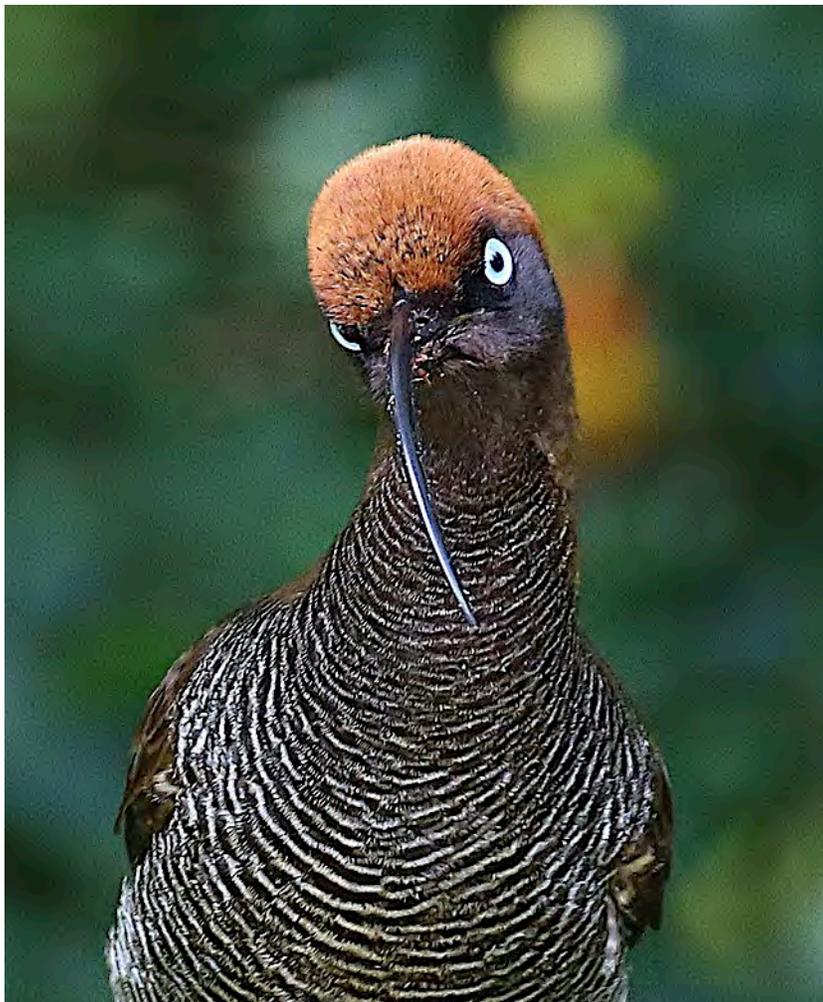


ITINERARY
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
July 6-23, 2017



A female Brown Sicklebill, one of 24 Bird-of-Paradise species we will seek on this amazing tour. The feeders at Kumil Lodge offer wonderful views of many outstanding species. Photograph by participant Steve Rannels.

We include here information for those interested in the 2017 Field Guides Papua New Guinea tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

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

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our 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 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

This 1400-mile-long island, the largest tropical island and the world's second largest overall (after Greenland), lies less than 400 miles below the equator. Here in the warm latitudes of the South Pacific, New Guinea represents the northern limit of the Australasian Region, and a major center for avian evolution with well over

400 endemics. It is in the massive backbone cordillera of New Guinea that the great mountain system extending from the Himalayas through Indonesia makes its easternmost thrust into the Pacific.

New Guinea's location at the juncture of two vast biogeographic regions has made it a crossroads on the pathway of evolution. There is a high degree of specialization to be found in virtually all forms of life, from entire families of minute invertebrates living on the mossy backs of weevils, to the more than 800 distinct languages spoken by native peoples. And New Guinea is the land of the fabled birds-of-paradise and bowerbirds. These two fascinating groups have evolved to occupy practically every habitat on this great island, from verdant rainforest and dry savanna to montane forest at treeline on high mountain peaks.

Our tour centers around locating as many birds-of-paradise as possible. Among them are some of the most highly sought birds on Earth: King-of-Saxony, Twelve-wired, Raggiana, Greater, King, and Blue birds-of-paradise, the elegant Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, the huge Brown Sicklebill, and many more, each so uniquely plumed as to seem unrelated to the others. Parrots, pigeons and fruit-doves, cuckoos, and kingfishers are also particularly well represented, and most have

elaborate and beautiful plumages. Some less-familiar groups of birds form the bulk of the passerine avifauna: spritely fairywrens, gemlike pittas, cuckooshrikes, whistlers, logrunners, babblers, and honeyeaters. There are three endemic families too, in berrypeckers and longbills, painted and tit berrypeckers, and satinbirds, recently split off from the bird-of-paradise assemblage and including the Crested and Loria's former birds-of-paradise.

Over the centuries, the island of New Guinea developed a human population equally as colorful and diverse as its bird life. Amid the isolation of forested mountains, more than 800 languages developed, representing some 20% of the world's languages. Here, far more than in most places, the native peoples understand and appreciate their bird life, an attitude strongly reflected in their art and customs. On our tour we'll have the opportunity to encounter tribes ranging from the Huli highlanders of the Tari Valley, famous for their elaborate wigs decorated with bird plumes, to the sago swamp dwellers of Western Province and the coastal peoples of the Port Moresby area. Dress is mostly western and the housing increasingly so, but there is still ample evidence of cultures in recent transition.

Many people have the impression that a birding tour to Papua New Guinea must be unusually demanding or uncomfortable. For all of Papua New Guinea's remoteness, however, travel is surprisingly easy and food and accommodations are mostly good to very good. While we spend some time in the humid lowlands (which can be hot if sunny!), more than half of our birding is done in the wonderfully comfortable foothills and highlands, with cool nights and pleasant days.

Our tour will sample the Moresby savannas; lowland and foothill rainforest on the south slope near Port Moresby, Kiunga, and Tabubil; and montane forest and grasslands of the Central Highlands near Ambua Lodge and at Kumul Lodge near Mt. Hagen, where the feeders are a great place for photography.



Field Guides group boarding boats along the muddy Elevala River. Although this tour may have some challenging moments, we feel it is worth it for sights such as White-bellied Sea Eagle, Southern Crowned Pigeon and many other special birds. Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: New Guinea represents a particular challenge for our company. To get you to join us we need to convince you that it is one of the most wonderful regions on Earth, one of those must-see destinations on the planet. However, we find that the people who enjoy the tour the most are those who have (relatively) low expectations, and are then excited by the numerous rewards. Thus, our challenge is to raise your expectations, carefully lower them, and then let New Guinea delight you.

The birding in New Guinea may well be the most difficult in the world. Many species are very shy (be very careful about pointing!), the beautiful forests have quite low bird densities, and individual birds are often very wary. Do not go to New Guinea thinking the birding will be like an endless David Attenborough documentary: Adult male birds-of-paradise may constitute only 10% of a population and be the shyest individuals, and we don't have the months to spend waiting for every skulker to perform. Not everyone sees every bird; some shy ones will slip away.

New Guinea also presents other challenges. It rains a lot (in some areas at some point most every day) and heavy rain means no birds. We see very few mammals in New Guinea; hunting pressure is high and most live in areas

inaccessible to us: this is indeed rubber boot or neos and umbrella country. It can be warm and humid in the lowlands. There are bugs (mosquitoes, leeches, etc.), though they are seldom bad. There are travel hassles (planes and drivers can be late, tires do go flat).

Papua New Guinea can also be a dangerous place, though many of the dangers are in common with many other tours (boats, planes, etc.), and as with those, we rely on well-established local operators, with many of whom we have worked for years. Crime is a major problem in this country, a country that is more elemental, closer to the edge. We believe that travel as a group reduces the risks, and we limit our activities to areas that we understand to be safe: certain areas around Port Moresby, the “company towns” of Kiunga and Tabubil, and Ambua and Kumul Lodge, both long-established and run by a veteran company or the local landowners. We are comfortable offering this tour, but we also know that it encompasses even more of what adventure travel is about, the risks and benefits, than most other tours we do. Be assured though that our local contacts are our best insurance policy, as it is in their interest to look after us, and they have a great track record.



Ambua Lodge, overlooking the Tari Valley in the Southern Highlands, will be our base for several nights. Photo by participant Sharon Rannels.

That said, New Guinea *is* one of the most wonderful regions on Earth, one of those must-see destinations on the planet. The birds include some of the most incredible in the world. Of the roughly twenty species of birds-of-paradise the tour encounters, we see adult males of a majority, usually including the displays of several. While these are truly incredible, there are a delightful number of New Guinea birds that possess a simpler but almost equal beauty, including fruit-doves, lories and lorikeets, kingfishers, whistlers, robins, jewel-babblers, boatbills, and berrypeckers. The accommodations range from rustic but comfortable to excellent (and are often remarkable given the remote locations), the food is quite good (though one does not come here for a gourmet experience!), and there is enough of a transportation system to get us around some of the most rugged country on the globe. The cultural milieu is fascinating.

Field Guides has been taking one or more groups to Papua New Guinea every year for nearly thirty years; the route we have developed consistently produces a comprehensive survey of New Guinea’s habitats and birds. By selecting five rich areas in different regions, we are able to reduce the number of changes of hotels; multi-night stays are the rule. Early mornings are precious, and we will be up early to enjoy them. Siestas are possible on a number of days, and a good night’s sleep is typically to be had. Our birding will be on a mixture of seldom-traveled roads and trails, a few of them steep or muddy, and some patience and agility are needed every day for climbing over treefalls, getting in and out of boats, pushing through wet shrubbery to get to a trail. We will take it all slowly. Overall, the pace of this trip is certainly not strenuous and is mostly easy, though regularly moderate.

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.

Special Notes: Plane schedules change all the time. It is possible that our original itinerary will not be the final itinerary. We try to keep the tour length the same, but likely changes up and down include the number of days around Port Moresby, Tabubil, and Ambua Lodge, and the order of Kiunga and Tabubil often flip-flops. Then there are unscheduled changes, such as those caused by weather or tribal troubles, which may necessitate last minute changes, though we always end up finding great birds whatever comes.

Another issue of which you should be aware is the luggage limitation on this tour. There are often *luggage weight restrictions of 35 lbs.* (15kg) on checked baggage on our commercial flights *within* Papua New Guinea. If your luggage exceeds 35 lbs., we will be fortunate merely to pay additional charges to the airline, which we will pass along to you. More

likely and the worst case, overweight bags may be left until a later flight. **However, our TNT charter is now limited to just one flight and their new PAC plane makes life much easier as it has a good payload capacity, so the angst caused in the past by very strict weight limits is now much reduced.**

That said, we find that by packing reasonably and leaving excess weight in Port Moresby, we can get by, at worst some non-essential bags may have to follow on later flights. “Unnecessary” luggage (clothes for the return flight or items you may need if you are staying over in Australia) can be stored safely at our hotel in Port Moresby.

About the Tour Fee: This tour is not inexpensive. In fact, it is very expensive, as tourist-class travel in remote parts of the world generally is, but you have some of the most experienced tour leaders in New Guinea, and a great support staff with whom we have dealt for years. We have had to make many decisions, our primary concern being to maximize your experience through a convenient, safe, and comfortable trip. In particular, we are staying at several wonderful lodges (Ambua and Kumul) that are expensive, as are the charter aircraft. Charters are the only option for one flight, and in some cases they substantially decrease (but don’t eliminate) the chances of losing a day to missed connections. This tour may stretch your budget, but year after year our clients have found it an excellent way to have a comprehensive introductory tour of Papua New Guinea, with many fantastic sightings of unforgettable birds.

About the Birding Areas

Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, lies in the rain shadow of the Owen Stanley Mountains and is in one of



the driest parts of the country. Predominant habitats are grasslands, spotted with palm-like *Pandanus* and *Eucalyptus* and *Melaleuca* savanna, both very similar to (and sharing birds with) the drier regions of northern Australia. As one moves westward or inland from the immediate Port Moresby area, however, rainfall increases gradually until one reaches humid forest. In much of the region, this forest type has been selectively logged, but most of the original avifauna still is present, and the birding can be very productive. Species for which we’ll make an effort in the Port Moresby area include Spotted Whistling-Duck, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, the huge and bizarre Papuan Frogmouth, and Gray-headed Munia. We usually have time to visit a couple of ponds, and while the species are often widespread, Purple (Pacific) Swamphen, Pied Heron, and Comb-crested Jacana are always fun.

Tabubil area—Situated at about 2000 feet (615 m) in the Ok Tedi (= Tedi River) valley, the town of Tabubil owes its existence to the Ok Tedi Mining Corporation, whose mine above the town site is working a large gold and copper find. Based in Tabubil, we have access to forest in the 1600 feet (492 m) to 3000 feet (900 m) elevational range. The foothill zone of the remote Star Mountains harbors a great variety of birds, many of which are of restricted distribution or are rarely seen anywhere. This rich area, first visited by a birding tour on the 1987 Field Guides trip, has one of the highest annual rainfalls in New Guinea, but even in light mist or drizzle the birding can be extremely productive.

Birds of special interest in the Tabubil area include Salvadori’s Teal (good recent encounters), a distinctive form of Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot, the scarce Pesquet’s Parrot, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Shovel-billed Kookaburra (a mega-challenge but seen at the nest in 2007 and 2009!), White-rumped Robin (a shy forest dweller), Torrent-lark, Torrent Flycatcher (along rushing streams), Mountain Peltops, Great Woodswallow, Spotted Honeyeater, Golden Cuckooshrike, Papuan (Black-shouldered) and Gray-headed cicadabirds, Obscure Berrypecker, Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise, Magnificent Riflebird (shy, but with a fabulous, echoing, carrying voice), the bizarrely adorned Carola’s Parotia, and the little-known Greater Melampitta, a great rarity thought to roost in limestone sinkholes and recently found near Tabubil!



*A flamboyant male Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise at a display tree.
Photograph by participant Steve Rannels.*

Kiunga—Lying in the lowlands of the northern Fly River basin (and on the Fly River itself), the town of Kiunga is the shipping port for the Ok Tedi mine at Tabubil. The town and surrounding area are only very sparsely settled, and from the air the surroundings have a very wild aspect. We'll bird this extensive lowland forest both from land and from the river (by boat).

Since our first visit in 1987 as the first organized birding tour to the area, we have learned much about Kiunga's avifauna, and it is rich indeed. Pigeons and fruit-doves abound, Moustached Treeswifts and bands of noisy cuckooshrikes (including Golden) are often overhead, and Hooded Pittas call from the forest floor. Over the years we have found such scarce species as Little Paradise-Kingfisher, Long-billed Cuckoo, White-bellied Pitohui, Yellow-eyed Starling, and White-spotted Munia here, and other specialties of the area include Gray-headed Goshawk, Collared Imperial-Pigeon, Palm Cockatoo, Pesquet's (Vulturine) Parrot (declining), Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, Large Fig-Parrot, Dwarf Koel, Blyth's Hornbill, Obscure Honeyeater, Black-sided Robin, New Guinea Babbler, and the spectacular Flame Bowerbird. Local expert Samuel Kepuknai, who joins us in Kiunga, knows a lek tree of Greater Birds-of-Paradise where we can watch fabulous males displaying raucously in the treetops overhead (along with Raggianas, and their hybrids; what is going on here?). On past tours the display has been a huge trip highlight, with both species plus hybrids carrying on wonderfully at a very accessible forest tree. Upriver a King Bird-of-Paradise can often be seen proclaiming its viney tangle courtship area to passing females. With luck we could even find a male

Magnificent Riflebird on its song perch. Scope views of these displaying birds often constitute one of the highlights of the tour. The river offers another vantage point and an opportunity (with luck, of course) to see the fantastic Southern Crowned-Pigeon, bird of the trip for many years now!

Varirata National Park, in the low Astrolabe Mountains paralleling the Owen Stanley Range east of Port Moresby, represents Papua New Guinea's first conservation area, encompassing 3265 acres (1306 hectares) of savanna and undulating, forest-covered hills. Atop the Sogeri Plateau, at elevations ranging from 2200 feet (677 m) to about 3000 feet (923 m), the rainforest is high enough to support a different group of birds from those of lower-elevation forests near Port Moresby. A fine network of trails provides access to the forest interior, and the bird life here is rich in rare or secretive species as well as more widespread foothill birds.

Species of particular interest in the park include Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, Frilled Monarch, Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Goldenface (Dwarf Whistler), Wallace's Fairywren, Golden Monarch, White-faced Robin, Black Berrypecker, Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise, Magnificent (Eastern or Growling) Riflebird, and a long list of compelling but very difficult-to-see birds, among them: Dwarf Cassowary, Black-billed Brush-Turkey, Pheasant Pigeon, Barred Owlet-Nightjar, Painted Quail-Thrush, Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler, and Northern Scrub-Robin.

Kumul Lodge is a rustic, landowner-style lodge situated in high moss forest at 9000 feet (2800m) with sometimes-erratic hot water and electricity. The site is great and best of all, there are feeders that lure in such gems as Brown Sicklebill, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Brehm's Tiger Parrot, and perhaps Archbold's Bowerbird, Crested Satinbird, Crested Berrypecker, and Chestnut Forest-Rail. There are excellent photographic opportunities at the lodge while nearby sites have King-of-Saxony, Magnificent, Blue, and Lesser (at a lek) birds-of-paradise, and Yellow-breasted Bowerbird. The grounds are

good for skulkers, too, and we have seen Lesser Melampitta, New Guinea Woodcock, and Archbold's Nightjar here, and on some nights, Mountain and Feline owl-nightjars call near our rooms.



*Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, one of four tiger-parrots we may see in the highlands.
Photo by participant Steve Rannels.*

Tari and Ambua Lodge—Tari, nestled in a remote valley of Southern Highlands Province, was first touched by outside influence only in the 1940s. Indeed, the Highlands Highway that ascends the mountains from Lae, passing through Goroka, Mt. Hagen, and Mendi, was completed as far west as Tari only in the 1980s and is now being upgraded as the oil and gas boom develops in these highlands provinces. Thus the Huli people of the Tari Valley have not yet completed the thorough (and inevitable) cultural reorganization experienced by most tribal societies accessible to outsiders. Although the Tari Valley is a typical, intensively cultivated highland valley, we will spend some time birding there in order to see such “yard birds” for the locals as Superb and Blue birds-of-paradise, Lawes's Parotia, and Papuan King-Parrot! There are also fascinating cultural trip opportunities for those who may feel so inclined, with outstanding photographic potential. This can be arranged via the Lodge and would incur a small additional charge.

Above the valley the lushly forested Müller Range, Mt. Kerewa, and the Doma Peaks provide a vast, undisturbed refuge for numerous birds-of-paradise (fifteen species are known from the area!) and other highland birds. The mountains of Papua New Guinea are home to a high proportion of the island's endemic birds, and beautiful Ambua Lodge, situated at 6800 feet (2092 m) and overlooking the Tari Valley, is the perfect base from which to enjoy this avian wealth. Above the lodge, the forest is dominated by *Lithocarpus* or *Castanopsis* oaks and *Nothofagus* “Antarctic beeches,” and epiphytes and ferns abound. This remarkable forest, presently under consideration by local clans as a conservation area to continue to attract ecotourism, reaches up to about 8600 feet (2646 m), where fire and/or natural soil conditions have created a large area of rolling grassland. Sadly, logging has encroached on the lower levels in recent years, causing habitat damage and making male Princess Stephanie's *Astrapia* hard to come by, but the area is still very rich.

Highland specialties we'll look for in the area include four species of tiger-parrots, Chestnut and Forbes's Forest-Rail (both hard), White-breasted Fruit-Dove, Papuan, Plum-faced, and Goldie's lorikeets, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo, Mountain Kingfisher, Papuan Treecreeper, the little-known Archbold's and Macgregor's bowerbirds, Orange-crowned Fairywren, Red-collared Myzomela, Wattled Ploughbill, the diminutive Garnet Robin, Black-throated and White-winged robins, Lesser Ground-Robin, and Sclater's whistlers, Rufous-naped Bellbird (a former whistler), Papuan Logrunner, Spotted Jewel-Babbler, Blue-capped Ifrita, Black-breasted Boatbill, Friendly, Black, and Dimorphic fantails, Torrent-lark, Hooded and Black-bellied cuckooshrikes, Mountain Firetail, Fan-tailed, Crested, and Tit berrypeckers, Lesser Melampitta, Loria's Satinbird (formerly considered a BOP), and such spectacular birds-of-paradise as King-of-Saxony, Ribbon-tailed and Stephanie's *Astrapias*, and Brown and Black sicklebills. We've also been fortunate enough to see the magnificent New Guinea (Harpy) Eagle on some of our tours. Little-known riches abound, and to help us find them an experienced local guide should be on hand to assist.

Itinerary for Papua New Guinea

Days 1-3, Thu-Sat, 6-8 Jul. Los Angeles to Brisbane; continue to Port Moresby. Qantas offers a direct flight from Los Angeles to Brisbane, departing at 11:20 p.m. on Day 1 and arriving the morning of Day 3 at 6:10 a.m. (“losing” Day 2 to the International Dateline). There is also a non stop flight on Delta that departs LAX at 11:50 pm arriving in Brisbane at 6:50 am on the 1st. Our group flight to Port Moresby is scheduled to depart Brisbane at 10:40 a.m., arriving in Port Moresby at 1:50 p.m. If you fly out on July 6, you will have over 3 hours before your flight to Port Moresby. If you have the time, we encourage you to fly to Brisbane on July 5 and overnight at a hotel near the Brisbane Airport. This will give you a chance to get some rest after the long flight. The Field Guides office will be happy to book a room for you near the

airport if you decide to do this. If you will be spending less than twenty-four hours in transit through Australia, you may get a tax-exempt stamp for your boarding pass there instead of paying the standard Australian departure tax.

Upon arrival at the airport in Port Moresby, each participant will need to get a tourist visa (free for US and Canadian citizens in 2016; other nationalities may need to pay. See the Information Bulletin for more information). Currency exchange counters are located in the main terminal just outside the arrivals hall. Jay will be on the flight with you from Brisbane to Port Moresby, so he will be able to help you with the process of navigating through the airport. Upon arrival, we will be transferred to our city hotel, a short drive from the airport. The hotel grounds hold few birds (and we advise against solo excursions outside of the grounds), but Willie-Wagtail, White-breasted Woodswallow, and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird are possibilities here. In the afternoon, we will head out for some introductory birding of the savanna habitats around Port Moresby. Brahminy Kite, Red-cheeked Parrot, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher, Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, Brown-backed and Yellow-tinted honeyeaters, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, and Black-backed Butcherbird are just some of the species we could encounter today, and we'll make an effort to find the very local Silver-eared Honeyeater as well. Night of Day 3 in Port Moresby.



Wandering Whistling-ducks. Photograph by participant Conny Palm.

Day 4, Sun, 9 Jul. Varirata National Park.

We'll have an early breakfast today so that we can be at the park near first light. At Varirata, most of our birding today will be on foot along the entrance road and at clearing edges, though we may stray along a well-maintained forest trail or two as well. We definitely will want to enter the forest to visit a well-known Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise display area for a look at those spectacular birds!

Entrance road and clearing-edge possibilities include Pacific Baza, Great and Amboyna cuckoo-doves, Beautiful, Orange-bellied, and Pink-spotted fruit-doves, Zoe and Pinon imperial-pigeons, Eclectus parrot, Black-capped Lory, Rainbow Lorikeet, Brush Cuckoo, Pheasant Coucal, Sacred, Azure, and Yellow-billed kingfishers, Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, Rufous-bellied kookaburra, Barred Owlet-Nightjar, Red, Elfin, and Papuan Black

myzomelas, White-throated Honeyeater, Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, White-bellied Whistler, Gray Shrike-Thrush, Hooded Pitohui, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Hooded Butcherbird, Brown Oriole, Black-faced, White-bellied, Barred, Boyer's, and Stout-billed cuckooshrikes, Red-capped Flowerpecker, and Black-fronted White-eye.

Inside the forest, we will focus on mixed-species flocks, which may include Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Goldenface (Dwarf Whistler), Yellow-bellied, Fairy, and Green-backed gerygones, Spot-winged, Frilled, Black-faced, and Black-winged monarchs, Pale-billed Scrubwren, Pygmy Drongo-Fantail, and the scarce Wallace's Fairywren. Elusive voices can include Pheasant Pigeon and Piping Bellbird, both far more often heard than seen.

After a picnic lunch at the park, we'll head back down towards the city, making a stop at the grounds of the Pacific Adventist University (PAU). The fenced college grounds here include several ponds where a nice variety of waterbirds are protected—and hence quite approachable. Among the more interesting possibilities are Australian Darter, Wandering and perhaps Spotted whistling-ducks, Pied Heron, Rufous Night-Heron, Comb-crested Jacana, Papuan Frogmouth, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Helmeted (New Guinea) Friarbird, Rufous-banded Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Myna, Australasian Figbird, Gray-headed Munia, and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird. We'll return to our hotel around dusk, so be prepared for a long day in the field. Night in Port Moresby.

Day 5, Mon, 10 Jul. Flight to Kiunga, drive to Tabubil. This morning we'll take a flight from Port Moresby to Kiunga, where we will have lunch before heading up the road for the drive to the mining town of Tabubil. The distance is some 135 kms along a well-maintained but winding dirt road; without stops this takes three to four hours depending on road and weather conditions. Birding stops along the way will be mainly along the roadside. Weather permitting we will make a stop at Ok Menga to search the river for the local Salvadori's Teal. Night in Tabubil at Cloudlands Hotel, a basic but comfortable hotel, with occasional Wifi.

Day 6, Tue, 11 Jul. Tabubil. We'll have the full day for birding at different elevations in the Tabubil area. July is one of the driest months here, which means the daily rainfall average is a mere two-thirds of an inch (enough to keep the snazzy Torrent Flycatchers happy)! So have your rubber boots and umbrella at hand, just in case. Most of our birding will be along side roads with little or no traffic but we will ascend at least one steep stony road/trail at Dablin Creek to get to good foothill forest, which is under pressure now from a growing population in the Tabubil area. Specialties here include Long-tailed Honey-buzzard, the crepuscular Shovel-billed Kingfisher, Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, Pesquet's (Vulturine) Parrot, White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, White-rumped Robin, the almost unknown Obscure Berrypecker, Golden Cuckooshrike, Papuan and Gray-headed cicadabirds, Mountain Peltops, Magnificent Riflebird, Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise, and Carola's Parotia (though males of both of these are very elusive). Night in Tabubil at Cloudlands Hotel.

Day 7, Wed, 12 Jul. Tabubil to Kiunga. We'll have a second morning in the Tabubil area to continue our search for the local specialties before making the return drive to Kiunga. Time and weather permitting, we'll make an afternoon stop at km 17, the site of an active lek of the flashy Greater Bird-of-Paradise, as well as an assortment of other lowland birds. Night at Kiunga Guest House.

Days 8-9, Thu-Fri, 13-14 Jul. Kiunga. We will have a little more than two full days to bird the exceptionally rich lowland forests of the Kiunga region. Our time will be spent at several different sites including the aforementioned km 17, where, in addition to the Greater BoPs, we could find things like Hooded Pitta, Blue Jewel-Babbler, New Guinea Babbler, Variable Pitohui, White-bellied Thicket-Fantail, Frilled Monarch, and many more. We'll also spend some time birding the forest areas along the Boystown Road where Flame Bowerbird is a good bet. Among the many other possibilities here are Yellow-streaked Lory, Orange-breasted and Double-eyed fig-parrots, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Long-billed Cuckoo, the stunning little Emperor Fairywren, Plain and Streak-headed honeyeaters, Meyer's Friarbird, Yellow-bellied and Pygmy longbills, the brilliant Golden Monarch, Rufous-backed Fantail, Black-sided Robin, Lowland Peltops, and the scarce Yellow-eyed Starling.

One day we'll make a boat trip up the Fly River and up one of its tributaries, the Elevala River, for much of the day (how long depending on weather). For this, make sure you have a way of protecting both yourself and your gear adequately from rain and sun as these boats are not covered. Although we will spend much of our time in the boats, we plan to get out in several spots—and to walk a trail in search of some very local species—so you'll want waterproof boots for the muddy river banks and plenty of insect repellent or sulfur powder (there can be bad chiggers here). A considerable variety of species can be seen along the river, including White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Gray-headed Goshawk, Great-billed Heron (when water levels are low), the incredible Southern Crowned-Pigeon, Collared Imperial-Pigeon (locally common here), raucous Palm Cockatoos, Large and Orange-breasted fig-parrots, magnificent Blyth's Hornbills, Channel-billed Cuckoo, sleek Moustached Treeswifts, Shining Flycatcher, the diminutive King and the incredible Twelve-wired birds-of-paradise, Golden and Yellow-faced mynas, and huge flights of flying-foxes (fruit-bats). On the trails we will look for Common and Little paradise-kingfishers, the elusive Hook-billed Kingfisher, (thought by some to be capable of teleportation!), Papuan (Red-bellied) Pitta, the very local White-bellied Pitohui, Hooded Monarch, and many more. Look out for the synchronized glow-worms pre-dawn, too. Nights in Kiunga.

Day 10, Sat, 15 Jul. Flight to Mt Hagen; drive to Kumul Lodge. Our birding today is completely dependent on our flight schedule. If time permits, we'll do some birding locally around Kiunga before our flight, but at some point we'll make our way to the airport for the flight to Mt. Hagen, where we will be met and transported one hour up into the highlands to the charming Kumul Lodge, perhaps arriving early enough to spend some time enjoying the feeders there. The feeders are a major highlight, with great looks expected at such regular gems as Brown Sicklebill, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, and Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, while occasional visitors include such rarities as Archbold's Bowerbird, Bronze Ground-Dove, and maybe Crested Satinbird. And after dark, there's always a chance of a mammal or two coming in for a fruity feast. Giant rats, bandicoots, and the squirrel-like Speckled Dasyure have all been seen on or under the feeders here on recent trips. Night at Kumul Lodge.

Day 11, Sun, 16 Jul. Kumul Lodge. We have just one full day in the Kumul Lodge region, so we'll use our time here to focus on some of the species we're less likely to see around Ambua Lodge. Foremost among these are Lesser Bird-of-Paradise and Yellow-breasted Bowerbird, two species lacking at Ambua, and we'll make a special trip to look for these specialties. Among the many other possibilities we can expect here are such incredible birds as Papuan Lorikeet, Crested and Tit berrypeckers, Wattled Ploughbill, Blue-capped Ifrita, White-winged Robin, Crested Satinbird, Regent Whistler, Rufous-naped Bellbird, Mountain Firetail, and many, many more. On one evening we plan to make a short search for night

birds; Mountain and Feline owl-nightjars are regularly heard near the lodge, though both are incredibly difficult to see. Night at Kumul Lodge.



*A Barred Owllet-Nightjar peers out of its roost.
Photograph by participant Peter Gasson.*

Day 12, Mon, 17 Jul. Charter flight to Tari; Ambua Lodge.

We may have part of this morning to continue searching for birds at Kumul, but how much time depends entirely on the timing of our charter flight to Tari (departure time TBA), from where we'll transfer to the wonderful Ambua Lodge, likely arriving there in time for lunch. After some time to settle in, we'll do some inaugural birding with the prospect of some four days in this terrific highland birding area. This lovely lodge consists of a large and beautiful dining hall/lounge/bar and several dozen very comfortable bungalows attractively laid out on the slope around the exotic flower gardens. A beautifully wild forested canyon lies just behind the lodge. We'll have opportunities to bird the lovely grounds and good trails in the upcoming days. Mountain and Glossy swiftlets circle over the grounds, and Great Woodswallows huddle to roost side-by-side on the rooftops. A very convenient fruiting tree (outside Cabins 6-10) often attracts Tit and Spotted berrypeckers, as well as several species of birds-of-paradise. The bamboo behind the cabins can be visited by White-shouldered Fairywrens, Fan-tailed Monarchs, and Black Fantails, and the forest beside the driveway can have Blue-gray and Black-throated robins, or a mixed flock with Sclater's Whistler, Island

Leaf-Warbler, Gray Thornbill, Friendly Fantail, and Buff-faced Scrubwren. At this time of year expect some fog and/or rain in the evenings; always bring your umbrella to meals! Night at Ambua Lodge.

Days 13-15, Tue-Thu, 18-20 Jul. Ambua Lodge. Ambua is set on the slopes of the mountains surrounding the Tari Valley and is generally a high-rainfall area. Although we will be birding primarily along gravel roads and good trails and waterproof boots may not always be necessary, they are very handy to have on (or at least along in the bus) at all times as we will also enter some small trails (likely to be muddy) or step off onto the roadsides (which may have wet grass) in pursuit of some of the world's most incredible birds. Lodge trails include several vine bridges, necessary to cross streams and rivers in this land of cascades and waterfalls. We plan to do night birding on one or more nights, so an individual flashlight or headlamp is an excellent idea.

Our time here will be divided between the lodge grounds and the Highlands Highway, with weather conditions dictating some of our movements. In the higher elevation forests towards the Tari Gap we'll search for such species as King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise, Black-throated Honeyeater, Crested Berrypecker, and Plum-faced Lorikeet, among many others, while lower down towards Tari potential targets will include Blue and Superb birds-of-paradise, Papuan King-Parrot, Black-headed Whistler, Marbled Honeyeater, and many more. With an incredible diversity of spectacular species in the region, our time here is sure to be exciting and productive! Nights at Ambua Lodge.

Day 16, Fri, 21 Jul. AM at Ambua Lodge; PM flight to Port Moresby. After a final morning of birding around Ambua, we'll head for our afternoon flight to Port Moresby, where we anticipate arriving in time for dinner. Night in Port Moresby.

Day 17, Sat, 22 Jul. Varirata National Park. Varirata National Park is always worth a second visit, so that's what we'll do today, with another early start to get to the park at a reasonable hour. The plan will vary depending on what birds we want to target, but very likely will involve more birding along interior forest trails, where many of the more difficult species may be encountered. Among the many skulkers here, we will likely still be searching for some real gems like Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler, Painted Quail-Thrush, Papuan Scrub-Robin, Piping Bellbird, and the scarce Pheasant Pigeon to name just a few. We'll make the most of our final day here, with a late afternoon return to our hotel. Night in Port Moresby.

Day 18, Sun, 23 Jul. Flight to Brisbane and on to the US. Our flight departs Port Moresby this morning for Brisbane and on to LAX. The flight arrives in Brisbane at 9:25 a.m. and the Qantas non-stop flight departs Brisbane for LAX at 10:00 a.m. There is a non stop flight on Delta that departs Brisbane at 10:35am arriving in LAX at 6:40am on the 17th

(same day). This is a legal connection but you may not feel comfortable with this option. You may opt to overnight in Brisbane in which case the Field Guides office will be happy to book you a room at a hotel near the airport.

****Note:** On Day 18, Jay will be flying to the island of New Britain for a 3 night stay at Walindi Plantation Resort, a comfortable beach hotel catering to divers and birders alike. While here, he will be scouting the area for future inclusion as an extension to the Papua New Guinea tour. Although this is not being offered as an official extension at this time, and pre- and post-tour materials such as checklists, trip reports, etc., should not be expected, if you would like to join Jay on this scouting trip, please let the office know at the time of booking. This short visit could net somewhere in the region of 20+ new species of birds, including specialties like Nicobar Pigeon, Red-knobbed, Finsch's, and Bismarck imperial-pigeons, Knob-billed Fruit-Dove, Pied and Violaceous coucals, New Britain and Beach kingfishers, Blue-eyed Cockatoo, Singing Parrot, Ashy and Sclater's myzomelas, Black-tailed Monarch, Red-banded Flowerpecker, and Bismarck Munia, among others.

About Your Guides

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

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

When he's not on tour, Jay's native habitat is his home near Montreal, where he lives with his partner, Annie, and their growing family—daughter Ariane, son Noah, and youngest daughter Elodie.

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

Doug Gochfeld made the jump from a love of trains, planes, and automobiles typical of many 7-year-olds to an avid interest in birds after a close encounter with a Steller's Jay in the Pacific Northwest. This filled his early formative years with scouring the urban landscape of New York City for birds with his father. After a teenage break from all things avian, he returned to it with a vengeance, and he hasn't looked back.

His first birding job was as a migration counter at the legendary Cape May Bird Observatory, where his love of and interest in the dynamics of migration (of anything with wings, insects included!) was cemented. From 2006 to 2016, he worked with birds from New Hampshire to Arizona, and from Suriname to Israel. He has also spent a substantial amount of time guiding in Alaska, the bulk of which was spent on St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs.

Doug's strongest interests in birding are migration, vagrancy, and overall patterns of distribution. Shorebirds and seabirds (and any other long-distance migrants, really) hold a special place in his heart, and he has done intensive work studying the breeding and wintering ecology of Hudsonian Godwits in Alaska and Semipalmated Sandpipers in Suriname and Brazil.

In addition to being on the New York State Avian Records Committee, Doug is passionate about spreading the gospel of birding and the outdoors, and to this end he participates in youth and urban birding initiatives and has guided at birding festivals across the country. His writing and photographs have been published in a myriad of venues.

Doug has co-led Field Guides groups to Alaska, Trinidad, Panama, Cape May, Arizona, and Newfoundland/Nova Scotia and has a busy and wide-ranging schedule coming up for late 2016 and all of 2017—from the US, Puerto Rico, and Mexico to New Guinea, Southeast Asia, and Madagascar.

Doug is fantastic. His motto is "never stop birding" and he doesn't! Doug is a gem and we are lucky to have him! P. P. Vietnam.

Visit <http://fieldguides.com/guides> for complete tour schedules for Jay and Doug; just click on their photos.

Financial Information

FEE: \$11,875 from Brisbane (includes all flights within New Guinea as well as the flight from Brisbane to Port Moresby and return)

DEPOSIT: \$1200 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: March 8, 2017

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$2100

LIMIT: 10

Other Things You Need to Know

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

DOCUMENTS: A current **passport** valid beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Australia and Papua New Guinea. We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. You will need to acquire a tourist visa for Papua New Guinea upon arrival in Port Moresby. For US and Canadian citizens, the visa can be obtained at no charge upon arrival at the Port Moresby airport; **however, some other nationalities require the visa to be purchased before arrival. If you are traveling with a passport other than from the US or Canada, please check with the PNG consulate for visa requirements.** Visas are also necessary for passengers transiting Australia; our office can issue them electronically for you (no need to part with your passport or fill out any forms!).

If you are not a US or Canadian citizen, please check with the Australia and New Guinea consulates 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: Round-trip airfare from Los Angeles to Brisbane is currently \$1926.56 (subject to change) on QANTAS. 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 \$11,875 for one person in double occupancy from Brisbane. It includes all lodging from Day 3 through Day 17, all meals from dinner on Day 3 through dinner on Day 17, airfare from Brisbane to Port Moresby and return, all flights within New Guinea, 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 Brisbane, 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 \$2100. 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 REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$1200** 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 March 8, 2017. 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 (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when making final payment for the tour, 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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