

ITINERARY

***Idaho: Snake River to Sawtooths***

*May 18 - 26, 2019*



*The recently christened Cassia Crossbill is one of our major focal points. This sedentary species was recently split from Red Crossbill because their bill structure and call notes are appreciably different, and they can only be found in the South Hills of Idaho. Photograph by Craig Benkman.*

We include here information for those interested in the 2019 Field Guides Idaho: Snake River to Sawtooths 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:

- 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, an annotated list of birds seen on the tour

**F**rom shrub-steppe desert to expansive wetland complexes, and from dramatic canyons to majestic mountains -- Idaho has a rich diversity of habitats. This week-long birding adventure starting in Boise will cover much of the southern half of the state, tracking down numerous western specialties, while maintaining an enjoyable pace to soak in the sublime landscapes.

Raptor lovers will delight in our time spent around the Snake River Canyon Birds of Prey National Conservation Area just outside of Boise. Along an 80-mile stretch of the Snake River, towering cliffs hold nest sites for more than 500 pairs of 15 species of owls, falcons, hawks, and eagles. We will observe nesting Prairie Falcons, Golden Eagles, and Ferruginous Hawks while singing Canyon Wrens and chattering White-throated Swifts echo off the walls. The various riparian corridors and shrub-steppe desert surrounding the canyon will keep us busy looking for classic western species like Lewis's Woodpecker, Calliope Hummingbird, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and

Sagebrush Sparrow. Reservoirs in this region draw Clark's and Western grebes, while shorebirds like Black-necked Stilt and American Avocet forage in the shallows.

We will track east across the Snake River Plain, with a detour to seek out the recently split Cassia Crossbill en route to Idaho Falls. A series of wetland complexes at Camas National Wildlife Refuge and surrounding wildlife management areas hosts impressive concentrations of nesting waterbirds. Massive colonies of White-faced Ibises and Franklin's Gulls are interspersed with nesting Trumpeter Swans, Cinnamon Teal, Sandhill Cranes, American Bitterns, rails, grebes, and ducks. This concentration draws the attention of birds of prey such as Bald Eagle and Short-eared Owl.

To round out our western adventure, we will head up to Stanley and McCall, beautiful mountain towns nestled in central Idaho. Our time spent there puts us in the nesting habitat of American Dipper, Williamson's Sapsucker, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, Western Tanager, and Townsend's and MacGillivray's warblers, and we'll have a chance at Great Gray Owl.

Guide Eric Hynes spent four long field seasons in Idaho. When not studying raptors in the Snake River Canyon, Eric prospected every hidden gem of a birding locale he could find. He can't wait to share them with you.



*Trumpeter Swans were once in danger of extinction, but in recent decades they have benefited from protection and their population is doing well. Even so, they are not common, so we'll make an effort to find these huge waterbirds on our tour.  
Photograph by guide Eric Hynes.*

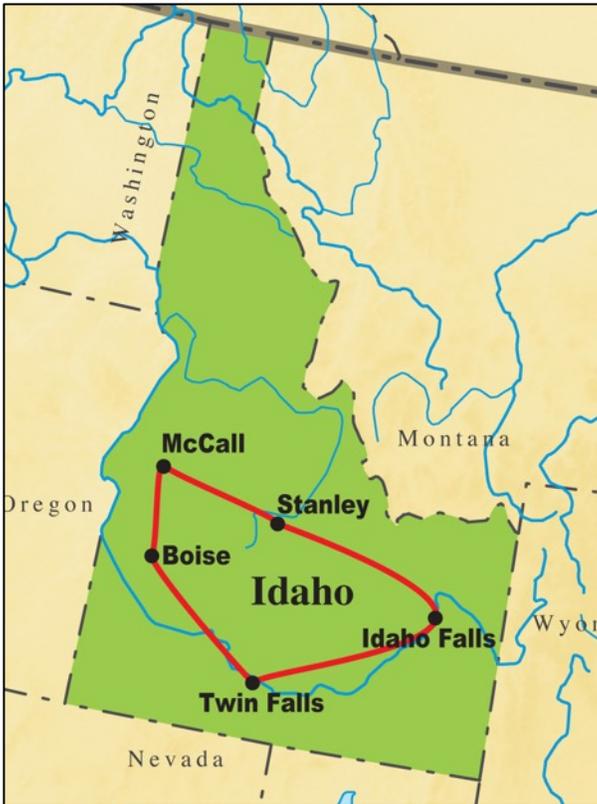
**About the Physical Requirements & Pace:** Our goal is to enjoy ourselves while studying as many birds in Idaho as possible. Notice—we lead with *enjoy*. Much of our birding will be observing from a stationary position or making short walks. However, these walks may indeed add up to several miles per day, but the footing should be relatively flat and consistent. Most of the walking will be on road edges or well-maintained trails.

The possibility that we get lured off-trail into the woods by an uncooperative bird is real, so a sturdy pair of water-resistant walking/hiking shoes is definitely advised. We will certainly be overlooking marshes but not entering them. Knee-high rubber boots are not necessary. Dust and rocks underfoot are more likely than mud or water. Wear what works best for you. Eric will be in a pair of hiking boots most of the time.

We will be birding only a month shy of the summer solstice, so sunrise and sunset will be at very far apart. On a couple days we will be pursuing nocturnal or crepuscular species. Western states like Idaho are grand, so we will have some long drives to get from one ecoregion to the next. Expect early starts and a few days with lengthy drives. To offset this, we will make frequent stops for birds and incorporate some down time in the afternoon when possible. You will be advised which outings can be skipped without being left behind if you need some personal time.

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



**Boise Area**—World famous *Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area* is nearly half a million acres and hosts one of the highest concentrations of nesting raptors anywhere in the world. Cliffs rise 700 feet above the canyon floor and provide nests sites for hundreds of pairs of hawks, eagles, owls, and falcons. Notable among them are Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, and Barn Owl. The shrub-steppe habitat surrounding the canyon invite Swainson's Hawks, Loggerhead Shrikes, Burrowing Owls, Long-billed Curlews, Black-throated and Sagebrush sparrows. It is also one of the best places to encounter a charismatic American Badger. The foothills and riparian corridors just outside Boise draw exciting breeding birds like Dusky Grouse, Calliope Hummingbird, Lewis's Woodpecker, and Lazuli Bunting. A day trip up into the *Owyhee Mountains* southwest of Boise to *Silver City* is like stepping back in time. In many ways, Silver City is unchanged since the late 1800s, when several thousand people sought their fortune in the mining industry boom. Higher up we hope to find Broad-tailed Hummingbirds and Fox Sparrows. Reservoirs and watering holes near *Mountain Home*, in this arid region, will draw migrant shorebirds, wading birds and waterfowl.

**South Hills (Twin Falls)**—These mountains south of Twin Falls are where we will pursue North America's newest species: Cassia Crossbill. Red Crossbills will be in the area as well so we will be sure to listen carefully. Nuthatches, woodpeckers, flycatchers, finches and other forest-dwelling birds will round out our list for the morning.

**Eastern Refuges (Idaho Falls)**—Our time in the shadow of The Tetons will be focused on three major wetland complexes: Camas National Wildlife Refuge, Market Lake Wildlife Management Area and Mud Lake Wildlife Management Area. These vast marsh environments are teeming with breeding birds in late May. The diversity and sheer number of birds in this area is truly a sight to behold. Noteworthy species reliably seen in this section of Idaho include: American White Pelican, Trumpeter Swan, Cinnamon Teal, Eared Grebe, Bald Eagle, Short-eared Owl, Sandhill Crane, Virginia Rail, Sora, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

**Sawtooth Mountains (Stanley and McCall)**—The mountainous landscape of central Idaho is rugged, wild and enchanting. The cathedral forests of conifers, nestled between the peaks, invite numerous resident and migratory birds to breed. Species we will focus on finding in these parts include: Spruce Grouse, American Dipper, Varied Thrush, Williamson's Sapsucker, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, Western Tanager, Lincoln's Sparrow, Townsend's and MacGillivray's warblers and Evening Grosbeak. We might even be fortunate enough to hear Wolves in this region.

## Itinerary for Idaho: Snake River to Sawtooths

**Day 1, Sat, 18 May. Arrival in Boise.** Please plan to arrive in time to meet in the lobby of our hotel at **5:00 p.m.** for introductions and a quick overview of the tour. We'll then head to dinner in downtown Boise before retiring early after a long travel day for some of you. Night in Boise.

**Day 2, Sun, 19 May. Boise Foothills and the Snake River Canyon.** We will begin on our first day in the field predawn in order to try for Common Poorwill and owls, en route to displaying Dusky Grouse at sunrise. This outing will be an out and back route along a riparian corridor in the foothills. Highlight species we hope to find creekside include: American Dipper, Lewis's Woodpecker, Bullock's Oriole, Dusky Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak, Calliope and Black-chinned hummingbirds, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Lazuli Bunting. In the afternoon, we will visit the stunning Snake River Canyon for some picturesque views and a good sampling of raptors. Ferruginous and Swainson's hawks might be seen on the

way, while Prairie Falcons and Golden Eagles will likely be patrolling their cliff face territories. White-throated Swifts should be chattering overhead while Rock and Canyon wrens will be ringing from the slopes below us. Night in Boise.



*Many raptors, including the magnificent Golden Eagle, breed in the Snake River Canyon region. We'll look for eagles, Swainson's and Ferruginous hawks, and Prairie Falcons while in this area. Photograph by guide Tom Johnson.*

**Day 3, Mon, 20 May. Owyhee Mountains and the Snake River Canyon.** On this day we will cross the Snake River and head up into the Owyhee Mountains. Along the way we will travel through shrub-steppe sagebrush habitat keeping our eye out for: Northern Harrier, Burrowing Owl, Long-billed Curlew, Sagebrush, Brewer's, Black-throated, and Lark sparrows, Sage Thrasher, and Loggerhead Shrikes. As we ascend toward Silver City, we transition into "PJ" (Pinyon-Juniper open woodlands) where we hope to add Black-throated Gray Warbler, Ash-throated and Gray flycatchers, and Green-tailed Towhee. Up at Silver City we are likely to add Broad-tailed Hummingbird and Fox Sparrow. Depending on the timing, we may visit the Snake River Canyon again on the way back to Boise. Night in Boise.

**Day 4, Tue, 21 May. Boise to Twin Falls.** On this day we will say goodbye to Boise and head east. The morning will be spent checking out various state wildlife management areas and reservoirs outside Mountain Home and possibly a return to the Snake River Canyon to clean up regional species missed the first few days. Species likely to be seen this day include: Cinnamon Teal, Redhead, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Franklin's and California gulls, Caspian and Forster's terns, American White Pelican and Yellow-headed Blackbird. By the afternoon, we will need to track east on Interstate 84. After tallying what is likely to be an impressive daylist, we will position ourselves for our search for Cassia Crossbill the next day. Night in Twin Falls.

**Day 5, Wed, 22 May. Twin Falls to Idaho Falls.** Wednesday morning will be dedicated to searching for North America's newest species: Cassia Crossbill. Red Crossbills will be in the area as well so we will be sure to listen carefully. Nuthatches, woodpeckers, flycatchers, finches and other forest-dwelling birds will round out our list for the morning. In the afternoon, we will bird our way east, then northeast. Where we stop and for how long will greatly depend on how quickly we achieve a satisfactory experience with Cassia Crossbill. After an early dinner, we will position ourselves at Market Lake Wildlife Management Area to marvel at the chaotic scene of thousands of Franklin's Gulls and White-faced Ibis returning to their breeding colonies, while Short-eared Owls float across the marshes and meadows. Night in Idaho Falls.

**Day 6, Thu, 23 May. Idaho Falls to Stanley.** First up this day is a thorough tour of the canal roads bisecting Camas National Wildlife Refuge. This site is managed primarily for waterfowl and other waterbirds, but numerous other species visit this wetland site to breed. We expect to see numerous duck species, Trumpeter Swans, several grebe species, raptors, shorebirds and more. After cleaning up at Camas NWR, we will stop in at Mud Lake to see what this reservoir is hosting. The afternoon will be consumed driving north and west to Stanley. Night in Stanley.

**Day 7, Fri, 24 May. Stanley to McCall.** The forests and lakes in the Sawtooth Mountains are remote and rugged. We will be seeking Spruce Grouse, owls, American Three-toed and Black-backed woodpeckers, flycatchers, Canada Jay, finches, and warblers. After birding around Stanley, we will hop on the Wildlife Canyon Scenic Byway, which follows the South Fork of the Payette River through some spectacular country as we make our way west, then north, to McCall. Night in McCall.

**Day 8, Sat, 25 May. McCall to Boise.** This final morning together will be spent birding the various locations within Payette National Forest surrounding McCall. This mixed conifer forest is interspersed with meadows, lakes and wetlands. Targets in this region will be Williamson's and Red-naped sapsuckers, Pileated Woodpecker, Olive-sided, Cordilleran, and Hammond's flycatchers, Cassin's Vireo, jays, both kinglets, Varied, Swainson's and Hermit thrushes, Evening Grosbeak, Cassin's Finch, plus Orange-crowned, MacGillivray's and Townsend's warblers. At some point we will have to tear ourselves away from the birding fun and drive south down state highway 55 for our farewell dinner. Night in Boise.

**Day 9, Sun, 26 May. Boise - Departures for home.** You are welcome to schedule your departures at any time.

## About Your Guides

**Eric Hynes** has been fascinated by birds and passionate about birding since he first heard the ghostly wailing of a Common Loon at summer camp in Maine more than 30 years ago. Upon completion of his B.S. at the University of Vermont, where he studied environmental studies and wildlife biology, Eric began a serious endeavor as a bird hobo that lasted more than a decade. His travels ranged across the U.S. with a number of trips to Central America as well. During this quest, Eric did everything from monitoring breeding raptors in the Snake River Canyon, to guiding for two summers in Alaska on St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs, to ground squirrel rustling in Montana, to owl banding and hawk counting in Pennsylvania.

Getting married to Christine helped settle Eric into a fulltime position at Maine Audubon but not until after a birding trip to Panama cleverly disguised as their honeymoon. As the staff naturalist and adult education coordinator, Eric taught numerous bird identification workshops and led field trips locally and abroad for Maine Audubon. His positive energy and infectious enthusiasm for all things wild has drawn many a convert to birding and conservation. Eric served several terms on the Maine Bird Records Committee.

Eric and his family recently relocated to Telluride, Colorado where he focuses on tracking down Gunnison Sage-Grouse and rosy-finches as a scout in-residence for the Colorado Grouse tour.

**Mitch Lysinger**, a native of Florida, grew up birding the southern part of the state as well as other parts of the US before moving to Ecuador to work at La Selva Lodge (for two years) and then with Field Guides since 1997. Mitch is fascinated by bird sounds and has spent many years intensively birding and tape-recording the birds of Ecuador and other Neotropical countries on tours and in his free time. As a result (and hundreds of field-recorded cassettes later!), Mitch and John Moore teamed up and published the two-volume cassette, *The Birds of Cabanas San Isidro*, and then went on to tackle (with other co-authors) the multi-volume CD set—with four published and more to come—of the birds of Ecuador. An updated CD of *The Birds of San Isidro* by Mitch, John Moore, & Niels Krabbe was published in 2011.

Mitch has more recently become involved in the conservation scene in Ecuador, working closely with the Jocotoco Foundation on land purchase for the purpose of setting up new reserves in areas critically in need of protection. When not on tour, Mitch can often be found with his wife Carmen and their two children (Martin and Sara) at Cabanas San Isidro—their cloudforest lodge on the east slope of the Andes—where they see to the needs of their guests and continue to expand the lodge's already vast 1200-hectare reserve with the hopes of widening the existing forest corridor that bridges the gap between two large national parks.

*“An added bonus of the tour was traveling with **Eric Hynes**, who was patient, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and kind, and whose insights into animal and bird behavior made me want to learn more.” P.G., Colorado Grouse*

*“**Mitch Lysinger!** He is amazing in his ability to spot and hear birds, to call them in, to accommodate to each individual, and to stay cheerful, patient, and energetic.” D.S., Montane Ecuador*

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for complete tour schedules for Eric and Mitch; just click on their photos.

## Financial Information

**FEE: \$2950 from Boise**

**DEPOSIT: \$300**

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE: January 18, 2019**

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$650**

**LIMIT: 14**

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The manager for this tour is Karen Turner. Karen 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:** This tour requires flights in and out of Boise, Idaho. 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.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The **tour fee** is \$2950 for one person in double occupancy from Boise. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 8, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast 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 Boise, 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 \$650. 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, one seat in the van or bus will be taken by the guide in training. 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 \$300** 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 January 18, 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 \$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. 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, 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](http://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.

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