

ITINERARY
NORTHWESTERN ARGENTINA
The Chaco, Córdoba & Northern Andes
October 13-31, 2018



Burrowing Parakeets are found in arid areas such as the Gran Chaco of Argentina. This monotypic species breeds in large colonies in cliffs, tunneling into earth and rock to create nesting burrows. Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.

We include here information for those interested in the 2018 Field Guides Northwestern Argentina 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

From the humid, lush forests of the Yungas on the lower slopes of the Andes to the driest inter-Andean valleys in Salta, from a sparkling high Andean lake near the Bolivian border to the vast lowland salt flats in northwestern Córdoba, and from dense thorny woodland in the Gran Chaco to the inviting grassy slopes high in Tucumán, northwestern Argentina's incredible diversity of striking landscapes and habitats holds boundless promise for birders.

Like so many other Andean venues, northwestern Argentina offers an exciting and varied mix of birds to both seasoned South American birders and to those who are new to the rich southern Andes. By visiting a sampling of key habitats at several different sites in Jujuy, Tucumán, Salta, and Córdoba provinces, we stand an excellent chance of finding a huge percentage of the intriguing specialties here, along with many widespread southern South American species, in this stunningly beautiful country.

The alluring, epiphyte-laden Yungas forest that stretches from southern Peru to central Argentina holds countless specialties such as the rare and very local Red-faced Guan, Large-tailed (White-faced) Dove, Green-cheeked Parakeet, the rare Tucumán (Alder) Parrot, the recently described Montane Forest (Hoy's) Screech-Owl, the spectacular Lyre-tailed Nightjar, Blue-capped Puffleg (rare), the tiny Slender-tailed Woodstar, Dot-fronted Woodpecker, Spot-breasted Thornbird, the incredible Giant Antshrike, the endemic White-browed Tapaculo, Sclater's and Buff-banded tyrannulets, Plumbeous Black-Tyrant (Andean Tyrant), Brown-capped Redstart, Fulvous-headed and the striking endemic Yellow-striped brush-finches, Rusty-browed Warbling-Finch, and the rare, local, and beautiful Rufous-throated Dipper. One crystal dawn will find us ascending the mountain-ringed puna at Laguna de Pozuelos, stadium for the trio of Andean flamingos and ephemeral home to the fabled Horned (very rare now) and Giant coots. Temperate zone shrub/grassland, seemingly empty of birds to the passerby, is found on close inspection to harbor an amazing variety of small feathered forms, several of



*We'll listen for the Giant Antshrike in the Yungas region, and hope to get a good look like this! These huge antbirds can be difficult to see, but their loud song carries well, so we'll do our best to track one down.
Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.*

which are of quite local distribution, among them Golden-spotted and the endemic Bare-eyed ground-doves (all four *Metriopelia* ground-doves are likely on this tour), Gray-hooded and Mountain parakeets, the stunning Red-tailed Comet and both Wedge-tailed and Andean hillstars, the near-endemic Buff-breasted Earthcreeper, Maquis (Iquico) and endemic Steinbach's (rare) canasteros, Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail, Zimmer's Tapaculo, the strange White-tipped Plantcutter, Rufous-sided Warbling-Finch, the rare and endemic Tucumán Mountain-Finch, Puna, Bright-rumped, Citron-headed, and Greenish yellow-finches, and the local Red-backed Sierra-Finch.

The dry, thorny habitats of the Gran Chaco, center to one of the continent's most distinctive avifaunas, shelter such seldom-seen specialties as Brushland Tinamou, Chaco Chachalaca, Spot-winged Falconet, Black-legged Seriema, Chaco Owl (rare; a recent split from the Rufous-legged Owl), Blue-tufted Starthroat, Black-bodied Woodpecker (very rare), Scimitar-billed and Great Rufous woodcreepers, Chaco Earthcreeper, Short-billed Canastero, Little Thornbird, Lark-like Brushrunner, Brown Cacholote, Stripe-backed Antbird, Crested Gallito, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Cinereous Tyrant, Suiriri Flycatcher (Chaco Suiriri), the dapper Black-crested Finch, and Many-colored Chaco-Finch.

After a couple of days in the warm embrace of the Gran Chaco we'll be ready for a return to the cool springtime of the Argentine Andes. As we've seen previously on this tour, this is stunningly beautiful country, a region in which misty forests with a plethora of birds lies practically at the foot of great mountain deserts spiked with huge columnar cacti where a few bizarre birds, like the strange Burrowing Parakeet and the endemic Sandy Gallito, make their rocky homes.

If you have never chased a ghostly gallito or thrilled to the courtship flight of the Cinereous Tyrant, join us this fall in Northwestern Argentina!

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: Argentina is such a vast place that to really do it justice, one needs to bird for a couple of months here. If you don't have two months to spend here, our NORTHWESTERN and SOUTHERN ARGENTINA offerings do an excellent job of covering the avifauna. Few tours that we offer see such a large percentage of a country's total avifauna on a regular basis than these two tours. Since we do try to sample a wide variety of habitats during this tour, some of the distances covered on our birding days and on days that are primarily travel days are great (the greatest ones are covered in airplanes). Long distances also tend to produce generally long days in the field, and we will typically rise early and depart after an early restaurant breakfast or enjoy a picnic breakfast in the field either at or on the way to our primary destination. Also, since our primary birding destinations tend to be a fair piece from the nearest

restaurant, your guide(s) will be making lots of those yummy picnic lunches that many of you who have traveled with us before have come to know and love. We'll do our best to get the group back to the hotel before the sun sets, except, of course, when we plan to do some owling. Walking on this tour is mostly along roads (very few trails are present) but be prepared sometimes to walk a couple of miles, for example, to look for Salinas Monjita-- especially if the level of water is low in Pozuelos lake or to look for Salinas Monjita.

Climate, like the habitat, is extremely varied and there will be days that you will want the lightest of field clothing to provide some comfort in the heat of the Gran Chaco, while on other days you'll be donning your warmest down jacket, wool gloves, and wool stocking cap. Most of the climates will be somewhere in between these extremes, though. We'll also see an extreme difference in the types of terrain covered, from "flat as a pancake" to steep-sided Andean canyons. Hikes in steep terrain are very few, and those hikes are generally short or we avoid them altogether and walk downhill instead. For those sensitive to high altitude, rest assured that your guides are too. Any hiking high up in the Andes will be at a very slow pace and on the flattest ground that we can find.

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 your guide for the tour.

This tour may be combined with SOUTHERN ARGENTINA, October 30-November 15, 2018.

About the Birding Areas



The Yungas—Many of northwestern Argentina's special birds can be found on the humid lower Andean slopes in the rich subtropical forest known as the Yungas. The vegetation here is generally lush and wet, in sharp contrast to the dry Chaco woodland a short distance to the east, and to the dry montane habitats above this forest, and the air is pleasantly cool. We'll explore this habitat in the states of Jujuy, Salta and Tucumán, at elevations between about 4000 and 6500 feet. Chances for light to moderate precipitation in this habitat are greatly increased over those in the Chaco, and we'll want to be prepared for the eventual drizzle or mist while exploring this area. It is in this habitat that we will search for the likes of Red-faced Guan, Large-tailed (White-faced) Dove, Tucumán (Alder) Parrot, Rothschild's Swift, Slender-tailed Woodstar, Cream-backed Woodpecker, Giant Antshrike, Sclater's and Buff-banded tyrannulets, Slaty Elaenia, Plumbeous Black-Tyrant (Andean Tyrant), Rufous-throated Dipper, (Andean) Slaty Thrush, Yellow-striped Brush-Finch, and Rusty-browed Warbling-Finch.

The Puna—Lying in a mountain-ringed basin in the dry puna zone, Laguna de Pozuelos is, at times, one of the great lakes of the high puna zone of the southern Andes. It has been one of the remote strongholds of the rare and bizarre Horned Coot, a stadium for thousands of Chilean,

James's (Puna), and Andean flamingos, and one of the best places in the world to see Vicuña (we see South America's only other wild camelid, the Guanaco, on our **Southern Argentina** tour). An abundance of waterfowl and wintering shorebirds from North America, too, inhabit the shallow, shifting margins of the main lake, which covers many square miles (the monument encompasses some 34,000 acres) at an elevation of approximately 11,500 feet. In recent years, a continuing drought in this area of Argentina has drastically reduced water levels at the lake. Most of the water birds mentioned above are still present either here or in nearby Abra Pampa, but overall numbers have been greatly reduced. The area surrounding the lake receives very little precipitation through the year and is consequently quite arid. It consists of dry grasslands with scattered knee-high bushes and rocky areas on steeper slopes. Birds, however, abound in this situation, and a variety of furnariids, flycatchers, finches, and others will keep us busy in this high zone. We will spend two

nights at around 11,400 feet where temperatures outside can dip below freezing at night and in the early morning. Daytime temperatures are usually cool to pleasant but can become quite warm with cloudless skies or quite cold with overcast and wind. At elevations between 11,000 and 14,600 feet, we'll be sure to do everything in moderation and at a slow pace to minimize any adverse reactions to the high altitude. Any hiking that we do in this area will be on level ground or on a downhill slope. One exception will be an optional short (400m-500m) hike up a wet valley at about 13,500 feet east of La Quiaca on Day 6 to look for a couple of scarce specialties of the area.

The puna zone is visited at two other sites, one in Salta and the other in Tucumán at around 10,000-11,000 feet.



Laguna de Pozuelos, in the puna region, hosts a variety of waterbirds, including three species of flamingoes: Andean, Chilean and James's. Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.

The Chaco—The Gran Chaco, extending from north-central Argentina north through western Paraguay to southeastern Bolivia, covers an area of nearly one million square kilometers. This vast, level, and arid plain probably had its origins in the early Pleistocene, in the form of alluvial deposits from the recently uplifted Andes. Situated in the rainshadow of the mighty Andes, the Chaco becomes increasingly arid westward from the wet Argentine Pantanal. Our main birding destination in this region lies at the western edge of this wilderness and is characterized by dense, thorny woodland where water is highly localized. The dominant trees are mesquites (*Prosopis*) and handsome "quebrachos" (*Aspidosperma* and *Schinopsis*). In the understory, numerous cacti and terrestrial bromeliads further contribute to the distinctive beauty of the Chaco. Birding here in the austral spring can be fantastic as most birds in the area (a large percentage of them just now returning from their austral wintering grounds farther to the north) are singing and are generally quite conspicuous. Some of our target birds while here include Brushland Tinamou, Spot-winged Falconet, Black-legged Seriema (rare), Black-bodied Woodpecker (rare), Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Brown Cacholote, Cinereous Tyrant, Black-crested Finch, Many-colored Chaco-Finch, and many, many others. Later on in the austral summer weather here is quite hot (typically in the 100+ degrees F range) and dry, but during the austral springtime it is not unusual to have low overcast with light rain showers and mild temperatures.

Interandean Valleys and Slopes—The complexity of the Andean furnariid assemblage is perhaps nowhere so readily appreciated and understood as along the few roads that ascend the eastern slope of the Andes to reach communities located in intermontane valleys. All major groups inhabiting the non-forested Andes are represented here, often by more than one member, and most are relatively easy to see repeatedly for comparison and familiarity. Our time in these areas will be devoted to digging out and scrutinizing each of the many furnariids inhabiting the brushy slopes along beautiful, little-traveled roads from 4500 feet at the base of the mountains to the passes at 10,000-11,000 feet. These roads parallel, for much of their ascent, steep-walled river valleys, passing through stretches of tall, moist Yungas forest (where rain is a possibility) before the landscape becomes dry and brushy with numerous gigantic columnar cacti (*Trichocereus* spp.) reminiscent of the Saguaros of the Sonoran Desert. A flowering shrub zone dominates from about 7000 to 10,000 feet, with rocky canyons at the lower end giving way to eroded ravines and stony hillsides at the higher elevations.

Córdoba—Isolated some 350 kilometers to the east of the Andes, the Sierra Grande de Córdoba and the Sierra de Comechingones rise abruptly from the parched southern Chaco and the salinas region of Córdoba and San Luis provinces. Much older than the Andes themselves, the isolation of these ancient ranges has given rise to a number of endemic flora and fauna. Those that interest us are two endemic cinclodes, Córdoba (formerly Comechingones) and Olrog's, both of which can be found in the highest reaches of these mountains. Also here among the luxuriant *Festuca* grasslands is the *sclateri* race of Puna Canastero, once split out as a separate species, the Córdoba Canastero. An excellent paved road traverses the high elevations of these mountains, allowing us to search for these and other montane species, including an isolated population of Andean Condors, with relative ease. The hills and plains at the western base of these mountains support healthy Chaco and *monte* woodland, with many of the northern Chaco species being represented here. Also, a short distance to the northwest of these mountains, the expansive Salinas Grandes and the Salinas de Ambargasta spread out to the north and west as far as the eye can see. It is here, among the stunted vegetation of this stark and blinding landscape, that the little-known Salinas Monjita makes its home. With a bit of luck, we should get a good look at this rare endemic flycatcher.



*Straight-billed Reedhaunter is one of our targets at Otamendi Reserve.
Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.*

Otamendi Reserve – A short drive north of the capital of Buenos Aires lies the rich Otamendi Reserve near the mouth of the Rio Paraná. A good dirt road transects the beautiful marsh habitats here and gives birders an opportunity to search the varied wetland and brushy habitats for such targets as Red-and-white Crake, Giant Wood-Rail, both Curve-billed and Straight-billed reedhaunters, Crested and Warbling doraditos, Diademed Tanager, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, and many more. A couple of hours here can be very productive and will nicely complement our birding farther to the north in Corrientes.

Itinerary for Northwestern Argentina The Chaco, Córdoba & Northern Andes

Day 1, Sat, 13 Oct. Departure. Overnight flight departs tonight for Buenos Aires.

Day 2, Sun, 14 Oct. Arrival in Buenos Aires. Flights arrive at Buenos Aires around mid-morning today. We'll transfer via bus to our excellent hotel in downtown Buenos Aires (about a 40-minute drive). Upon arrival, after retrieving your luggage and clearing customs at Ezeiza International Airport, look for your name, or the Field Guides name, on one of the greeters' signs for your ride into town. We'll have lunch at or near our hotel after arrival and plan to do some easy but very productive birding later this afternoon at a small reserve near our hotel.

The reserve harbors an incredible array of aquatic species and small landbirds in the numerous ponds, marshes, and brushy areas within its boundaries. Some of the special birds that we might see include Ringed Teal and the scarce Black-headed Duck, perhaps as many as nine species of rallids, Freckle-breasted Thornbird, Sulphur-throated Spinetail, Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, White-crested Tyrannulet, Black-and-rufous Warbling-Finch, and Long-tailed Reed-Finch. Weather in Buenos Aires at this time of year can be cool and wet to warm, sunny, and humid. Dinner will be late (8:00-9:00), as is the custom throughout Argentina. Night in Buenos Aires.

Day 3, Mon, 15 Oct. Flight to Jujuy; the Yungas. After breakfast at our hotel, we'll load up our luggage and drive to the nearby domestic airport, where we'll board our morning flight to Jujuy. After being met by our driver and bus, we'll head towards the Yungas to drop our bags off at the hotel. We'll have a good lunch at our lodging after checking in and getting settled into our rooms. We plan to visit a nearby stretch of fine Yungas habitats this afternoon and into the early evening,

with a picnic dinner (and Argentine wine, of course!), in hopes of seeing two spectacular species: the rare and local Red-faced Guan and the remarkable Lyre-tailed Nightjar! Come prepared for very pleasant temperatures and a chance for rain as the afternoon advances. Night Jujuy.



Yungas Pygmy-owl will be a focus of our attention in the forests near Jujuy. Photograph by participant Jose Padilla-Lopez.

Day 4, Tue, 16 Oct. Rio Yala to La Quiaca. After breakfast at our hotel this morning, we'll pack up our things and head to a productive site along the nearby Rio Yala. The bulk of the morning will be spent birding the Yungas and associated habitats just north of Jujuy at elevations between 4,500 and 5,500 feet, where we hope to see such scarce birds as Torrent Duck, Tucumán (Alder) Parrot, Yungas Pygmy-Owl, Slender-tailed Woodstar, Plumbeous Black-Tyrant (Andean Tyrant), Rufous-throated Dipper, Pale-legged Warbler, Rust-and-yellow Tanager, and a number of other species. Mist or light rain is quite possible here, and the temperatures should be cool to comfortable. Most of our birding this morning will be along a little-used dirt road that has some moderately steep sections on which we will be walking.

Our final destination today is the town of La Quiaca far to the north of us on the Bolivian border. Along the route, which is primarily through arid montane habitats, we will stop fairly frequently at a variety of elevations in order to sample the changing avifauna and to adjust to the changing altitude. Our hotel for the next two nights is at an altitude of approximately 11,400 feet. Watch for Giant Hummingbird, Red-tailed Comet, Andean Hillstar, Brown-backed Mockingbird, and Black-hooded Sierra-Finch, as well as our first (of many) Vicuñas along the way today. Although our hotel is basic, the private bathrooms have hot water showers and the food at the nearby restaurant is tasty. We'll have a restaurant lunch along the way in the little town of Humahuaca. Remember to take precautions against the intense, high-altitude sunshine today. Night in La Quiaca.

Day 5, Wed, 17 Oct. Laguna de Pozuelos. We will want to depart early today in order to arrive at Laguna de Pozuelos early enough so that our views of the waterbirds on the remnants of the lake are not distorted by the heat shimmer on the water that develops as the air warms. Our entire morning (temperatures could be very cold early on) will be spent in very flat terrain at about 11,500 feet, and the peak elevation on our drive will be approximately 12,300 feet. Needless to say, at this elevation we will do everything slowly to avoid any problems with altitude sickness. Depending upon local water conditions, we may want to check a smaller nearby lake that has had many of our target species attending it when the water level at Pozuelos is low. Visiting this site entails about a one kilometer hike along a mostly flat dirt road in order to get a view of the lake. After a picnic lunch, we'll bird our way back to La Quiaca. It will be a busy, long, but very productive day. Night in La Quiaca.

Day 6, Thu, 18 Oct. Abra Lizoite to Jujuy. Just to the east of La Quiaca lies another mountain range that has been largely neglected by birders until very recently. It's certainly worthy of a visit just for the magnificent scenery, but when one considers the bird possibilities, a visit is even more enticing. Recent tours have reliably produced good looks at the local, and beautiful, Red-backed Sierra-Finch near the pass at just above 14,500 feet. Other possibilities here include the likes of Puna Tinamou, Variable (Puna) Hawk, Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, Mountain Parakeet, White-winged Cinclodes, Black-fronted and Cinereous ground-tyrants, Black Siskin, and many others. We even saw a stunning adult Mountain Lion on our drive to the pass in 2014! And the little town that we drive through on the way is probably the most reliable spot in Argentina for the attractive Citron-headed Yellow-Finch. We'll depart our hotel early this morning after an early breakfast toting a picnic lunch for later. After our lunch, we'll return to Jujuy, birding as we go. Weather, time, and road conditions permitting, we'll make stops at several spots along the way to search for anything that may have eluded us. Night in Jujuy.



We'll look for Andean Tinamou on our way to Cafayate. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Day 7, Fri, 19 Oct. Jujuy to Joaquín V. González and the Gran Chaco. After an early breakfast at our hotel, we plan to pack up and drive east to the small town of Joaquín V. González on the western edge of the vast Gran Chaco. Here we will have a chance of seeing a number of the more poorly known, nearly mythical species of this region, such as, Spot-winged Falconet, Black-legged Seriema, and Rufous Woodcreeper. It's likely to be warm (downright hot if not overcast) and dry today, so dress accordingly. Our new hotel in Joaquín V. González is quite comfortable, and is a considerable upgrade from hotels here in past years. Weather and road conditions permitting, we'll make a stop en route at the entrance to El Rey NP for some birding and a picnic lunch. Night in Joaquín V. González.

Day 8, Sat, 20 Oct. To San Lorenzo via El Rey. We will depart this morning from our hotel in J.V. González bound for the delightful town of San Lorenzo, located in a broad valley at the foot of the Andes at 4500 feet. Along the way, if time, weather, and road conditions permit, we'll again drive into productive El Rey National Park just to the northwest of J.V. González. Our hotel in San Lorenzo is comfortable, has its own laundry service. Night in San Lorenzo.

Day 9, Sun, 21 Oct. The Camino de Corniza. A fine stretch of the old Pan American Highway bisects some excellent Yungas between Salta and the nearby city of San Salvador de Jujuy. This road is little used now and the lush, hilly habitat is still mostly intact. A few of the birds that we can look forward to seeing today include Green-cheeked Parakeet, Giant and Rufous-capped antshrikes, Slaty Elaenia, Sclater's, Rough-legged, and Mottle-cheeked tyrannulets, Crested Becard, Plush-crested Jay, (Andean) Slaty Thrush, Two-banded Warbler, Golden-rumped and Purple-throated euphonias, Fulvous-headed Brush-Finch, Rusty-browed Warbling-Finch, and Golden-winged Cacique.

We plan to bird this stretch of road for the morning, with lunch back in town today. We'll then return to our hotel near Salta by early afternoon, and after an afternoon siesta (a good time to pack for tomorrow's drive), we will return to this same stretch of road in the late afternoon. We'll plan on a picnic dinner here tonight before we make an attempt for the local Montane Forest (Hoy's) Screech-Owl at dusk. Night in San Lorenzo.

Day 10, Mon, 22 Oct. San Lorenzo to Colonel Moldes. After breakfast, we will bird the grounds of our hotel, where we will look for stunning birds like the Cream-backed Woodpecker, White-tipped Plantcutter and others that we may have missed the previous days. Around mid-morning, we will pack up and depart towards the small town of Coronel Moldes where we will spend the afternoon near the large reservoir of Cabra Corral. The main target here will be Black-legged Seriema. We will have time to get prepared for the next visit back to the high Andes Mountains tomorrow. Night in Coronel Moldes.

Day 11, Tue, 23 Oct. The Cuesta del Obispo road. We'll depart our hotel this morning with our bags in tow. On the nearby Cuesta del Obispo road, we'll sample a number of different habitats, from wet Yungas to dry shrubby cactus-clad slopes to puna grassland between 4,500 feet at the base of the road up to just over 10,000 feet at the pass of Cuesta del Obispo in Salta province. Be on the lookout today in this spectacular valley for such birds as Andean Tinamou, Andean Condor, Andean Parakeet, Red-tailed Comet, Straight-billed and Rock earthcreepers, Brown-capped Tit-Spintail, Cordilleran, Maquis (Iquico), and possibly Scribble-tailed canasteros, Zimmer's Tapaculo, Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager, Rusty Flowerpiercer, and Black-hooded Sierra-Finch. For the most part, our morning is likely to be cool and dry with the possibility of mist or rain late in the afternoon. Lunch will be in the field today. We plan to arrive at our hotel in Cafayate in the afternoon, and in the late evening we will look for the unique Chaco Owl. Night in Cafayate.

Day 12, Wed, 24 Oct. Rio Calchaqui Valley and The Sierra de Aconquija to Tafi del Valle. We'll depart the small town of Cafayate in the arid Rio Calchaqui valley this morning after breakfast and head south through Argentine wine country. We'll make numerous birding stops along our route in this rainshadow valley, looking for the likes of Elegant

Crested-Tinamou, Burrowing Parakeet, the scarce and local Steinbach's (Chestnut) Canastero, the endemic White-throated Cacholote, White-tipped Plantcutter, the endemic Sandy Gallito, White-banded Mockingbird, plus many others before we head southeast over the pass flanks of the Sierra de Aconquija. Leaving the valley behind, we will start climbing where many different birds will be in our way. The scenery here is well worth the drive. Night in Tafi del Valle.

Day 13, Thu, 25 Oct. Rio Los Sosa Yungas, Pampa del Infiernillo, and the Sierra de Aconquija. Today will find us in a variety of habitats, but much of our time will be spent at or near the pass (just below 10,000 feet) in the Sierra de Aconquija above Tafi del Valle and along the Rio Los Sosa at much lower elevations in beautiful Yungas forest on the eastern slope. We hope to find, among others, Ornate Tinamou, the fabulous Andean Condor, the endemic Bare-eyed Ground-Dove, Andean Lapwing, Slender-billed Miner, Scale-throated and the near-endemic Buff-breasted earthcreepers, Puna Canastero, the endemic White-browed Tapaculo, Hellmayr's Pipit, and the lovely endemic Tucumán Mountain-Finch and Yellow-striped Brush-Finch. Most of our birding will be on a downhill slope along the roadside. Lunch today will likely be a picnic on the road in the Yungas. Night in Tafi del Valle.



The Tucumán Mountain-Finch is endemic to the high Andes of northwestern Argentina. Photograph by guide Willy Perez.

Day 14, Fri, 26 Oct. Early birding near Tafi, and then drive to Dean Funes. We'll put in a productive hour or two of birding near Tafi del Valle this morning. As we leave the highlands and drive through the beautiful Yungas forest of the Rio Los Sosa valley, we'll have another chance to look for the rare Rufous-throated Dipper (if we missed it the first day) feeding among the boulders of this rushing river. Before we begin our drive to the south through the Andean foothills of Tucumán Province, we will make a few birding stops along the way (maybe seeing the scarce Dinelli's Doradito!). The drive is a long one, but since there are no direct flights from Tucumán to Cordoba, driving in our comfortable mini bus will get us to our destination sooner than if we chose to fly through Buenos Aires. This could change if there are direct flights available in the future. Our hotel for tonight is rather basic, but it's comfortable and the service friendly. Night in Dean Funes.

Day 15, Sat, 27 Oct. Salinas Grandes and Chaco woodland near Dean Funes. We'll depart our hotel early this morning after an early breakfast in order to arrive at a favored site of the Salinas Monjita before the heat of the day sets in. We'll likely encounter a number of new birds for our tour here as well, including Straneck's Tyrannulet, a species that has only recently been formally described! After the monjita and the other birds of the Salinas, we'll either continue to explore

the Chaco woodland or we may decide to venture back into the foothills of the Sierra Grande de Córdoba in search of whatever eludes us. Depending upon the weather, we'll either have a picnic lunch or we'll head back to town for a meal before heading out to Capilla del Monte, which will be our next destination. Night in Capilla del Monte.

Day 16, Sun, 28 Oct. Capilla del Monte. We'll spend the all day birding the rich Chaco woodland near town. This rich habitat harbors the likes of Brushland Tinamou, Chaco Chachalaca, Ash-colored Cuckoo, Little and Scissor-tailed nightjars, Blue-tufted Starthroat, Spot-backed Puffbird, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Crested Hornero, Chaco Earthcreeper, Short-billed Canastero, Little Thornbird, Lark-like Brushrunner, Brown Cacholote, Crested Gallito, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Rufous Casiornis, Many-colored Chaco-Finch, Stripe-capped Sparrow, plus countless others. All of our birding today will be along dirt roads. Night in Capilla del Monte.

Day 17, Mon, 29 Oct. Capilla del Monte to The Sierra Grande de Córdoba. After breakfast at our hotel, we'll load up our luggage and head up to the mountain to begin our search for our target birds toward the Sierra Grande de Córdoba. We will spend as long as we need here to see all the specialties in this unique mountain range. Later in the day we will travel to the city of Cordoba to catch our late flight to Buenos Aires. Come prepared for cooler temperatures and a chance for rain as the afternoon advances. Night in Buenos Aires.

Day 18, Tue, 30 Oct. Morning birding at Otamendi Reserve, international flights home. After an early breakfast at our hotel, we'll drive an hour north of Buenos Aires to the very productive Otamendi Reserve. We plan to do some birding along a level road through some beautiful marshland for the all morning before we head back to the hotel to have lunch, clean up, and be prepared for the transfer to the Ezeiza International Airport in the early evening (with plenty of time to check in for our overnight flights to Miami).

Day 19, Wed, 31 Oct. Arrival home. You should reach Miami in plenty of time for connections home. ¡Vaya bién!

About Your Guides

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 slope of the Andes, on a project protecting marine turtles in Costa Rica, and on bird conservation in northwestern Ecuador. He was a resident guide at Kapawi Lodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon for three years, mastering the art of finding and identifying the many secretive birds of the lowland rainforest. He has since guided throughout Ecuador including the East and West 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 relocated to England for several years. He speaks excellent English and has an engaging and outgoing personality that makes every tour he leads enjoyable and fun.

"Willy was lovely...I loved the pace of his days and his ability to hear the birds. He was also very cordial. I am planning to travel with him again in the near future."
M.H., Ecuador: Rainforest & Andes

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

Financial Information

FEE: \$6475 from Buenos Aires

DEPOSIT: \$650 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: June 15, 2018

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$825

LIMIT: 10

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!

A NOTE ON ALTITUDE: We will reach a maximum elevation of approximately 14,600 feet on this tour, and we will spend a good portion of the tour at elevations above 8000 feet, including two nights in a hotel at 11,400 feet. We will take our time at higher elevations in order to minimize the effects of altitude.

DOCUMENTS: For US citizens a **passport**, valid beyond the date of your return, is necessary for entry into Argentina. You will be issued a **tourist card** by the airline in Miami. US citizens are not currently required to obtain a visa.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Argentinean 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: 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. On our domestic flights within Argentina, we'll each be limited to 2 pieces of checked luggage weighing 23 kg (55 lbs) in total. Carry-on luggage for domestic flights is limited to 8 kg (17 lbs).

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$6475 for one person in double occupancy from Buenos Aires. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 17, all food from dinner on Day 2 through lunch on Day 18, the flights within Argentina, 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 fees do not include your airfare to and from Argentina, 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** is \$825. 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 \$650** 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 June 15, 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 another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

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 <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.

1/18MM; peg