ITINERARY

Jamaica

Tour I: February 14 - 21, 2027
Tour II: March 18 - 25, 2027
Tour III: November 20 - 27, 2027

Jamaica has 29 endemic species, including the adorable Jamaican Tody. This tiny endemic can be a bit hard to spot, but once found, it offers great views. Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.

We include here information for those interested in the 2027 Field Guides Jamaica *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 outings

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

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

Jamaica is one of the hotbeds of avian endemism in the West Indies with at least 29 species found nowhere else. Add to that a host of regional specialties and numerous wintering wood warblers, and you've got an irresistible birding destination close to the United States. It doesn't hurt that we'll be based at just a couple hotels on a lush tropical island with fabulous food, vibrant culture, and world-renowned music. In just a week, we stand a good chance of encountering all of Jamaica's endemics, from the fabulous Red-billed and Black-billed streamertails to the taxonomically curious Orangequit.

Jamaica is the third largest island in the Caribbean at 146 miles long and 51 miles at its widest point. But don't worry; we won't be racing around the whole island. Instead, we'll spend most of our time in the northeastern end of the island, birding at a leisurely pace. Our goal is not to see every species in Jamaica but to see every species that you can only find in Jamaica (this includes the 19 endemic subspecies). We won't be pressing to reach every corner of the island or chancing any risky sites to find a species easily seen somewhere else.

Goblin Hill is a comfortable retreat with inviting trails circuitously winding through lush habitat. The extremely range-restricted Black-billed Streamertail was recently elevated to full species status and is easily observed on the grounds. The regal Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo may be working its way through the canopy of mature trees, while Jamaican Woodpeckers work the trunk, spritely Jamaican Todies and active Sad Flycatchers forage in the understory and White-chinned Thrushes hop across the ground. Numerous other endemics can be found here as well. The Caribbean breeze, a dip in the inviting pool, a good book, and a rum punch or fresh-squeezed juice might be really tempting. The beauty of staying at the same hotel for most of the tour is you are welcome to succumb to temptation and pass on any outing you wish (except for when we head west to Montego Bay).

Jamaica is lucky enough to have two endemic vireos, and we'll be watching for both of them. This is the Jamaican Vireo, which is found all over the island, unlike the Blue Mountain Vireo, which is less common, and tends to stay in less disturbed habitats. Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.

In order to round out our list of endemics, we will take field trips to the nearby foothills of the John Crow Mountains, climb up in elevation in the Blue Mountains, and visit Cockpit Country. Our higher elevation targets will include Jamaican Becard, Crested Quail-Dove, Yellow-billed and Black-billed amazons, Blue Mountain Vireo, White-eyed Thrush, Jamaican Oriole, and the odd Jamaican Blackbird. We will make stops along the coast to look for terns, frigatebirds, shorebirds, and herons. The grand finale will be visiting Rocklands Bird Sanctuary where wild birds have been fed for decades. Having a Red-billed Streamertail or Jamaican Mango land on your finger is an unforgettable experience!

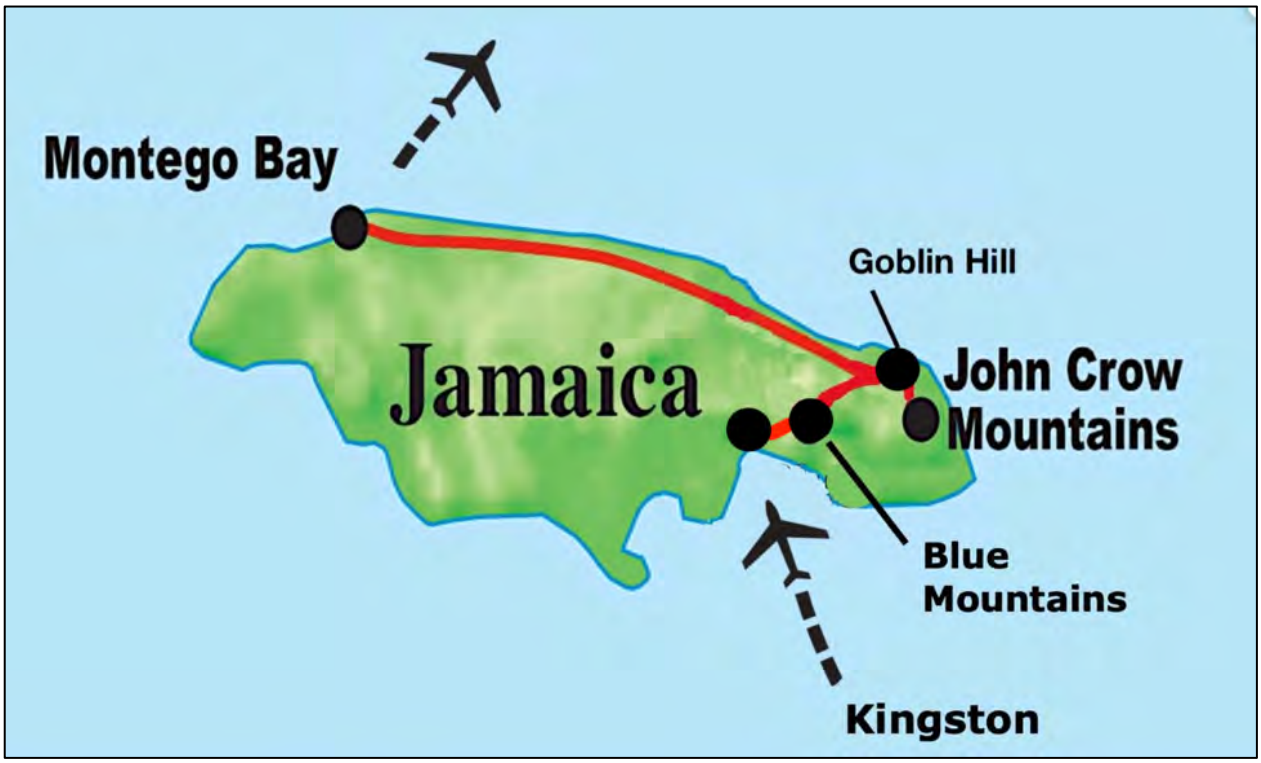
We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable 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 (2-3 miles in morning, 1-2 miles in afternoon), mostly on roads or packed dirt trails. No major climbs, but most of the terrain we cover is sloped. Several walks require going up and down a moderate grade for a short distance (walking sticks recommended). Trails may have loose, uneven or slippery areas.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES**: We will likely stand for long periods to observe flocks of birds.
- **PACE**: Early starts (typically around 5:00 a.m.) followed by birding until around noon. On some days, there is a break after lunch and optional afternoon birding. There may be at least one nighttime excursion to look for the Jamaican Owl or Northern Potoo, but we will not stay out longer than one or two hours.
- **WEATHER**: Temperatures can range from the low 50s F during early mornings in the higher elevations of the Blue Mountains to the mid-90s F later in the day and at lower elevations. Most days, highs are in the 80s F. Humidity is generally high, and rain is possible.
- **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. 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 on occasion, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT**: Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

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

We'll bird a variety of habitats, from beaches, to mountain rain-forest, to the dry Cockpit Country. Photograph by guide Megan Edwards Crewe.



About the Birding Areas

Foothills of the John Crow Mountains: Named after the Turkey Vultures (called "John Crow" locally) that course back and forth across their cloud-covered peaks, the John Crows are the easternmost mountains in the country. This area is rugged, formed of rather sharp karst limestone, and its razorback peaks receive quite a bit of rain (up to 300 inches per year!), owing to their exposure to the Northeast Trade Winds. This area is the only place in Jamaica where all the endemic bird species are possible. In fact, the birding is so good we may visit this site twice. One of the primary targets on this day trip will be Jamaican Blackbird, which is a few-and-far-between endemic. Crested Quail-Dove is always tricky to track down so we will stay alert for the "Mountain Witch" as well. This site will be our first chance to spot Jamaican Crow and both the Yellow-billed Amazon and the harder-to-find Black-billed Amazon. Keep your eyes peeled for Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, Arrowhead Warbler and Jamaican Becard this day too.

Blue Mountains: Famed for their outstanding coffee, the Blue Mountains are thinly populated, comprised mostly of igneous shales, and still covered in many places by lush, mature, wet montane forests. We will walk the road through a marvelous cloud forest with abundant mosses, bromeliads, and tree ferns at Hardwar Gap (~4000 feet in elevation). Our search images will be tuned to the shaky gait of the Crested Quail-Dove (one of the most challenging endemics to see), curious Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo, and various endemic flycatchers and the Blue Mountain Vireo in the trees. We will be keen to spot the endangered Jamaican Blackbird. We will hear the ethereal song of the Rufous-throated Solitaire and scan for the impressively large Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo as well.

Cockpit Country: This region sits southeast of Montego Bay and derives its name from the classic karst topography. It is made up of steep hills and valleys and is pockmarked with sinkholes and covered in dense forest. We will visit this region toward the end of the tour. It serves as an excellent back-up if we have missed either of the endemic amazonz, Jamaican Crow, Crested Quail-Dove, Jamaican Elaenia or Blue Mountain Vireo up to this point. The Jamaican subspecies of Olive-throated Parakeet is conspicuous here.

Rockland's Bird Sanctuary: Have you ever experienced a hummingbird on your finger? Well, you can hand-feed both endemic hummingbirds here. This site will serve as our grand finale. Over the course of many years, quite a few of the endemic species have become remarkably habituated at this elaborate feeding station. Photographic opportunities abound. Northern Potoo and Jamaican Owl are sometimes found on their day roosts at this site as well.

Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo is one of two endemic cuckoos we'll see. Like many cuckoos, these birds are rather shy and tend to stay in deeper foliage, where they run along tree branches chasing their prey.
Photograph by participant Don Taves.

Itinerary for Jamaica

Day 1. Arrival in Kingston. Please plan to arrive in time to meet your guide in our hotel lobby at 6:00 PM for introductions and a welcome dinner. Our driver will meet you at the airport and transfer you to the hotel, which is about 40 minutes away. Night in Kingston.

Day 2. Hellshire Hills to the Blue Mountains. The arid, thorny scrub of Hellshire Hills is a protected refuge and is best known for hosting several range-restricted regional specialties; chief among them is Bahama Mockingbird. We will depart early and travel less than an hour to these hot, dry limestone hills, which also attract Vervain Hummingbird, Stolid Flycatcher, and Mangrove Cuckoo. Our first encounter with Jamaica Mango, one of three endemic hummingbirds, is likely to occur here. Another Jamaican endemic we might see here is the Jamaican Vireo. Once we acquire some of these targets and before it gets too hot, we will transition and head to Hope Gardens in northern Kingston. Depending on recent sightings, we may encounter day-roosting Jamaican Owl and Northern Potoo! After lunch, we'll start making our way northeast up into the Blue Mountains, birding along the way. Night at Starlight Chalet.

Day 3. Blue Mountains. We will arise early and enjoy the cool climate around the Starlight Chalet as we begin to look for a wide array of endemics. The three most challenging endemics to see are Crested Quail-Dove, Jamaican Blackbird, and the newly-split Blue Mountain Elaenia. Along with Blue Mountain Vireo and Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, these are some of the species we'll be most focused on in the Blue Mountains. Other endemics at elevation include Ring-tailed Pigeon, Jamaican Vireo, Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, Jamaican Pewee, Jamaican Spindalis, Arrowhead Warbler, and Jamaican Elaenia. The footing will be good as we bird along the road. Expect to walk several miles over a gentle slope, but in one stretch it is rather steep. To help round out our Jamaican experience, we might even make a quick visit to a coffee plantation for a tasting. As the afternoon wanes, we'll descend from the mountains and make our way to the northeast coast, arriving at our lovely villas just outside Port Antonio, our home for the next three nights. Night at Goblin Hill Villas.

Day 4. Foothills of the John Crow Mountains and coastal sites. We will head out early to Ecclesdown Road at the far eastern end of the island. This is the only place in all of Jamaica where all of the endemic species have been recorded. Primary targets for this site will be the secretive Crested Quail-Dove and the elusive Jamaican Blackbird. Yellow-billed Amazon, Black-billed Amazon, Jamaican Crow, Black-billed Streamertail, White-eyed Thrush, Arrowhead Warbler, Blue

Mountain Vireo, and Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo are distinct possibilities as well. We will walk several miles on this quiet road with good footing and a gentle rise. For lunch, we will stop in Boston Bay, the world-famous home of Jamaican jerk, for authentic jerk chicken and pork, bammy, festival, and other traditional dishes. After lunch we will return to Goblin Hill for a siesta or dip in the enchanting pool, followed by an afternoon walk on the hotel property. Night at Goblin Hill Villas.

The Arrowhead Warbler is found in the higher elevations of Jamaica. We'll look for them in the John Crow and Blue mountains. Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.

Day 5. San San Preserve. This dense forest preserve is only a few minutes from our hotel. A road with minimal vehicle traffic passes through lush habitat and is a great birding spot where we can "clean up" a few of the endemics we might still be missing like: Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo, Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, Yellow-shouldered Grassquit, Ring-tailed Pigeon, and White-eyed Thrush. After lunch at a local Jamaican restaurant, we will visit Errol Flynn Marina. This waterfront park is lined with Hong Kong Orchid Trees, which should be in bloom during our tour. Their gorgeous blossoms attract hummingbirds and warblers galore, so expect to get killer looks at Jamaican Mangoes and Vervain Hummingbird. We will return to Goblin Hill for a siesta or dip in the relaxing pool, followed by an afternoon walk on the hotel property. Night at Goblin Hill Villas.

Day 6. Crossing the island to Montego Bay and Rocklands Bird Sanctuary. We will say goodbye to the wonderful staff at Goblin Hill and venture west along the north coast of the island. During this significant drive we will have to try to put the blinders on because our goal is to get to Montego Bay ahead of afternoon traffic. Our motivation for the expedited commute is a visit to the spectacular Rockland's Bird Sanctuary. Decades of feeding wild birds at this private home has led to a number of endemic species becoming remarkably habituated. Here you can have Red-billed Streamertails and Jamaican Mangoes sip sugar water from handheld feeders while Orangequits, Jamaican Orioles, Caribbean Doves, Bananaquits, and grassquits visit feeders little more than an arm's length away. On the way back to our hotel, we will visit the Montego Bay Sewage Ponds for great looks at a number of waterbirds. It is not uncommon for us to add a dozen new species to our triplist here (ducks, shorebirds, grebes). Night at Mynt Retreat in Montego Bay.

Day 7. Cockpit Country. We will head out early to Cockpit Country, which is rich with both endemic parrots, Jamaican Crow, Crested Quail-Dove, Jamaican Elaenia, Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, and numerous warblers. After our walk in Stewart Town, we will return toward Montego Bay for lunch on the coast, just shy of the city. A few stops along the shore might add a plover, sandpiper, or tern. We will say our goodbyes to our fantastic local guide and driver and wrap things up over a scrumptious dinner right at our lovely hotel. The tour concludes this night. Night at Mynt Retreat in Montego Bay.

Day 8. Depart for Home. After a delightful breakfast at the hotel (the rooftop deck is a great birding spot in the morning), a shuttle to Sangster International Airport (MBJ), which is just five minutes away, will be arranged. Please plan your departure flight at your convenience on this day. Safe travels!

About Your Guides

Tour I and Tour III:
Cory Gregory started learning birds on flashcards at the age of three, but it wasn't until the ripe age of ten that things started to get more serious. Since then, he has traveled to Central and South America, Australia, and all 50 states to try to get his fill of birding (and it hasn't worked yet!).

Cory earned a B.S. in zoology in Michigan, where he also worked for Whitefish Point Bird Observatory for several seasons. He then ventured to Iowa State University, where he earned a M.S. studying Long-billed Curlews in Nebraska. As an avid shorebird ecologist, he has handled more than 2000 shorebirds of more than 30 species.

After finishing school, Cory worked for several organizations as a shorebird ecologist and guided on St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs of Alaska for the 2014 and 2015 seasons. It was on St. Paul that his dream of stumbling on a first North American record was finally fulfilled. Cory is currently based out of Missouri where, when not on tour, he pursues his interest in birds, butterflies, and dragonflies with abandon.

Cory has co-led Field Guides groups to Arizona, Cape May, Colorado, Maine, Texas, Newfoundland, Costa Rica, Oaxaca, Colombia, Peru, France, and Australia and has a busy and wide-ranging schedule coming up, adding Oregon to his portfolio of tours.

*"**Cory Gregory**'s birding skills are exceptional. His sight and hearing seem super-human, and his knowledge of the birds' plumage, songs, and behavior is top-notch. He is excellent at finding the birds and getting the trip participants 'on' them. He was also a master at the organization and conduct of the trip. It was a pleasure birding with Cory because he is funny, caring, genuine, smart, and helpful. Cory is one of the best." C. G., Australia*

Tour II:
Marcelo Barreiros is a native of Sao Paulo, Brazil, who became fascinated with birds when he entered college in 2005, graduating with a degree in biology in 2009. He then moved to Manaus to work with conservation of Harpy Eagles and other large forest raptors, monitoring nests in both the Amazon and the Atlantic Forest regions. Today, Marcelo's depth of expertise in finding and identifying even the rarest species has earned him an outstanding reputation among the leading fieldmen in Amazonia and, increasingly, all of Brazil.

Marcelo and his wife moved back to Sao Paulo in 2015 to be closer to family and the wonderful beaches and Atlantic Forest. Marcelo is a friendly, generous guide with an even temperament and ready laugh, who truly enjoys showing birds to tour participants. He began working on Field Guides tours in 2016 and 2017 and has co-led trips with various of our senior guide staff, including Bret Whitney, Dave Stejskal, and Megan Edwards Crewe. He has a full schedule of upcoming tours in Brazil and Guyana and will see the occasional foray elsewhere.

*"**Marcelo…** is a natural trip leader and I would be delighted to take any trip with him as the lead guide. Aside from his mastery of the birds and environment, he projects a warm and humble confidence as well as a great sense of humor and even playfulness, which I appreciated enormously." W.M., Rio Negro Paradise: Manaus*

Visit https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/ for complete tour schedules for Cory and Marcelo; just click on their photos.

Financial Information

FEE: $4,725 per person from Kingston to Montego Bay
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): $775
DEPOSIT: $475 per person
FINAL PAYMENT DUE: August 18, 2026 (Tour I); September 19, 2026 (Tour II); May 24, 2027 (Tour III)
LIMIT: 8

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, feel free to reach out.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour begins in Kingston (Norman Manley International Airport, KIN) and ends in Montego Bay (Sangster International Airport, MBJ), Jamaica.

Arrival: Kingston (KIN) on February 14 (Tour I) or March 18 (Tour II) or November 20 (Tour III), by 4:00 PM.

Departure: Montego Bay (MBJ) on February 21 (Tour I) or March 25 (Tour II) or November 27 (Tour III), at any time. 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: Before departure, verify the latest entry requirements for all countries on your itinerary.

Passport: A valid passport is required for international travel. It should be in good condition, valid beyond your return date (at least 6 months is recommended), and contain sufficient blank pages for visas and entry/exit stamps throughout your itinerary (generally 1-2 pages per country).

Visa: U.S. citizens do not need a visa for tourism. Non-U.S. citizens should refer to official government sources for applicable travel requirements**.**

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is $4,725 for one person in double occupancy from Kingston to Montego Bay. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 7, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 8, 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 the tour, airport taxes, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, phone calls, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement is $775 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).

Please note: **At Goblin Hill, single travelers will have a private bedroom and bathroom while sharing the villa's common area.**

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 $475 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 August 18, 2026 (Tour I); September 19, 2026 (Tour II); May 24, 2027 (Tour III).** 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 are 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 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.

NCP 7/2020; NCP—9/2020; 5/25 cjg; peg; 6/26 peg