrush, the endemic Chilean Mockingbird, Diuca Finch, Austral Blackbird, and Long-tailed Meadowlark. More importantly, though, this shrub zone is home to another special endemic, the big White-throated Tapaculo, whose explosive song can raise the hairs on one's spine. And the "mouse-like" Tapaculo is here represented by the Dusky Tapaculo.

The coast of Valparaiso province and the farmland northwest of Santiago provides more Matorral habitat, where we shall try for anything we didn't see in the mountains. But the real highlights here are the small marshes sometimes teeming with waterfowl. Here we shall seek White-tufted Grebe, Stripe-backed Bittern, the gorgeous Black-necked Swan, Cinnamon Teal, Red Shoveler, Rosy-billed Pochard (rare), Yellow-billed Pintail, Lake and Black-headed (rare) ducks, Plumbeous Rail, Spot-flanked Gallinule, and Red-gartered, Red-fronted, and White-winged coots. Two species found in *Scirpus* marshes are the odd Wren-like Rushbird and the Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, perhaps the most beautiful Tyrant flycatcher.

Santiago's central Andes—The central section of the Chilean Andes is an important region for birding, as many species are limited within the country to this area. A variety of Andean habitats between 4000 and 11,000 feet are accessible from the capital. These vary from arid shrub-covered slopes and rugged canyons of the lower Andes to upper-temperate scrub and open Puna. We visit the Yeso valley, a beautiful area of high elevation (8000 feet) wetlands we'll seek such central-Chilean specialties as White-sided Hillstar, Creamy-rumped (rare) and Rufous-banded miners (the Chilean form probably deserves species status), Gray-flanked Cinclodes (scarce), Sharp-billed and Cordilleran canasteros, Moustached Turca (a vocal, large, and often very visible tapaculo!), Black-fronted, White-browed, and Ochre-naped (scarce) ground-tyrants, Greater Yellow-Finch, and Band-tailed and Gray-hooded sierra-finches. In the wild foothills, we will also make a concerted effort to locate the local and little-known Crag Chilia, perhaps Chile's most unusual endemic bird.

Also we'll look for Mountain Parakeet, Magellanic Tapaculo, as well as for anything we missed before.

But perhaps *the* bird of Yeso is the Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, *Phegornis mitchellii*, its generic name meaning bird of splendor. This high-elevation shorebird embodies characteristics of both plovers and sandpipers, and its beautiful plumage combined with its genuine rarity have made it one of the most sought-after of Andean birds. Yeso is a particularly good place for seeing the sandpiper-plover because much of the bird's favored bog/stream habitat occurs not far from the road and at a somewhat lower elevation than elsewhere in the bird's range. Finding this species will be a high priority.

The Diademed Sandpiper-Plover is a beautiful shorebird that we'll seek in the Yeso Valley. Photograph by guide Willy Perez.

Termas de Chillan is a popular ski resort nestled in the Andes east of Concepción. Here we find the northern extension of Chile's *Nothofagus* (Southern Beech) forests. This region is rich in birdlife including such fine species as the Des Murs' Wiretail, Magellanic Tapaculo, White-throated Treerunner, Fire-eyed Diucon, Patagonian Tyrant and the wonderful Magellanic Woodpecker. Other treats we can see here include the Chilean Hawk, split from Bicolored and the uncommon

White-throated hawks. Certainly, the species we will concentrate on is the elusive and colorful Chestnut-throated Huet-Huet, one of the biggest and fanciest of the tapaculos, as well as Patagonian Forest Earthcreeper, split from Scale-throated Earthcreeper. Be prepared for a wide variety of birds in Termas de Chillan, even some night birding.

The Araucania Region—The area around Temuco is known as the Araucania, named after the Araucano native group as well as the *Araucaria* (Monkey puzzle) tree, which provided their staple food. Abundant rainfall throughout the year creates a lush and wonderful zone of forest here, often referred to as the Valdivian forest. Several species of southern beech (*Nothofagus*) provide the dominant species. It is a primeval forest of great, lichen-covered trees and home to terrific birds. The understory is dominated by *Chusquea* bamboo, home to tapaculos and the strange Des Murs' Wiretail.

Our main destination in this area will be Cerro Ñielol National Park, nestled right within the city of Temuco. This park holds a diversity of habitats of the Southern Beech forests. Birds we will concentrate on finding include the Black-faced Ibis, Austral Pygmy-Owl, Green-backed Firecrown, Thorn-tailed Rayadito (an ovenbird trying to be a creeper and a chickadee at the same time), Black-throated Huet-Huet, Chucao and Ochre-flanked tapaculos, Austral Blackbird, and Black-chinned Siskin. Our focus, however, will be on finding the endemic Slender-billed Parakeet and, if luck is with us, the rare Rufous-tailed Hawk. In addition, this park holds a substantial population of Chilean Pigeons, a species that was once nearly brought to extinction by Newcastle's Disease.

The coastline of Los Rios and Puerto Montt —Situated at one of the wettest places on the planet, Puerto Montt is the gateway to the fjords of the southern portion of Chile's coastline. We will explore some local patches of forest, coast line and estuaries before staying overnight in Puerto Varas. The next day we will drive to Puerto Mont to catch our flight to the south to Punta Arenas. Special birds here may include Snowy-crowned Tern, Spectacled Tyrant, Slender-billed Parakeet, Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Black necked Stilt, flocks of shorebirds including Lesser Yellowlegs, Hudsonian Godwit, and some Cormorants.

The Magellanic Plover is an odd, dove-like shorebird endemic to the Patagonian region. They breed on Isla Grande, and we'll look for them while we are there. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Southern Chile: Isla Grande, Tierra del Fuego—From Punta Arenas southeast across the Strait of Magellan is the town of Porvenir on Isla Grande, Tierra del Fuego, near the southern tip of the continent, which we shall travel to on a scheduled ferry crossing. In this land of tundra-like hills and saltwater flats and rocky coastline, the Patagonian winds are king. But a calm morning in the wilds of Tierra del Fuego can be incredible. Several birds endemic to the far southern reaches of South America occur around Porvenir's large saltwater bay and the numerous lagoons nearby, as well as a few species more familiar to Northern Hemisphere birders. Possibilities include Imperial Cormorant (mostly of the "King Cormorant" subspecies here), Coscoroba Swan, Ruddy-headed geese, Flying Steamer-Duck, Magellanic Oystercatcher,

the elegant Rufous-chested Dotterel, Least Seedsnipe, Baird's and White-rumped sandpipers (both wintering here, sometimes in large concentrations), Magellanic Diving-Petrel, Short-billed Miner, Austral Canastero, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, and Patagonian Yellow-Finch. Perhaps foremost of the specialties is the rare and beautiful Magellanic Plover, one of the least-known shorebirds in the world. Restricted in the breeding season to the northern portion of Isla Grande and scattered places along and just north of the Strait of Magellan, the Magellanic Plover has an extremely limited distribution and has been observed by only a few birders. Recently a small colony of King Penguins has established itself on a remote bay on the island, and we will make the trek southwards to visit one of the south's most majestic birds. The colony is slowly expanding and now holds upwards of 90 birds.

Patagonia and Torres del Paine National Park—Punta Arenas, at 53° S latitude, is in the heart of Patagonian sheep ranching—and now oil-producing—country. Vast expanses of grassy steppe have been badly overgrazed by sheep and cattle, but where good grassland persists, the lowland form of the Lesser Rhea, *Rhea pennata pennata*, locally known as Ñandú, is still to be found in small parties on the open range. Here, too, are grazing flocks of Upland and Ashy-headed geese and occasionally overhead, scavenging Chilean Skuas, which patrol the grasslands and waterways almost everywhere in the Strait of Magellan area. Near the rocky shoreline are additional species, including Magellanic Penguin, Flying (and hopefully a Flightless or two!) Steamer-Duck, Magellanic Oystercatcher, and the striking Dolphin Gull.

North of Punta Arenas lies Parque Nacional Torres del Paine, arguably the finest national park in South America and certainly one of the world's finest. Established in 1959 and declared a Biosphere Reserve in 1978, the "Towers of Paine" were named by the Tehuelche Indians who once inhabited the area; paine was their word for the color blue. At the edge of the southern Andean ice cap, a portion of which is included within its borders, the 450,000-acre park offers rugged mountains, massive retreating glaciers, gentle forested hillsides, lakes, streams, rivers, and waterfalls—all within sight of the spectacular Torres del Paine themselves, sheer pinnacles of granite-capped limestone isolated by glaciers from the main Andean chain and thrust to 10,000 feet. Amid this setting of unsurpassed scenic splendor is wildlife galore, protected and often approachable.

This is the land of the Andean Condor, and Paine is a place where this great bird is common. The park also supports healthy populations of Lesser Rheas and Guanacos, and the many lakes in the region are the breeding grounds for a number of waterfowl and other special southern species, including White-tufted Grebe, Black-necked and Coscoroba swans, Torrent Duck (of the nominate race), Chiloe Wigeon, the rare Spectacled Duck, Red Shoveler, Andean Duck, Lake Duck, Cinereous Harrier, Austral Parakeet (the southernmost parrot in the world), Scale-throated Earthcreeper, Great Shrike-Tyrant, Rufous-tailed Plantcutter, Correndera Pipit (performing flight/song displays), and Black-chinned Siskin. Hot on the heels of the rediscovery of the legendary and mysterious Austral Rail on a previous tour, we discovered a population in Torres del Paine National Park and some year depending on the water level we have had wonderfull views of them. In the park we will have nice vistas of the Paine massif.

The Yellow-bridled Finch is an uncommon resident of the high mountains of far southern Chile. These finches are highly dimorphic, with colorful males and more cryptically patterned females. We'll look for them in the high elevations as we travel through Patagonia. Photograph by participant Jeanette Shores.

On our travel days in Chilean Patagonia we will be birding the whole way, sometimes taking detours to find special birds. In the Steppes near the east end of the Straights of Magellan we will look for unusual birds such as the Tawny-throated Dotterel, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, Chocolate-vented Tyrant, and the gorgeous and very rare White-bridled Finch. In higher areas we have a chance to find the White-throated Caracara, Patagonian Mockingbird, Band-tailed Earthcreeper and the stunning Yellow-bridled Finch.

The Moustached Turca is an interesting endemic, found in the central Andes of Chile. We'll likely see it when we visit the Yeso Valley, south of Farellones. Photograph by participants David and Judy Smith.

Itinerary for Chile: The Classic Tour

Day 1, Mon, 16 Nov. Flights from the US to Santiago. Most flights from the US depart late in the evening and arrive in Santiago the following morning. We recommend arriving a day early to be well rested for the tour. If you'd like, our office can assist with arrangements at an airport hotel.

Day 2, Tue, 17 Nov. Santiago to Arica. Whether you arrive this morning or stayed overnight at the airport hotel, please plan to **meet your guide in the international arrivals area of Santiago Airport at 11:00 am**. We'll enjoy our first lunch in Chile and, time permitting, visit Batuco for introductory birding before continuing to Arica. The onward flight is currently scheduled for early evening (subject to change). Night in Arica.

Day 3, Wed, 18 Nov. Arica and drive to Putre along the Rio Lluta Valley. From here we'll travel by bus, birding our way up the Lluta Valley and eventually into the absolute desert. As we climb, the desert gradually begins to show signs of life, and by the time we reach Putre in the late afternoon, it will seem almost lush. After settling into our simple yet comfortable lodging (where we'll spend two nights), we'll bird the nearby slopes. Be prepared for a wide range of temperatures since we'll be climbing from sea level in the Atacama to 11,000 feet. Night in Putre.

Day 4, Thu, 19 Nov. Lauca National Park. We'll drive up into the park for the day, birding at elevations ranging from 13,000 to 15,000 feet, carefully—and necessarily—avoiding excess exertion. Our bus will be nearby at all times should we wish to rest for a while. Wear your warm layers and lots of sunscreen. We'll have a picnic lunch at a birdy site by the lake. Night in Putre.

Day 5, Fri, 20 Nov. Putre to Arica. This morning we'll bird the Putre area looking for species that have eluded us until now. Once we are back in the Lluta Valley, we'll look again for any species that we did not find on Day 3 and then hop over to the Azapa Valley for some hummingbird action! Night in Arica.

We will bird in some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. Here, a Field Guides group visits a lake in Torres del Paine National Park. Photograph by guide Willy Perez.

Day 6, Sat, 21 Nov. Morning Arica and oasis valleys. Today we will visit the dry valleys of Chaca and Camarones near Arica, where we will be concentrating on regional specialties. Hiking boots are advisable here. Night in Arica.

Day 7, Sun, 22 Nov. Flight from Arica to Santiago and Vina del Mar. With a morning flight to Santiago, after we land it will be plenty of time to drive to Vina del Mar birding along the way. With clear skies we should be able to see Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Western Hemisphere (22,834 feet) from the left side of the plane. Night in Vina del Mar.

Day 8, Mon, 23 Nov. Pelagic boat trip off Valparaiso. We'll plan to start early for an exciting five-hour pelagic trip into the Humboldt Current where we may see various albatrosses, shearwaters, petrels, storm-petrels, and Peruvian Diving-Petrel. (Don't forget your motion sickness preventive.) In the late afternoon we will bird coastal sites north of Vina del Mar. Night in Vina del Mar.

Day 9, Tue, 24 Nov. Coastal birding and drive to El Maipo. Today we'll bird to the coast and drive to El Maipo valley, but in a roundabout and birdy way. We'll visit several sites on the coast, possibly, El Peral lagoon the mouth of the Maipo River where gulls and terns roost, as well as some coastal marshes that may be teeming with waterbirds. Night in San Jose de Maipo.

Day 10, Wed, 25 Nov. Yeso and Maipo valleys. We'll start early today, carrying our lunches and birding our way up to an area where we hope to find one of the most sought after of Andean birds, the Diademed Sandpiper-Plover. Come prepared for a cool morning and sunny, but cool temperatures in the highest areas. We'll hike for about 1.5 miles, but you will have the choice to opt out of the hike and stay at the vehicle with the driver. (If you are unsure about the activities on this day, please do not hesitate to contact our office). Night in San Jose de Maipo.

Day 11, Thu, 26 Nov. Drive from El Maipo to Chillan. We will spend the full day driving from El Maipo to Termas de Chillan, with several stops along the way. This will give us an opportunity to look for the Burrowing Parakeet and Chilean Tinamou, which are getting scarcer and more difficult to find in the usual places near Santiago. Night in Chillan.

Day 12, Fri, 27 Nov. Birding Termas de Chillan. We will spend all day in the beautiful Termas de Chillan region, visiting several spots to look for Chilean forest birds. Quests here include Chestnut-throated Huet-Huet, Patagonian

Forest Earthcreeper, Magellanic Woodpecker, Patagonian Tyrant, and White-throated Hawk among many others. Most of our birding will be roadside and trails spurring off it. There will be an opportunity for some optional owling (for Rufous-legged Owl) after dinner. Night in Termas de Chillan.

Des Mur's Wiretail is an interesting little furnariid that we'll track down near Termas de Chillan. This tiny bird has an extraordinarily long tail made up of just a few feathers. Photograph by participant Mike Warner.

Day 13, Sat, 28 Nov. Drive from Chillan to Temuco. In order to avoid indirect flights and long waits in airports, we plan to drive to the city of Temuco today. The drive to Temuco is approximately 250 kilometers. We will be stopping for some roadside birding near Los Angeles and we will spend most of the Afternoon in Cerro Nielol National Park, a fine patch of Valdivian forest a short distance from our hotel, looking for species such as Black-throated Huet-Huet, Chucao and Ochre-flanked tapaculos, DesMur's Wiretail, Slender-billed Parakeet, and perhaps Rufous-tailed Hawk. Night in Temuco.

Day 14, Sun, 29 Nov. Temuco to Puerto Varas. This is about a 4.5-hour drive, and we'll break it up with a drive over to the coastline of the Los Rios region, off of the main PanAmerican highway. We hope to have some nice birding in the estuaries, marshes, and rivers along the shoreline, with species such as Snowy-crowned Tern, Spectacled Tyrant, Slender-billed Parakeet, Hudsonian Godwit, and Many-colored Rush-Tyrant. Night in Puerto Varas.

Day 15, Mon, 30 Nov. To Puerto Montt, local birding, and flight to Punta Arenas. Today we'll have a short drive to Puerto Montt in the morning and visit Lahuen Nadi park, a local patch of forest for some southern Valdivian forest birding, to look for some of the elusive Tapaculos (if we are missing some) before we catch our flight to Punta Arenas. After landing in Punta Arenas we will stop at a wetland before we head to our hotel. Night in Punta Arenas.

Day 16, Tue, 1 Dec. Tierra del Fuego. We will visit Tierra del Fuego today, taking the morning ferry to Porvenir where we'll bird and then travel to Cerro Sombrero and stay in a quaint family-run hotel. We'll first visit a lake north of town, aiming to see many of the birds of the far south but specifically the Magellanic Plover and Short-billed Miner. The ferry ride to the island will give us a chance again to encounter Black-browed Albatrosses, Southern Giant Petrel, and Magellanic Diving-Petrel. Additionally, we will make a rather lengthy but very worthwhile afternoon sidetrip to a newly established King Penguin colony at Bahia Inutil, making this a long but very exciting day. Night in Cerro Sombrero.

Day 17, Wed, 2 Dec. To Cerro Castillo, arriving about dinnertime. This is another long but very birdy day. We'll begin early in the day in Cerro Sombrero and make our way towards Primera Angostura, the short ferry crossing to the mainland in the northern part of Tierra del Fuego. Once on the mainland, we will be searching for birds of the dry Patagonian Steppe such as Chocolate-vented Tyrant, Tawny-throated Dotterel, and the rare White-bridled (Canary-

winged) Finch. We'll be driving on well-maintained Patagonian dirt roads for many miles, stopping where there is good birding. Distances are great here, but the birding is great as well. We'll plan to arrive in Cerro Castillo for dinner. Night in Cerro Castillo.

Day 18, Thu, 3 Dec. Morning in Sierra Baguales; to Torres del Paine National Park. We will spend the morning birding the scenic and very interesting area of Sierra Baguales before heading to Torres del Paine. At Sierra Baguales we hope to find such birds of note as Yellow-bridled Finch, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, and maybe the scarce White-throated Caracara. We'll also have a shot at Austral Rail today. We will spend the night near the park at Cerro Castillo.

Day 19, Fri, 4 Dec. Torres del Paine and return to Punta Arenas. We will visit Torres del Paine agian in the morning for some nice birding in the park while taking some time to enjoy the incredible scenery. After lunch, we'll hit the road and return to our hotel in Punta Arenas, overlooking the Strait of Magellan. Night in Punta Arenas.

Day 20, Sat, 5 Dec. Flight to Santiago and connections home. We'll have some time this morning to visit nearby wetlands for a final bit of birding before our afternoon flight back to Santiago. Please plan your onward flights home for late evening departures tonight.

Day 21, Sun, 6 Dec. Arrival in the US.

About Your Guide

Willy Perez has been leading birding tours for more than twenty years. He has also worked as a resident guide at Maquipucuna Reserve on the west slope of the Andes, on a project protecting marine turtles in Costa Rica, and on bird conservation in northwestern Ecuador. He was a resident guide at Kapawi Lodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon for three years, mastering the art of finding and identifying the many secretive birds of the lowland rainforest. He has since guided throughout Ecuador including the East and West , the Amazon Basin, the Galapagos Islands, and southern Ecuador. During the last few years he has also guided birding groups in Chile, Argentina and the UK.

In his free time Willy trains local guides and is a frequent lecturer, in English and in Spanish, on birding and conservation issues in the Neotropics. His wife, Fiona, is British, and Willy and his family have relocated to England for several years. He speaks excellent English and has an engaging and outgoing personality that makes every tour he leads enjoyable and fun.

> ***Willy** has a magnetic personality. He's a great birder and his knowledge of the terrain and the locations adds tremendous value to his ability to find the birds. His people skills are unusually good. He makes you feel comfortable as soon as you meet him and he goes out of his way to help in whatever way he can. As soon as I arrived home from the trip, I began looking at his tour schedule to find another trip with him that would be a good fit for me. I am eager to tour with Willy again soon". J. T., SE Ecuador*

Take a look at https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/ for Willy's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Willy will be assisted by a **local guide** during the tour, if warranted by group size.

Financial Information

FEE: $10,975 from Santiago (includes flights within Chile)
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): $1550
DEPOSIT: $1100 per person
FINAL PAYMENT DUE: May 20, 2026
LIMIT: 12

Other Things You Need to Know

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

A NOTE ON ACCOMMODATIONS/ALTITUDE: This tour reaches elevations above 15,000 feet. We will take it easy, but please be aware of the symptoms of altitude sickness and consult your physician about appropriate preparation.

Accommodations are generally very good throughout the tour. In Putre we stay at a more basic hotel, but even there hot water and electricity are available 24 hours. Wi-Fi is now common in most hotels, sometimes at an extra charge.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour begins and ends in Santiago, Chile (SCL).

Arrival: Santiago (SCL) on November 17 by 10:00a.m. (plan for an overnight flight from the US).

Departure: Santiago (SCL) on December 5 after 9:00p.m.

Please wait to purchase airline tickets until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate. At that time, we'll be glad to assist with your flight arrangements at no service fee.

DOCUMENTS: Be sure to verify the latest entry requirements for each country you will visit or transit.

Passport: A valid passport is required for international travel. It should be in good condition, valid beyond your return date (6 months recommended), and contain at least one blank page for each country on your itinerary.

Visa: U.S. citizens do not need a visa. Non-US citizens should consult the consulates of each destination for current entry requirements.

Important: Upon arrival in Santiago, Immigration/Border Control will issue you a small receipt-style Tourist Card (PDI Tarjeta de Turismo) at no cost. Please keep it in a safe, easily accessible place, as it serves as proof of entry and **must be returned upon departure** (police and hotels may also request it at any time). If the card is lost or stolen, you must replace it at the PDI Extranjería at the Santiago airport before leaving, which may delay your departure.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is $10,975 for one person in double occupancy from Santiago. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 19, all meals from lunch on Day 2 through lunch on Day 20, all ground transportation, the flights within Chile, 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 Chile, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, excess baggage charges, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the tour is $1550 for those requesting a single room. 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 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 electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please send your deposit of $1100 per person; see https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/ for our Payment Options. **Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or by May 20, 2026.** 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.

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.

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.

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 purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to protect your investment in case of injury or illness to you or an immediate family member before or during a trip. Because we must remit early and substantial deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer refunds for cancellations outside of our Cancellation Policy. If a participant is unable to join or continue a tour due to illness, all related expenses will be their responsibility, and no refunds can be issued for missed days. Please wait to purchase insurance until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate, as most policies are non-refundable.

For full details, visit our Trip Cancellation Insurance page at https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/.

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.

4/21peg; 2/22cb; 4/23wp; peg4/24; 3/25; 3/26mz, peg