

ITINERARY

Mongolia: The Gobi Desert, Steppe & Taiga

May 31- June 17, 2018



The White-naped Crane, like most crane species, is rare and declining. These lovely birds breed in the wetlands of Dashinchilen and Elsen Tasarkhai. This individual was observed on the 2017 Field Guides tour. Photograph by participant Becky Hansen.

We include here information for those interested in this 2018 Field Guides Mongolia: The Gobi Desert, Steppe & Taiga 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
- 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 very romantic name Mongolia probably conjures up images of endless steppe grasslands, the vast wastes of the Gobi Desert and wild tribal horsemen. This is, after all, the land of Genghis (Chinggis or Chingiz) Khan and his successors, the dreaded Mongol hordes that swept down on the civilizations of China, India, Central Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe and only being halted at the siege of Vienna in 1536. Yet after this shattering impact on history, the Mongols faded into obscurity and today Mongolia is a little known land, sandwiched far away between Russia and China in the heart of Asia, about which one hears little.

Mongolia is still an almost empty land of awesome landscapes, where a simple, nomadic lifestyle remains the norm, a land of vast steppe grasslands, profuse wildflowers and fantastic birdlife. For anyone interested in Asian or Palaearctic birds, or in travel to a very different location, Mongolia has a great deal to offer. It has a tiny population of only three million scattered across a huge area and is one of the least densely settled countries on earth. Happily, and despite the impact of

various forms of communism, it is still a true wilderness, where much of the wildlife still remains. The socio-political systems are fast changing, but Mongolia remains a fascinating transition zone of east Asia, where to the north is the southern edge of the great Siberian boreal forest (or taiga), in the centre the seemingly endless steppe and in the south the daunting sands of the Gobi Desert. As if this was not enough, you can then add to the diversity the vast mountains of the Altai, Gobi Altai, Khangay and Khentiy, and a multiplicity of lakes and marshes rich in wildfowl, shorebirds and cranes.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: The walking effort is mostly easy, sometimes moderate, although there will be a few optional harder walks in the mountains. Easy to moderate walking for the most part, and accommodations ranging from comfortable western style in Ulaan Bataar to the traditional gers in the rural areas away from the capital city. The walk for the Altai Snowcock and later, Black-billed Capercaillie, entails some climbing up onto ridge tops at up to about 8000' (or 2600m), but can be done slowly. In 2017 everyone was able to make the trek for the Capercaillie in beautiful boreal forest with many wildflowers, though the Snowcock involves a steeper and more slippery slope, which is not suited to everyone.

Climate: Predominantly dry and sunny, but some overcast weather and rain (or rarely even snow) is likely and wind is a regular feature of the desert. Temperatures generally range from warm to cool, but it can be cold at night at higher altitudes and sometimes it gets hot in the Gobi.

Accommodation & Road Transport: The hotel in Ulaanbaatar is of good standard. The ger lodges are quite simple, consisting of large very clean, rondavel-like rooms called gers each with several Mongolian style, attractively painted beds (although we shall have just one or two persons per ger), and a wood-fired heating stove. In addition to the gers, there are separate dining and toilet/shower buildings.

Roads are generally poor (or even completely lacking in some places, where one merely drives across the steppe or desert!). Our transport consists of sturdy 4x4 vehicles, which take 6 people including the driver, and a tough well-equipped Russian-made camp truck, which carries all the gear. Expect some dust in the desert zones, and corrugated road surfaces en route to the Gobi, but nothing too drastic.

About the Birding Areas



The wide range of habitats is reflected in an exciting avifauna which encompasses both Siberian and Central Asian forms, including a number which are unique to Mongolia and its immediate surroundings. Prime specialities include Altai Snowcock, Black-billed Capercaillie, Oriental Plover, Asian Dowitcher, a chance of Relict Gull, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Mongolian Lark, Kozlov's and Brown Accentors, Red-throated Thrush, Chinese Bush Warbler, Azure Tit, Henderson's Ground Jay, Saxaul Sparrow, Pere David's (Small) Snowfinch and a great range of buntings including Pine, Black-faced,

Meadow, Grey-necked, Godlewski's and Pallas's Buntings. The rich supporting cast includes Swan Goose, Stejneger's Scoter, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Upland Buzzard, Amur Falcon, Demoiselle and White-naped Cranes (and just maybe Siberian Crane), Mongolian Gull, Hill Pigeon, Asian Short-toed Lark, Pale Martin, Blyth's Pipit, Alpine Accentor, Eyebrowed Thrush, Thick-billed Warbler, White-crowned Penduline Tit, Isabelline and Steppe Grey Shrike, White-cheeked Starling, Mongolian Finch and Hawfinch.

Spring in Mongolia (which really only commences in mid-May!) is a delightful season when birds are in breeding plumage, song fills the air and migrants are still passing through on their way north to Siberia. Excellent birding and travel through wide-open spaces with incredibly few friendly people make for an unforgettable experience. This is quite an adventure, where the birds are amidst some of the most remarkable wilderness scenery on our planet! Roads are pretty poor dirt tracks in most of the country, so it takes a long time to cover any distance, but we have allowed for this in the itinerary and so there will still be lots of time for birding.

We will start our birding in the vicinity of the capital Ulaanbaatar (or Ulan Batar), where Azure Tit and Pine Bunting are to be found, and we will make a start on the waterfowl amongst the ponds. **Khustai Nuruu National Park** is where Przewalski's Wild Horse (*Equus przewalskii*) is being re-introduced in the country. Bird species here should include Golden Eagle, Saker Falcon, Amur Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, Cinereous Vulture, Himalayan Griffon, Daurian Partridge, Booted Eagle, Daurian Jackdaw, Black Stork, and Isabelline Shrike, Mongolian Lark and Meadow Bunting. After extensive birding, we will drive to a small spring where the wild horses drink water.

Wetlands around **Dashinchilen** and **Ugii Lake** en route to Kharkorin hold some exciting species, and this is where we saw both Relict Gull and Siberian White Crane in 2017. White-naped, Demoiselle and Common Crane can also be seen, as well as various waterfowl including Ruddy and Common Shelduck, Red-crested Pochard, Garganey, maybe Falcated Duck and Eastern Spot-billed Duck. Whooper Swan is likely and maybe genuine wild Mute Swan, as well as breeding Swan and Bar-headed Goose.



We'll spend time exploring the desert and impressive dunes of Khongoryn Els National Park. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.

Moving westwards to the Gobi region to **Khongoryn Els National Park**, we will explore areas of desert, sand dunes and the strange saxaul 'forest', haunt of the rare Saxaul Sparrow as well as Steppe Grey Shrike. As we travel onwards through the wide-open emptiness of the Gobi Desert, we will investigate areas of steppe and scrub, searching out the specialities of the area including the strange Henderson's Ground Jay and Asian Desert Warbler. A highlight of our journey will be the exploration of several brackish steppe lakes to the north of the Gobi Altai. Here we will have reached the breeding grounds of the fabled Relict Gull, and we can also look for Swan and Bar-headed Geese, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Demoiselle Crane, Pallas's Gull, Asian Dowitcher and many other interesting birds.

On one day we'll fly to Dalanzadgad town near **Yolyn Am** (High Mountain), which may give us the spectacular Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Himalayan Griffons, plus Mongolian (Kozlov's) Accentor, Sulphur-bellied Warbler,

Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch, and Wallcreeper. Altai Snowcock is one of the most challenging species for the trip but we hope to see it in this area.

The great Siberian boreal forest with its wonderful spring wildflowers will be visited near the end of the tour at **Terej NP**, with forest and forest steppe birds such as Oriental Cuckoo, Eurasian Hoopoe, a good range of woodpeckers including Lesser-spotted, Great-spotted, White-backed and perhaps Eurasian Three-toed and Black Woodpecker. Great Tit, Willow Tit, Pine Bunting, Red-throated Thrush, Siberian Rubythroat, Siberian Stonechat, White-cheeked Starling, Dusky Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Taiga Flycatcher, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Eastern Buzzard (*japonicus*), Blyth's Pipit. There are two challenging species, Chinese Bush Warbler and Black-billed Capercaillie here which will depend on local conditions. Next morning, we will drive to the east of our tourist camp to get to riparian river forest. We will try to find Three-toed Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Olive-backed Pipit, Common Rosefinch, and Taiga Flycatcher in breeding plumage.



The Saxaul Sparrow occurs only where the Saxaul Tree is found, thus its range is limited. We'll look for them near Khongoryn Els. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.

Itinerary for Mongolia 2018

Day 1, Thu, 31 May. Depart US for Mongolia. If you have the time, we urge you to come a day or two early in order to rest up before the tour. City tours can be easily arranged for those interested.

Day 2, Fri, 1 Jun. Arrival in Ulaanbaatar. We will arrive at Chinggis Khaan International Airport in Ulaanbaatar, capital of Mongolia and check into our hotel. For those who arrive in the morning, we'll have time for an afternoon trip to Tuul River Forest and a gravel pond to see Azure Tit, Azure-winged Magpie and White-crowned Penduline Tit, and some waterfowl in the pond. The main tour begins with a Welcome Dinner at one of the most famous restaurants in Ulaanbaatar. Overnight in Ulaanbaatar.

Day 3, Sat, 2 Jun. Ulaanbaatar-Khustai NP. After breakfast, we will drive to Khustai Nuruu National Park where Przewalski's Wild Horse (*Equus przewalskii*) is being re-introduced in the country. Bird species should include Golden Eagle, Saker Falcon, Cinereous Vulture, Himalayan Griffon, Meadow Bunting, Daurian Partridge, Amur Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, Booted Eagle, Daurian Jackdaw, Black Stork, Isabelline Shrike, Mongolian Lark, and Meadow Bunting. After extensive birding, we will drive to a small spring where the wild horses come to drink water. In the late evening, we'll be back to the park restaurant and have a dinner with Mongolian cold beers. Overnight in a tourist ger camp.

Day 4, Sun, 3 Jun. Khustai National Park. Daurian Partridge will be one of the targets today, as well as exciting mammals like Argali and Mongolian Gazelle, and a supporting cast of buntings. We'll also be on the lookout for raptors, including Cinereous Vulture and Lammergeier, as well as passerines such as Pied Wheatear. Overnight in Khustai tourist ger camp.

Day 5, Mon, 4 Jun. Khustai National Park, and on to Ugii Lake. We'll start the day with some early birding in Khustai NP. After breakfast, we will head west to the steppe lake (Tsagaan) where we will see a number of ducks and shorebirds. The targets today will be Demoiselle Crane, White-naped Crane, probably Common Crane, Asian Dowitcher, Pallas's Reed Bunting, Asian Dowitcher, Citrine, White and Yellow Wagtails, Bar-headed Goose, Swan Goose, Grey-lag Goose, Common (*longipennis*) and White-winged Black Terns.

We will reach a freshwater lake called Ugii Nuur in the evening. We will drive around the lake where on the shoreline we can see White-winged Black Tern, Mongolian Gull, Common Ringed Plover, Bar-headed and Swan Geese, sometimes Pallas's Fish Eagle and White-tailed Eagle. At a river delta on the western side of the lake, we'll watch for possibly thousands of Swan Geese, also Pochards and perhaps an Asian Dowitcher. White-winged (Stejneger's) Scoter and perhaps Dalmatian Pelican can be seen on the lakes. Near our ger camp, we'll find nesting Rock Sparrow, Small Snowfinch and Upland Buzzard. Overnight Ogii Lake Tourist ger camp.

Day 6, Tue, 5 Jun. To Karakorum. After breakfast, we drive to Kharkorin town, where there are ruins of the Great Mongol Empire dating back to the time of Chinggis Khaan when this was the capital of Mongolia. A visit to Erdenezuu temple can be made, where Blyth's Pipit nests. Birding in the planted sea buckthorn shrubs near this town can be rewarding and we will watch for late migrants such as Greenish, and Yellow-browed Warblers, flycatchers, etc. Overnight in a tourist ger camp.

Day 7, Wed, 6 Jun. To Elsentasarkhai. In the early morning we will drive to the east to get to sand dunes in the middle of a steppe area. We will make a concerted effort to see the breeding Arctic (Black-throated) loon/diver, Eastern Marsh Harrier, White-naped Crane, Bar-headed Goose, Oriental Reed Warbler and Chinese Spot-billed Duck in ponds with reeds, with a chance of Asian Dowitcher. Here we'll stay in a simple clean tourist camp. Overnight Hoyol Zagar Tourist Ger Camp.

Day 8, Thu, 7 Jun. To Ulaanbaatar . The morning will be spent in the Elsen Tasarkhai area and in the afternoon we will head back to our comfortable Ulaanbaatar hotel. After checking into the hotel in UB, our large bags will go ahead with the vehicles to meet up with us again in Dalanzadgad, a drive of about 800 km. Overnight at a hotel in Ulaanbaatar.

Day 9, Fri, 8 Jun. Yolyn Am (High Mountain). This morning, we will fly to Dalanzadgad town near Yolyn Am and rendezvous with the vehicles and our large bags. We can expect good views of Bearded Vulture and Himalayan Vultures plus Mongolian Accentor, maybe Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch and Wallcreeper. Altai Snowcock is one of the most challenging species for the trip but we can hope to see it in this area. Overnight in Khanbogd tourist ger camp.

Day 10, Sat, 9 Jun. Yolyn Am area. We'll have another morning Yolyn Am, trying for Altai Snowcock early on. Later we can visit the Mukhar Shiver valley to see Barred Warbler and White-winged Snowfinch. Overnight in Khanbogd tourist ger camp.

Day 11, Sun, 10 Jun. Khongoryn Els (Sand dune and saxaul forest). We have a long drive today, but will make stops for any interesting birds or scenery along the way. We will arrive at our next location, the famous dunes of Khongoryn Els, in the afternoon. We will find all the Gobi species including, Desert Wheatear, Asian Desert Warbler, Henderson's Ground Jay, Saxaul Sparrow, Long-legged Buzzard, Great Grey Shrike. The remainder of the day is free to relax following the drive. Overnight Gobi Erdene ger camp.



The lovely Desert Wheatear is common in the Gobi Desert. Photograph by participant Becky Hansen.

Day 12, Mon, 11 Jun. Khongoryn Els. We'll have a full day to look for the Gobi species found in this interesting area. Mammals can include Black-tailed Gazelle, Gobi Jerboa, Giant Gerbil, Tolai Hare and the delightful Long-eared Hedgehog. Overnight Gobi Erdene ger camp.



*The ger camps provide a touch of adventure, while being very comfortable!
Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.*

Day 13, Tue, 12 Jun. Dalanzadgad Town. We'll drive back to Dalanzadgad, with birding stops en route, with a chance for Oriental Plover and good possibilities for Pallas's Sandgrouse. Overnight at a western-style hotel in Dz, with large bags going ahead with the vehicles.

Day 14, Wed, 13 Jun. Transfer to Terelj. We'll fly from Dalanzadgad to UB on an early morning Mongolian Air flight, rendezvous with vehicles and baggage, and drive to Terelj NP. Overnight in Tumen Khaan tourist ger camp in Terelj.

Day 15, Thu, 14 Jun. Gorkhi-Terelj (Boreal forest zone). After breakfast, we will drive to the east of the city to the Terelj forest and check into our tourist ger camp. After we get settled, we will go birding. We will search for forest and forest steppe birds such as Oriental Cuckoo, Eurasian Hoopoe, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Willow Tit, Pine Bunting, Red-throated Thrush, Siberian Rubythroat, Siberian

Stonechat, White-cheeked Starling, Dusky Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Taiga Flycatcher, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Eastern Buzzard, and Blyth's Pipit. There are two challenging species here to look for here, which will depend on local conditions: Chinese Bush-Warbler and Black-billed Capercaillie. Overnight in Tumen Khaan tourist ger camp in Terelj.

Day 16, Fri, 15 Jun. Gorkhi-Terelj NP (Siberian boreal forest). We will drive to the east of our tourist camp to get to a riparian river forest. We will try to find Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Olive-backed Pipit, Common Rosefinch, and Taiga Flycatcher in breeding plumage. Overnight in Tumen Khaan tourist ger camp near birding sites.

Day 17, Sat, 16 Jun. To Ulaanbaatar. The morning will be spent birding the area around Terelj. In the afternoon, we will drive back to Ulaanbaatar city, where we will spend the final night of the tour in a comfortable hotel. We will have a farewell dinner together at a famous Mongolian restaurant.

Day 18, Sun, 17 Jun. Transfer to the airport for your homeward flight. Depending on traffic, the transfer should take around 30-45 minutes. Happy travels!

About Your Guide

Phil Gregory was born in Southampton, UK, and became a birder as a youth when the steam engines were scrapped and birding offered a way to travel and look for wonderful things. The quest for birds has led to many forays in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Pacific. He and his wife, Sue, worked as teachers for eight years in Nigeria and Zambia, where they raised their two children and made serious inroads into the birds of Africa, before transferring to the Falkland Islands for a two-year stint. In 1991-97 they relocated to Papua New Guinea where the 450-plus endemics proved a great challenge, and since then they have lived in the Northern Territory and since 1998 in far north Queensland, Australia.

Phil's major interests are field identification, vocalizations, and the geographic distribution of birds. He is also a writer with assorted contributions to many reference books including doing some family accounts for the *Handbook of Birds of the World*. He is currently working on a *Birds-of-paradise and Bowerbirds* title in the Pica/Helm series, and a forthcoming *Field Guide to the Birds of New Guinea* for Lynx Edicions. He has also published and now maintains three checklists, one for the birds of Australia and its island territories, one for the Solomon Islands and one for New Guinea and associated islands. Phil and Sue run the well-known Cassowary House, a birding and nature lodge situated in a great birding spot in the rainforest at Kuranda, near Cairns in the far north of Queensland.

Visit <http://fieldguides.com/guides> for Phil's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Financial Information

FEE: \$7,275 from Ulaanbaatar

DEPOSIT: \$730

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: January 31, 2018

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$640

LIMIT: 8

Other Things You Need to Know

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

DOCUMENTS: A current **passport** valid beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Mongolia. We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your return, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. Please make sure your passport has at least six months validity beyond your return date. No visa is currently necessary if traveling as a tourist for under 90 days.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Mongolian 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 and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour starts and ends in Ulaanbaatar. 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 \$7,275 for one person in double occupancy from Ulaanbaatar. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 17, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through dinner on Day 17 (Breakfast on Day 18 is covered in the tour fee. Please enjoy breakfast on Day 18 on your own schedule, if your flight departure time allows for it.), all ground transportation, all internal flights, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leader(s).

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Ulaanbaatar, airport taxes, visa fees, 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 \$640. 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 \$730** 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 31, 2018. 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 an 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, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when 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 www.fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.htm 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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