

ITINERARY
FRANCE: CAMARGUE & PYRENEES II
September 4 – 14, 2019



*Greater Flamingos breed in the Camargue, and we should be able to see them, plus many other breeding birds and migrants.
Photograph by guide Eric Hynes.*

We include here information for those interested in the 2019 Field Guides France: Camargue & Pyrenees II 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

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- 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 reference list
- 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

The south of France is acclaimed for its sunny Mediterranean beaches, ancient Roman ruins, fine Provençal cuisine, and internationally famous movie festival. But birders know of other reasons to visit this lovely area—the Camargue, a 210,000-acre national park situated in the very heart of the vast Rhone delta, and the Pyrenees, brooding mountains that form a towering wall between France and Spain.

Our tour begins amid the rugged splendor of the Pyrenees. Rising to more than 10,000 feet, these impressive mountains comprise the highest limestone range in Europe. Stretching from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the warmer blue waters of the Mediterranean in the east, they run more or less the full length of the border between France and Spain—a span of 250 miles—but they're at their most spectacular in the scenic Gavarnie area south of Lourdes, where we'll spend four nights at a lovely hotel in the picturesque mountain village of Gèdre.

Hemmed in by montane forests, upland meadows, and the spectacular snow-capped peaks of the High Pyrenees, Gèdre is the perfect base from which to enjoy a series of short drives and leisurely walks in our quest for some of Europe's most sought-after birds. Here, we will search for Alpine Accentor, Citril Finch and Yellow-billed (Alpine) Cough, the rare and impressive Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier), and the ever-elusive Wallcreeper. The precipitous alpine crests can act as a barrier to many of Europe's summer migrants, southbound now toward their winter quarters in tropical Africa, and periods of inclement weather during September sometimes result in sizable fallouts in the valleys. Those who enjoy watching birds of prey will find this an exciting place, too, as many European raptors pass south via the high mountain passes in the fall.

From the mountains, we'll move east towards the Mediterranean coast and the flat lowland marshes of the Camargue, one of the best-known and most important birding areas in Western Europe. Though the park is perhaps most famous for its huge breeding colony of rosy-hued Greater Flamingos, in autumn it's also a vital rest and refueling stop for untold thousands of Palearctic migrants. Early September is arguably the peak time to visit the Camargue. Most of the region's specialty breeders are still around at this time, and with flocks of migrant shorebirds also passing through, we may encounter anything from Squacco and Purple herons, Wood Sandpiper, and Slender-billed Gull, to colorful European Rollers and Eurasian Hoopoes, Short-toed Snake-Eagle, and the omnipresent Eurasian Marsh-Harrier.



Throughout our stay in this delightful corner of Provence, we'll be based near the historic Roman town of Arles in a small country hotel that features wonderful regional cuisine. Not only is our hotel convenient to all the prime wetland sites, it's also only a short distance from two additional habitat types—the dry plain of La Crau and the low wooded hills around Les Baux de Provence. Among the many varied possibilities here are such species as Lesser Kestrel, Eurasian Thick-knee (Stone-curlew), Little Bustard, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse (rare now), Iberian Gray Shrike, and Sardinian Warbler, while an evening foray to look for the mighty Eurasian Eagle-Owl could result in a thrilling highlight to our stay in the lowlands.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: This tour features a mix of terrain; for maximum enjoyment (and full participation) you must be able to climb steps, spend a good part of some days on your feet, and walk up to 3 miles in a day (6 miles if you plan on hiking to the Cirque de Gavarnie) on varied terrain with some (short) steep sections. On our walks, we generally move at a slow pace, allowing time to find, watch, and enjoy the birds as well as any interesting plants and animals encountered. The terrain in the Camargue and La Crau is predominantly flat and

easy-going. Much of our birding here is possible from or close to the road and most walks are short, typically one to four kilometers or one-half to two miles. In the Pyrenees, and around Les Baux de Provence (in low hills in the Camargue region), some of our birding will be done from the roadside and some along trails on foot. In both places, most of our steepest ascents will be made in the vehicles. At the Cirque de Gavarnie, we will be on foot for most of the day—a necessity if we are to try for specialties such as Wallcreeper and Citril Finch—but there is a cafe where we can rest and refresh near the furthest point, and, in all, we will be covering a maximum total distance of only about ten kilometers (six miles). As one would expect from a mountain region, there are inevitably some steeper sections, but the pace is leisurely enough so as to present little difficulty to anyone in reasonable health and used to some regular walking. Most walks are much shorter than this (typically one to five kilometers). The going varies from easy to moderate, mainly along well-trodden trails with just occasional rougher sections—punctuated by frequent stops for birding, of course! Altitude ranges from 3100 feet (our hotel in Gèdre), through 5500 feet (Cirque de Gavarnie), up to a maximum of about 7600 feet in the Port de Boucharo and on the hills above the Col du Tourmalet.

The combination of the wetlands of the Camargue and the mountains of the French Pyrenees offers some of the most varied autumn birding available anywhere in Western Europe. That said, birders used to the diversity found in the US and the American tropics are sometimes surprised by the relatively low diversity of Europe. But there's a benefit to this lower

diversity and to our proximity to birding destinations during the tour: there will be fewer early starts than perhaps some are used to. In the Camargue, we'll offer a pre-breakfast excursion most mornings, as our hotel doesn't generally serve breakfast until 8:00 a.m. On one of the mornings we visit the Crau steppe, we'll start earlier in order to better our chances of seeing Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Little Bustard and Little Owl, returning for breakfast later in the morning. In the Pyrenees, we'll meet for breakfast each day at 7:30 a.m. We will then be out for much of every day, taking a picnic lunch before returning in the late afternoon (about 6:00 p.m.). Each evening, we'll arrange an informal pre-dinner get-together to fill in the day's checklist and to outline plans for the following day. Dinner is typically served from 7:30 p.m.

For maximum flexibility, transport during our stay will be in vans driven by the guide(s). Most roads are paved, but access to some spots entails travel along unpaved tracks that may be bumpy and/or dusty. 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.



The Bearded Vulture, or Lammergeier, is often one of the favorite birds of the tour. We'll watch for these massive raptors while we are in the Pyrenees. Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.

Itinerary for France: Camargue & Pyrenees

Day 1, Wed, 4 Sep. Flights depart from the US.

Day 2, Thu, 5 Sep. Arrival into Toulouse and transfer to hotel. Your guide(s) will meet the group just outside the baggage claim exit in the Toulouse Airport at 1:00 p.m. Once we've assembled, we'll begin the drive to our hotel in Gedre, which is about a 2.5 hour drive away—without birding stops, that is. It will certainly take us longer as we'll be birding along the way. Once we've made our way out of Toulouse, we may venture off on to some quiet rural roads through a rolling landscape dotted with sleepy, red-roofed villages, farmland, and deciduous woods, keeping our eyes open for Common Buzzard, Eurasian Hobby, European Stonechat, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Cirl Bunting, and other species typical of this part of southern Europe. Returning to the highway, we'll continue west to Lourdes where a stop at the Pic-du-Pibeste will have us looking for the Egyptian Vultures that can often be found here, and we'll likely have our first looks at the massive Eurasian Griffon and lovely Red Kites among others. From Lourdes, we swing south to begin the ascent to our hotel at Gèdre, which nestles in the wooded Gavarnie valley at an elevation of around 3100 feet, in the heart of the French Pyrenees. Night in Gedre.

Days 3-5, Fri-Sun, 6-8 Sep. The Gavarnie valley is the premier bird-watching site in the French Pyrenees, and our hotel is superbly situated to give easy access to this marvelous place, with its resident Wallcreepers and Lammergeiers, its fascinating alpine flora and fauna, and its breathtaking vistas. (On several recent tours, our groups have been treated to views of Lammergeier while enjoying a beer on the hotel's terrace. Some have even been lucky enough to spot one from

their bedroom windows!) An additional attraction of the Gèdre-Gavarnie area is that much of our birding can be enjoyed on foot.

We'll begin with a day's ramble to the foot of Gavarnie's magnificent cirque—classified as a World Heritage Site. Surely no one can fail to be impressed by the immensity of these vast glacial cliffs, which here form a huge rock basin on the border between France and Spain. White-throated Dippers and jaunty Gray Wagtails inhabit the swift-flowing mountain streams, with Crested Tit, Goldcrest, and Red Crossbill to watch for in the pines, and Black Redstart, Rock Bunting, and the delightful but often elusive Citril Finch to search for in the cirque itself. Red-backed Shrikes breed here in summer, and we may find a tardy youngster or two still present among the scrub and boulder scree. Mammals of note include Pyrenean Chamois (Isard) and the bulky Alpine Marmot (the latter's loud, birdlike whistles are a characteristic feature of the high alpine grasslands), and participants with an all-around interest in natural history will find plenty of alpine plants and butterflies to distract them from their birding. Above all, this is an excellent spot in which to scour the sheer limestone faces for a glimpse of that crimson-winged cliff-climber—the Wallcreeper!

On our visit to the Port de Boucharo, we can gaze down a glacier-scoured valley into Spain while the immense shapes of Eurasian Griffon, Lammergeier, and Golden Eagle patrol the skies above. Parties of Water Pipits are common on the grassy slopes, and it's here that we'll also hope to find a well-camouflaged Alpine Accentor or two. These are the high passes through which a host of passerine migrants, such as Eurasian Wryneck, Tree Pipit, Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush, Whinchat, Common Redstart, Blackcap, Garden and Willow warblers, and European Pied and Spotted flycatchers must pass if they are to continue their journeys south. Many birds of prey traverse these same routes, and in early September we have good chances of seeing Short-toed Snake-Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, and Peregrine Falcon. The dimorphic Booted Eagle and three harriers (Montagu's, Northern [Hen], and Eurasian Marsh) are less predictable, but we should see parties of Eurasian Crag-Martins and white-rumped Common House-Martins as well as noisy flocks of Yellow-billed and Red-billed choughs.

We'll also explore the Col du Tourmalet—famous as part of the classic Tour de France bicycle race—as its forested lower slopes are home to Black Woodpecker, Song Thrush, Firecrest, Coal Tit, Eurasian Treecreeper, Common Chaffinch, and European Serin. Nights in Gèdre.

Day 6, Mon, 9 Sep. To the Camargue. We'll need to get going early today for the long ride east to Arles. Though today is primarily a travel day, we will make the occasional stop for birds as time allows, and we should pick up our first flamingos and other water birds along the way. We will aim to arrive at our hotel by about 7:00pm. Night in Raphèle-lès-Arles.



*Similar to the North American accipiters, the Eurasian Sparrowhawk is a common fall season migrant in southern France.
Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.*

Days 7-9, Tue-Thu, 10-12 Sep. The Camargue. Our hotel in Raphèle-lès-Arles is ideally placed for easy exploration of this wonderful corner of France, famed for its flocks of pink-dusted Greater Flamingos, galloping white horses, and black

fighting bulls. Although much of the northern part of the huge Rhone river delta has been converted into rice paddies, further south there are still wide expanses of reed, marsh and lakes, saline lagoons, and dry Mediterranean steppe that shelter a rich variety of resident species as well as a host of passage migrants and shorebirds. Little Egrets, Gray, Squacco, and Purple herons, Eurasian Marsh-Harrier, Little and Whiskered terns, Zitting Cisticola, and Cetti's Warblers are among the many mouth-watering possibilities we could see. Colorful migrant European Rollers seem to favor certain stretches of roadside wires, but despite their dazzling colors, troops of mellow-voiced European Bee-eaters can be surprisingly hard to spot as they too drift south, passing high overhead.

Most conspicuous of all the region's long list of breeding birds, however, will be those beautiful but fragile-looking flamingos. Although most of the "ugly-duckling" youngsters will have dispersed from their breeding colony by this time, some will doubtless remain, huddled together into a noisy creche at the back of their nesting lagoon. Flocks of peculiarly "nosey" Slender-billed Gulls, their bodies often flushed a quite startling shade of pink, are another delight at this season, and, with a little perseverance, we may be able to locate a skulking Spectacled Warbler or two amidst the *Salicornia* scrub. As we thread our way around the maze of unpaved tracks that crisscross the Camargue's patchwork of brackish lagoons, we may find scattered groups of Sandwich, Black, and Common terns, and we should add the likes of Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish, Common Ringed, and Little Ringed plovers, Little Stint, Dunlin, Ruff, and Wood, Green, and Curlew sandpipers to our already impressive list of species. As a further incentive, September is an excellent month for turning up some of the Camargue's rarer visitors. Unexpected highlights on past tours have included such rare treats as Eurasian Spoonbill, Eleonora's and Red-footed falcons, Broad-billed Sandpiper, and Temminck's Stint.

Twelve thousand years ago, the Crau—an arid, stony plain to the east of the Camargue—was the delta of the river Durance. With its waters long since diverted into the Rhone, this unique steppe-meadow habitat is now home to a fascinating range of dry-country birds, including Greater Short-toed Lark, Tawny Pipit, Little Bustard, and a small and isolated population of Pin-tailed Sandgrouse. As their specialized habitat becomes ever more fragmented, the last two species can be particularly difficult to find nowadays, and we'll need a bit of luck if we are to be successful with either. The piles of stones that stretch away in all directions provide ample lookout posts for Eurasian and Lesser kestrels, and Little Owls. Though these stone piles may seem something of a puzzle at first sight, they were in fact made by POWs during the Second World War; the Nazis were trying to prevent Allied forces from mounting an airborne invasion using troop-carrying gliders. In September, flocks of up to fifty Eurasian Thick-knees (Stone-curlews) sometimes gather on the Crau, and we'll keep an eye open too for the Iberian Gray Shrike, widely recognized as a full species now. Several recent tours have found small groups of migrant Eurasian Dotterel and big flocks of lingering Calandra Larks resting in the steppe.

Note: Vehicular access to the Crau has recently been restricted, which will limit us mainly to areas we can reach on foot, and thus may reduce (but not eliminate) our chances for a few Crau area species.



The Tawny Pipit is a ground-nesting bird that we'll seek in the Crau region. They are wide-spread, but prefer more open, dry habitat; by the time of our tour, they will be preparing to migrate to sub-Saharan Africa for the winter.

Photograph by guide Eric Hynes.

To the north of Arles, the rugged limestone hills around Les Baux de Provence lie within easy reach of our hotel and offer yet another delightful change of scene. The herb-scented slopes, dotted with pines and evergreen scrub, are the haunt of Alpine Swift, Eurasian Crag-Martin, Long-tailed Tit, Blue Rock-Thrush, and scolding Sardinian Warblers, while migrants such as Tree Pipit and European Pied Flycatcher often pause here during September. It's in the evening, however, that

these attractive low hills really come into their own. As the sun begins to set and the daytime temperature cools, we'll watch and eagerly await the appearance of the impressive Eurasian Eagle-Owl from its rocky roost. Nights in Raphèle-lès-Arles.

Day 10, Fri, 13 Sep. To Montpellier. We'll have a final day to explore the Camargue region, targeting any birds we have not yet come across, as we work our way back west towards our final destination, Montpellier. Along the way we'll look for Mediterranean Gulls at one of their main gathering areas, and, if we haven't already seen Little Bustards, there are some areas near our hotel that are good for this species as well. Night near the Montpellier airport.

Day 11, Sat, 14 Sep. Flights home. You may schedule your departure for any time today. Our hotel provides a free shuttle to the airport, which is just a few minutes away. If you schedule a departure flight that requires leaving the hotel between midnight and 5:30 a.m., you'll need to arrange a taxi (your guide can help); the cost in 2018 was roughly €25. *Bon voyage!*

About Your Guide(s)

Jay VanderGaast was introduced to birding by his father, and his obsession with birds was evident by age seven when he memorized the plates in Peterson's eastern field guide. He went on to earn a B.S. in biology at university and briefly contemplated a career in research, but two years on the mosquito-infested arctic tundra watching ptarmigan do little other than occasionally getting eaten by Gyrfalcons soon put an end to that plan! Instead, he strapped on a backpack and a pair of bins and began roaming the world in search of birds.

His travels eventually led him to Costa Rica, where he stumbled into a job as a birding guide at Rancho Naturalista Lodge. Amazed that he was actually getting paid to watch birds, he jealously guarded his position there for six years. His career with Field Guides coincided with the dawn of the new millennium (if you believe that began in 2000!), and since then he has guided more than 100 tours on several continents.

*"Jay VanderGaast was a delight to travel with...incredible at finding the birds and extremely helpful in getting us on the birds—which was much appreciated!he made the trip an exceptional experience which I will remember for the rest of my life."
L.K., Costa Rica*

Willy Perez has been leading birding tours for more than ten years. He has also worked as a resident guide at Maquipucuna Reserve on the west slopes 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 slopes of the Andes, the Amazon Basin, the Galapagos Islands, and southern Ecuador. During the last few years he has also guided birding groups in Bolivia. 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 recently relocated to England for two years. He speaks excellent English and has an engaging and outgoing personality that makes every tour he leads enjoyable and fun.

"Willy Perez was an incredible birder and an extraordinary guide. I do a lot of traveling and have been on a fair number of birding trips...and Willy is one of the best guides I've ever seen." N.D., Amazonian Ecuador, Sacha Lodge

Take a look at <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for complete schedules for all our guides; just click on a photo.

Financial Information

FEE: \$4175 from Toulouse

DEPOSIT: \$425 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: May 7, 2019

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$495

LIMIT: 12

Other Things You Need to Know

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

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations are comfortable throughout the trip, though rooms are cozy in typical European fashion. All rooms have en-suite bathrooms; our hotel in Arles has only a handful of rooms with bathtubs (most have showers only), while our hotel in the Pyrenees has only showers. Please note that guaranteed non-smoking rooms are available **only** in Toulouse on the final night of the tour.

ALTITUDE: The highest altitude we'll reach on the tour will be about 7600', on the hills above the Col du Tourmalet, and at the Port de Boucharo. Our hotel in the Pyrenees sits at about 3100'. While we'll spend a fair bit of our time in the mountains on foot, and while there are naturally some steeper sections on the trails we'll take, our pace will be slow enough so as to present little difficulty to anyone in reasonable health. The terrain varies from roadsides and well-trodden paths to occasional (optional) scrambling over rocks and streams, punctuated by frequent stops for birding.

DOCUMENTS: A current passport valid three months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter France. However, we recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the French consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online, or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp, so as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: ***Please note that the tour begins in Toulouse and ends in Montpellier.*** When departing from the US, an overnight flight will be necessary.

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 may charge additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify its policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights will be the client's responsibility.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$4175 for one person in double occupancy from Toulouse. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 10, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 11, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping for hotel staff and restaurant staff 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 hotel staff for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to give an additional tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

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

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$495. 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, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$425** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by May 7, 2019. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 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.

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 payment, less a \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (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 the 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 airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. In case of emergency, we reserve the right to substitute 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, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (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 from us a brochure 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. **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 with InsureMyTrip (www.insuremytrip.com) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. Please let us know if you have any questions about this. If you purchase the insurance within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. 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 reverse side of 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. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. 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.
12/18JV; peg