

ITINERARY
**PERUVIAN RAINFORESTS OF THE TAMBOPATA:
MACAW LICK EXTRAORDINAIRE**
July 22 – August 1, 2024



Many parrots visit the clay licks along the Tambopata, including 6 species of macaw. Tambopata Research Center was established to study this fascinating behavior, and has become well-known as a place where Scarlet Macaws such as these, can be seen well. Other species frequenting the clay lick include Blue-and-Yellow Macaws, and Blue-headed, Orange-cheeked, Yellow-crowned and Mealy parrots. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides *Peruvian Rainforests of the Tambopata* 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

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

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

Southeastern Peru has long been acknowledged as the most species-rich birding region on Earth. During the 1980s, when the Explorer's Inn was intensively birded, that single rainforest site built a cumulative bird list of more than 550 species within a three-mile radius of the lodge. Just to the north, in the huge Manu Biosphere Reserve, which protects habitats from treeline down to lowland rainforest, we regularly encounter more than 500 species on a two-week tour! Back to the south, the Tambopata Research Center was established as a wilderness lodge with the largest known "ccollpa," or clay lick, attracting spectacular numbers of parrots and macaws. Posada Amazonas was established in

conjunction with Ese'ēja Indians, who kept track of active Harpy Eagle nests, and it has developed a very long bird list of its own, including most of the myriad bamboo specialists of upper Amazonia. As various newer sites in the region become more thoroughly explored, they too compete for distinction as the "richest site on Earth for birds." Suffice it to say that this region of Amazonia is exceedingly diverse biologically and offers some of the world's most exciting birding.



This tour combines three classic reserves on the Rio Tambopata—Tambopata Research Center (TRC), Posada Amazonas (APA), and Refugio Amazonas (ARA). These complementary sites include trails through a wilderness rainforest rich in monkeys and *terra firme* birds; the Tambopata *Ccollpa de Guacamayos*, or macaw clay lick; a canopy tower in Ese'ēja Indian territory from which we have seen both Crested and Harpy eagles; a wonderful Hoatzin-lined oxbow lake (*cocha*) complete with Giant Otters (though not encountered on every trip) and reached by a trail through rich bamboo. Together with our experienced guide, these areas will produce an astonishing variety of lowland Neotropical birds and mammals.

One of the biggest draws for birders to southeastern Peru is a mysterious and spectacular phenomenon that is generally considered one of the most dazzling wildlife spectacles in the world. The *Ccollpa de Guacamayos*, as it is called locally, is a clay bank along the Rio Tambopata about seven hours by boat upriver from Puerto Maldonado. Here, almost daily and depending on the season of the year, dozens of big macaws and hundreds of other colorful parrots gather to a vertical section of the riverbank carved out of the foothills to consume a beak full or two of mineral-rich clay, a vital but rather mysterious part of their diet, now thought to protect them against toxic chemicals ingested in various fruits they eat or to supplement their diet with sodium. The phenomenon was richly documented by Charlie Munn in the January 1994 issue of *National Geographic*. The Tambopata Research Center, immediately downstream from the *ccollpa*, was founded to allow study of the macaws and their fascinating behavior and now makes it possible for tourists to experience this incredible spectacle firsthand. The Tambopata *ccollpa* used to be the largest known clay lick in South America.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. First we'll fly from Lima to Puerto Maldonado, a bustling, tropical frontier town at the juncture of the Tambopata and Madre de Dios rivers. About an hour by motorized canoe up the Rio Tambopata is Posada Amazonas, the product of a long relationship between TRC and the native community of Infierno. It is here, and at the newer Refugio Amazonas a couple of hours upstream from Posada Amazonas, that we might have a fair chance of seeing a Harpy Eagle. Ese'ēja Indians living in the area have tried to keep track of several pairs of Harpy Eagles that have nested in this stretch of the Tambopata for years. In an effort to utilize their natural resources to bring in tourist dollars, the native community teamed up with TRC to construct a lodge near the village, completed in 1998. The development of this very attractive ecolodge, with keen native guides (who keep track of any nesting eagles), has benefited both tourists and the local people. Because incubation in Harpy Eagles takes two months and because the nestling doesn't fledge for another five or six months and even then usually hangs out near the nest for another eight to twelve months, an active nest once found can afford a good opportunity for viewing for a year-and-a-half or more. However, a pair may breed only once in three years, and in a 20-year period may only fledge three chicks. Since Posada Amazonas opened, we have been able to see Harpies at the same nest in two consecutive years only once, and we've

also been there when there were no known active nests. In at least two of those years, we've lucked into a Harpy anyway—flying over a *cocha* or sitting in a canopy tree. In other years we've seen nesting Black-and-white Hawk-Eagles or watched Crested Eagles perched or circling overhead. While we can't promise a Harpy, all in all, it's a very good place for big raptors.



*A number of toucan species can be seen in the area we visit, including the Curl-crested Aracari.
Photograph by participant Eric VanderWerf.*

Besides the (always iffy) possibility of a Harpy Eagle, the beautifully designed Posada Amazonas, located just downriver from Explorer's Inn, offers another major draw: a canopy tower with a wonderful 360-degree view. It's a metal-encased staircase ascending to about 115 feet (35 meters) with a railed viewing platform on top, located in nice *terra firme* forest. The opportunity to view canopy species eye-to-eye is almost as prized as watching the hordes of psittacids gathering at a *collpa*. Here, one can see species rarely seen well from the ground, species the likes of Curl-crested Aracari, the recently split Western Striolated-Puffbird, and Amazonian Pygmy-Owls being mobbed by White-browed Purpletufts. We've had marvelous views of dazzling White-bellied Parrots investigating potential nest holes; vibrant Black-capped Parakeets feeding in a fruiting *Cecropia* right below us; five species of aracarís, the two big toucans, and displaying Golden-collared Toucanets. We've looked down on Yellow-crowned and Orange-cheeked parrots, as well as the rare Blue-headed Macaws, and all the big macaws in dramatic low-angle light. It'll take some patience and persistent scanning (an aesthetic joy in itself in this environment!), but we'll see dozens of species with canopy or subcanopy niches. And with luck we could see monkeys foraging in fruiting trees or just sitting up catching a few rays. There's also now a well-maintained network of trails leading from the lodge, some of them entering good stands of *Guadua* bamboo. And to top it all off, Posada Amazonas is only ten minutes by boat from the trail to Tres Chimbadas, an old oxbow lake of the Tambopata that is rich for *cocha* species, from Rufescent Tiger-Heron and Horned Screamer to Gray-breasted Crake and the endangered Giant Otter. Within the wonderful network of trails near Posada Amazonas, there are trails that hold virtually all of the giant bamboo specialists, from White-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher to Rufous-headed Woodpecker, considered by many the handsomest of its family. We'll bird trails where trumpeters tread, seek specialties of varzea, bamboo, and *terra firme* forest, and sleep to the mellow tooting of Tawny-bellied Screech-Owls right outside our rooms.

Another six hours up the Tambopata, we'll be well within the heart of the 3.7 million-acre Tambopata National Reserve, protecting the entire watersheds of two tributaries to the Tambopata as well as much of the Tambopata basin. In 1990, the Tambopata Reserve Zone (first established as a parcel of rainforest behind the Explorer's Inn in 1977) was greatly expanded, to include almost 1.5 million hectares—30% the total size of Costa Rica! In 1996, 802,750 acres—including the Pampas de Heath (already a National Sanctuary) and part of the Tambopata-Candamo Reserve Zone—were officially designated by the government as Bahuaja-Sonene National Park. On the trip upriver, one's sense of

wilderness increases dramatically above the boundary of the officially protected national park, and well before reaching TRC, all manmade clearings along the river have disappeared. The wilderness aspect of this remote place is attested by the relative abundance of big birds and mammals, including Razor-billed Curassow, Spix's Guan, eight species of monkeys, White-lipped Peccary, Short-eared Dog, Tapir, Tayra, and even the elusive Jaguar (*which we've seen here four times!*).

The trail system invites exploration of habitats that include floodplain forest, transition forest, palm swamp and some hilly *terra firme* forest (tall rainforest on well-drained soils), as well as extensive areas where clonal giant bamboo flowered and went to seed in 2001; these stands are now in a fascinating successional stage as the bamboo grows back from seed. Most of the bamboo specialists disappeared from here when the bamboo died, and we'll have a first-hand look at what's come back. TRC's location, at the base of the foothills, the very edge of the low-gradient portion of the Amazon basin, offers additional Manu-type species, including some hill-forest birds that are rare or missing at Explorer's Inn (well downriver). And its remoteness results in a much higher density of cracids, trumpeters, big macaws, and large mammals than at the Explorer's Inn. We've seen Tayras and Pacas in the clearing, and the open-air kitchen was visited by an Ocelot during an early tour. In fact, the group mammal list for TRC on that tour included eight species of monkeys, Short-eared Dog, Brazilian Tapir, and a herd of 150-200 White-lipped Peccaries, which sometimes can be seen foraging out at the lodge clearing! On past tours, we've seen a Jaguar strolling along the cobbled riverbed across the river from the lodge!



The remoteness of Tambopata allows us good chances to see some large mammals and birds such as this Razor-billed Curassow that have become scarce in places with greater human influence. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

That brings us back to the spectacular *Ccollpa de Guacamayos* that has become the marquee draw for birders to TRC. Whatever the function of that ingested clay, this gathering of brilliant psittacids in the early sunlight, their raucous calls filling the air, is never to be forgotten.

From TRC we'll head back down the Tambopata river to Refugio Amazonas Lodge where we will spend the better part of two days of birding based in our comfortable lodge. On this itinerary, this lodge and its various trails radiating from the main clearing set back from the steep banks of the Tambopata access the best *terra firme* forest of the trip. It was here in 2017 that we watched a 4-month old Harpy Eagle chick and an adult bird in an active nest a short distance from the lodge itself! The now one-year old immature was still around the nest site in 2018, and our group enjoyed another great experience with this amazing apex creature (the two-year old bird was seen again in 2019)! This lovely lodge also boasts a canopy tower and accesses a different set of canopy specialists than what we normally see at Posada Amazonas. After two nights here, we will then head down river and bird some of the areas around Puerto Maldonado before catching our flight to Lima.

Preparing for the birds on this tour should now be an immense pleasure, with the publication of *BIRDS OF PERU* by Schulenberg, Stotz, (our own Dan) Lane, O'Neill, & Parker (Princeton University Press, 2007). Now it is available as paperback! This field guide will be indispensable for all of our Peru tours.



We'll have ample opportunities to explore different habitats for the special birds they host. Here, guide Jesse Fagan leads our group in search of Guadua bamboo specialists. Photograph by participant Dorothy Paul.

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour:

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Trails may be muddy, and have short steep sections, as well as obstacles such as tree roots, fallen logs and overhanging limbs that will need to be avoided. You'll need a good sense of balance, and be able to walk at a fairly slow pace for 6-8 hours at a time. To get from small boats to the riverbanks, you'll need to be able to climb steep stairways cut into the banks.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** Some of our birding will be done from canopy towers; you'll need to be able to climb up stairs to reach the platform at approx. 100 ft. (Of course, you can opt out of this or just climb up to whatever point you feel comfortable.) We will also spend time on forest trails where we will need to stand and wait quietly for skulkers to appear. All the lodges on the Tambopata are accessed via long motorboats and you will need to be able to get in and out, plus be able to climb up the steep steps to the bank, and walk about 15 or 20 minutes to the lodges. Water may be a little rough at times, but we are required to wear life jackets.
- **PACE:** We will have very early starts, getting in the field by 5:45 am so we can miss the heat of the day. Most days we'll return to the lodge for lunch and an afternoon rest before we go back out for the afternoon.
- **ELEVATION:** We will reach an altitude of 11,000 feet on this tour during a short stopover in Cuzco on our flight to Puerto Maldonado (sometimes the flights are direct from Lima to Puerto Maldonado). Our birding is all in the lowlands.
- **WEATHER:** Climate is warm and humid; highs in the 90s F, with cooler nights. An austral cold front can drop temperatures into the 50's during the day, and the 40s F at night. These austral cold fronts (called *friajes*) can make your life miserable if you do not bring adequate layers. Rain is always a possibility, and we may get wet on the boat trips.

- **VEHICLE SEATING:** We spend very little time in vehicles on this tour (i.e. vans or buses). We do have bus transfers from Puerto Maldonado to Infierno (45 minutes) for our boat rides. We might make birding stops along the way.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** There are few indoor restrooms on most of our excursions, so participants must be prepared to make comfort stops in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

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

This tour can be combined with Mountains of Manu, Peru, August 1 - 12, 2024.

About the Lodgings: The lodges we use up the Tambopata are surprisingly comfortable for such remote areas. At all our lodgings, lighting is by a combination of high efficiency light bulbs, kerosene lanterns, and candles (lighters provided); a flashlight or headlamp (with extra batteries) is essential. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** the Tambopata lodges are all open air. They have one wall fully open to the forest and adjacent walls are built high-enough to offer privacy to each room. However, this means that there will be neighbor noise. We need to be respectful of our volume and sounds during our stay here. Also, if you are a light sleeper, then ear plugs or noise-cancelling earphones will be important to have with you.

At **Posada Amazonas Lodge**, spacious rooms offer canopied, mosquito-netted beds in lovely open-air rooms and private bathrooms with flush toilets and hot-water showers. A wooden-block passageway connects the rooms to a thatched sitting area (with hammocks) and to the open-air dining room, where tasty native foods are prepared, and hot water is always available for tea or coffee. Cold drinks, beer, and mixed drinks are available from the bar, where you can run a tab.

Tambopata Research Center, converted from its original research-only purpose to a combination research facility and comfortable tourist lodging, consists of six platformed, interconnected, thatch-roofed buildings, handsomely designed after traditional low-impact native architecture. The main building, rebuilt in a new location 15 minutes from the riverbank, consists of 18 double-bedded rooms, each bed with mosquito netting. In 2017, the original tourist rooms were renovated to include private bathrooms with hot-water showers in each, and an additional 16 rooms were built a short distance from the dining area. All guest rooms now have private bathrooms and hot-water showers - a big improvement from just a couple of years ago! A generator is turned on as needed to recharge batteries (110V or 220V) and pump water.

Refugio Amazonas Lodge is a very spacious and comfortable lodge with a layout similar to that of Posada Amazonas Lodge; it is located in a 200-hectare private reserve within the buffer zone of the Tambopata National Reserve. Our local outfitter is partnering with local families there who sustainably harvest Brazil nuts from the surrounding rainforest to ensure that they share in the benefits of ecotourism.

In Lima we are staying at the Wyndham **Costa del Sol Airport Hotel** at the Lima international airport.



Sand-colored Nighthawks roost on sandbars and fallen trees near Posada Amazonas Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.



*Western Striolated Puffbird is one of the birds we'll hope to see well from the canopy tower at Posada Amazonas.
Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.*

Itinerary for Peruvian Rainforests of the Tambopata

Day 1, Mon, 22 Jul. Flight to Lima. We recommend the earliest flight possible to get you to Lima this evening. Be sure our office knows your arrival plans. You will get your passport stamped at Immigration, claim your luggage, and proceed through Customs. You can exit the baggage area and make your own way to the Wyndham Costa del Sol Hotel within the airport complex (ask any porter or airport information assistant for directions). You can push your luggage cart right across the street to the hotel check-in desk on the street floor. As you check into the hotel, please submit your passport for copying (a requirement of most hotels in Peru) and ask for a message from your guide (after 6 p.m.) with details about the hotel and plans for tomorrow's departure. Night at the Wyndham Costa del Sol Airport Hotel, Lima.

Day 2, Tue, 23 Jul. Lima to Puerto Maldonado. This morning we'll board a flight to Puerto Maldonado, sometimes with a short stop in Cusco, where we usually do not have to deplane. If the weather is clear, the flight can be a highlight in itself. Leaving Lima, we'll cross the rugged and beautiful snow-clad peaks of the Andes before descending into the valley of Cusco; and between Cusco and Puerto Maldonado we'll fly over a small portion of the Amazon Basin, where the endless expanse of tropical forest below is broken only by twisting rivers and an occasional savanna. More clearings become evident as we approach the juncture of two rivers: the Tambopata and the Madre de Dios. Puerto Maldonado is a bustling, booming tropical frontier town. Its principal activities are gold mining, Brazil nut collecting, timber extraction, agriculture, and (nowadays) ecotourism.

From the airport we'll be transferred to our local outfitter's office, where bottled water with which to fill your canteen is available, as are restrooms. Snacks will be available too, and recommended, as we plan to take a bus to the Infierno dock, a 45-minute drive, before loading into our boat.

At the "port" we'll board our covered, motorized canoe for the trip to Posada Amazonas, a little over an hour up the Rio Tambopata. Once aboard we'll be seeing White-winged and White-banded swallows flying over the water and an occasional pair of Drab Water-Tyrants hugging the banks. Check the sandbars (if water levels are such that there *are* sandbars) for Pied Lapwing and Collared Plover and watch for aerial Large-billed and Yellow-billed terns. Along this stretch of river, we'll pass many small farms and clearings where colonists have been living for a long time. But we'll begin to see a few areas of undisturbed forest, green walls of vegetation against the bank. By now there should be noisy flocks of parakeets dashing overhead. Check exposed perches for raptors, Roadside Hawk being the most common and conspicuous, but Bat Falcons, King Vultures, hawk-eagles, and even a Harpy are among the possibilities. Never knowing what may be around the next bend is part of the suspense of river travel in Amazonia.

From the riverbank landing (“the port”), we climb the steep cut bank and then onto older terraces of the river, reaching *terra firme* forest at the top. It’s a twenty-minute walk to the lodge, and we’ll have a welcome drink and an orientation session upon arrival. We’ll get settled into our simple but well-designed rooms (with private baths) and then meet to bird the nearby forest and clearing edge in the late afternoon. There’ll be lots to see close at hand, and we may want to try for Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl very near our cabins at dusk. We’ll receive a briefing about the reserve and the ecotourism project before dinner and then sleep tonight to the diverse and exciting sounds of the rainforest night. It’s always exciting to arrive in Amazonia! Night at Posada Amazonas.



*The canopy tower at Posada Amazonas is a wonderful place to see birds like these Lettered Aracaris.
Photograph by participant Charlotte Byers.*

Day 3, Wed, 24 Jul. Posada Amazonas area. We will take advantage of our proximity to some wonderful *terra firme* forest trails, to the 115-foot canopy tower, to the best accessible bamboo stands in these parts, and to the beautiful oxbow lake at Tres Chimbadas. We’ll have a full day and another full morning to work in all the birding we’d like to do from this comfortable base.

Certain raptors, parrots, toucans, puffbirds, barbets, cotingas, flycatchers, tanagers, and some rarely seen hummingbirds are more easily viewed from the canopy than from the floor of the towering rainforest. And it seems, each canopy tower offers different strengths. Our experience with this one (only a twenty-minute walk from the lodge) indicates particularly good potential for close looks at raptors and fruit-eating species. Besides Crested and Harpy eagles, raptors we’ve seen from the tower include: Gray-headed Kite, Slate-colored Hawk, Black and Black-and-white hawk-eagles, Gray-bellied Hawk, and King Vulture. We have seen relatively few mixed-species canopy flocks, but we have seen lots of macaws and parrots (including some that are rarely seen near the big macaw lick): eye-to-eye Black-capped Parakeets, White-bellied Parrots, both big toucans, Golden-collared Toucanets, and Ivory-billed, Curl-crested, Lettered, and Chestnut-eared aracaris at close range. It’s a good place to see Amazonian Pygmy-Owl, Western Striolated- and White-necked puffbirds, Bare-necked Fruitcrows, several species of trogons, woodcreepers, and woodpeckers, as well as a variety of flycatchers and tanagers, honeycreepers, and dacnises. Of course, our luck with fruit-eaters and with canopy hummers (such as Black-bellied Thorntail) will depend on what happens to be in fruit and flower near the tower at the time. As with every canopy tower, there are sure to be some goodies.

The climb is up an unobstructed spiraling stairway encased in metal mesh, with an extended landing at the top (as well as a couple of platforms at lower levels, in the shade). On sunny days (there’s no canopy above to shade it) it can be very productive early and late, but the heat of the direct sun—and the sweat bees that emerge—will drive us down to the shady trails by mid-morning. On a cool or cloudy day, activity could persist for much of the day. We consider the tower one of the greatest strengths of Posada Amazonas, and we may want to visit it twice.

Along the network of forested trails below we’ll seek Bartlett’s and White-throated tinamous, Pale-winged Trumpeter, Needle-billed Hermit, Pavonine Quetzal, Semicollared Puffbird, Rufous Motmot, Great Jacamar, Banded Antbird, Round-

tailed Manakin, White-crested Spadebill, Ruddy Spinetail, and a host of other *terra firme* forest species, including the army-ant followers. Nearby stands of giant bamboo support some of the bamboo specialties that are now difficult to find at TRC—Pheasant and Pavonine cuckoos, Rufous-breasted Piculet, Rufous-headed Woodpecker, and Flammulated Pygmy-Tyrant. Night at Posada Amazonas.



*We'll look for some specialties such as the beautiful Rufous-headed Woodpecker in stands of Guadua bamboo.
Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.*

Day 4, Thu, 25 Jul. Posada Amazonas to Tambopata Research Center. This morning we'll plan to start especially early for Tres Chimbas, a classic Amazonian oxbow lake where many of the typical *cocha* inhabitants occur. Though the trail to the lake is only ten minutes by boat from the Posada landing, the trail in to the *cocha* is one-and-a-half to two kilometers through giant bamboo and transition forest. At the lake edge a sturdy, large catamaran awaits us for a ride on the beautiful *cocha*. Our aim is to get out on the lake as early as possible, while activity is at its peak. Such classic *cocha* inhabitants as Horned Screamer, Sungrebe, Sunbittern, Green Ibis, Capped Heron, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Hoatzin, Black-collared Hawk, Lesser Kiskadee, and a family of Giant Otters enliven the lake. (And we have seen Harpy Eagle here before.) As the day heats up, we'll retreat to the shady entrance trail, where we'll want to bird before returning to our covered boat for the ride upstream to TRC. The remainder of today will be primarily travel to TRC, watching the forested banks of the Rio Tambopata slip past and become increasingly wilder. We'll pass several lodges and various gold-mining operations on our way upriver. We'll have our picnic lunch on the boat as we move. The gold-rich Rio Malinowski, a tributary of the Tambopata, is the source of huge boulders of black basalt, washed down from the distant Andes and ruggedly eroded by the rushing river. There are sections that look almost like decaying pavement. Watch for groups of Sand-colored Nighthawks on the sandbars and for Ladder-tailed Nightjars roosting in the rocks. Where these hard rocks have resisted erosion and where the gradient of the river increases, we may well encounter some rapids. Be sure to have your rain gear handy, as we are likely to get some splash. On the other hand, on a hot day, moving along the river—creating our own wind chill—is likely to be the coolest way to spend the heat of the day.

There is one check station at the Malinowski, the confluence with the Tambopata river and at the edge of the national park; getting out at the check point is not required unless you want to use the bathroom facilities. From this point on, your chances to see more spectacular wildlife are enhanced. Watch for a loafing Jaguar as we continue upriver into a protected wilderness. Brazilian Tapir, the largest of the mammals in this part of the world, could be seen swimming across the river. Bat Falcons should be commonplace by now, and we could see groups of Capybaras, pairs of Orinoco Geese, or a Razor-billed Curassow along the banks. We should reach the Tambopata Research Center, our home for the next five nights, by late afternoon. You should have access to your headlamp, just in case, for the 15-minute walk through the forest from the landing to the lodge. Here, in the heart of remote Amazonia, we can sleep to the sounds of the rainforest night and awaken to a pre-dawn chorus of monkeys, owls, and Ocellated Poorwills. Night at TRC.



Along the rivers, we'll see birds such as the lovely Capped Heron. Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.

Days 5-7, Fri-Sun, 26-28 Jul. Tambopata Research Center. The TRC "camp" is in a small clearing right in the forest. The rooms here are thatch-roofed but open in the back, affording fresh air and a nice view out into the clearing or the nearby forest. Each room is thin-walled and shares the high ceiling (*so talk quietly unless you intend to be talking to all your neighbors!*), and each bed is supplied with mosquito netting, which you should always use. It's a short walk down the (airy) hall or boardwalk to the open-air dining hall. Be aware that pesky hand-reared macaws (called *chicos*; now free and "wild") could appear on your banister at any time during the day; so, organize your gear and keep small, shiny objects inside the drawers. (*And be sure to put any snacks into the locker, out of reach of hungry mouse opossums.*) Agoutis and Tayras frequent the clearing, and Crested Owls call hauntingly from the adjacent forest; during one breakfast, a Collared Forest-Falcon flew down to attack its prey on the ground beside us, then retreated to the banister for a look around. One rainy morning an Amazonian Motmot took shelter on the dining-hall railing. A male Plum-throated Cotinga often sits atop a dead tree off the dining hall early in the morning, and macaws and aracarís nest in a big tree at the edge of the clearing. It's always a good idea to bring your binoculars to meals.

At TRC, trails abound—some fifteen miles of them, many with loops we can do in a morning or an afternoon. TRC's proximity to the base of the Andes is reflected in the presence of a few primarily foothill species. Accessible habitats include hill-forest, old-growth floodplain forest, and river-edge *varzea*. We'll concentrate on seeing the specialties of these habitats here.

We'll have time to enjoy the fabulous macaw-lick spectacle on a good-weather morn, leaving pre-dawn (with our headlamps, after a cup of tea or coffee) to boat upriver a short way to a recently formed island where we can sit on stools with a wonderful view of the *ccollpa*. We'll watch quietly as the parrots and macaws begin to fly in from afar and accumulate in the trees above the bank. Soon the calls of parrot, parakeets, and macaws blend to a roaring din, occasionally almost deafening as flocks, disturbed by a raptor or who knows what, flush from the trees and circle right overhead. The excitement of these sounds is a soul-stirring part of the experience. If conditions are right, all of a sudden some of the parrots appear on the ground and others follow, the big macaws eventually joining them. Vulnerable as they are, they tend to be flighty, and we must wait patiently until researchers studying the macaws give us the word that the show is over. Then we'll return for a hot breakfast at the lodge.

Some well-positioned benches above the bluffs provide a delightful viewpoint from which to watch the river-edge canopy. With three full days to explore, we should chance upon some of the toughies (Razor-billed Curassow, Starred Wood-Quail, Pheasant Cuckoo, Semicollared Puffbird, White-throated Woodpecker, Black-tailed Leaf-tosser, Ash-throated Gnatcatcher, or a flock of Pale-winged Trumpeters) and enjoy good looks at many of the regulars, including some tinamous, Blue-throated Piping- and Spix's guans, Pale-tailed Barbthroat, Reddish Hermit, White-throated and Bluish-fronted jacamars, Chestnut-capped Puffbird, Lemon-throated and Scarlet-hooded barbets, a wonderful variety of woodcreepers, foliage-gleaners (including Cinnamon-rumped and Brown-rumped), antbirds (including White-throated should we find an

army ant swarm), and flycatchers; Cinereous Mourner, Dull-capped Attila, Pink-throated Becard, Musician and Scaly-breasted wrens, Lawrence's and Hauxwell's thrushes, Purplish Jay, Pectoral Sparrow, and some pretty fancy tanagers (from Masked Crimson to Paradise and White-winged Shrike-Tanager). We will also have time to invest in ferreting out some of the floodplain's prizes, including Rufous-fronted Antthrush and Amazonian Antpitta. Many of the birds we'll see, such as jacamars, puffbirds, woodcreepers, ovenbirds, antbirds, and cotingas, belong to families that occur only in the New World tropics. From reverberating leks of Screaming Pihas to showier, if more vocally modest, leks of Band-tailed Manakins; from drab-colored furnariids in mixed-species flocks to perky, rail-like antthrushes that walk on the forest floor, we'll witness the stuff of Amazonia. Each day will be a full and rewarding one, as the aesthetics of birding (and mammaling) will wholly absorb us. Nights at TRC.



*The spectacular Harpy Eagle is never a sure thing, but we have a good chance to see one near Refugio Amazonas.
Photograph by participant Eric VanderWerf.*

Day 8, Mon, 29 Jul. TRC to Refugio Amazonas. We will depart from TRC after breakfast and after some birding on the nearby trails. After a three-hour boat ride downstream from TRC, we'll arrive at Refugio Amazonas Lodge in time for lunch. After an early afternoon break, we will have the chance to explore *terra firme* forest trails to look for species that we might have missed at our other two venues, such as Variegated and Brazilian tinamous, Pavonine Quetzal, Brown-banded Puffbird, (found in this area recently), Paradise Jacamar, Black Antbird, and Red-headed Manakin among others. It was here that we saw Harpy Eagle on the nest in 2017, so we'll have yet another chance to see this magnificent raptor if we haven't done so already. Night at Refugio Amazonas.

Day 9, Tue, 30 Jul. Refugio Amazonas. We have a full day to explore the canopy tower here as well as the myriad trails on the property to search for a wealth of *terra firme* birds and a few bamboo specialists known to be around. The *terra firme* forest here is the richest of the entire trip, so we're likely to find something new here if we put in the time. Night at Refugio Amazonas.

Day 10, Wed, 31 Jul. Refugio Amazonas to Puerto Maldonado and on to Lima. Today after breakfast we'll retrace our steps back down river to Puerto Maldonado, where we'll catch our flights back to Lima and home. If your flight home departs this evening, you will have a day room at the hotel; if you're flying home tomorrow morning, you will have an overnight room. You should plan to be at the check-in counter 2.5 to 3 hours in advance of your flight.

Day 11, Thu, 1 Aug. International flights; connections home. Buen viaje y que les vaya bien!

About Your Guide

Jesse Fagan (a.k.a. the Motmot or just “Mot”) has been passionate about birds since his teens, when he had an encounter with a flying Pileated Woodpecker. He has birded throughout the United States, including spending seven years in Texas, and since 1995 has been birding and for a time living in northern Central America. He is a co-author of the recently published [*Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America*](#) (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), a field guide to the region which includes the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Belize.

In addition, Mot has birded in or led tours to Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, France, Morocco, and Madagascar. He also enjoys leading many of the Field Guides tours in the Caribbean. He likes to think he can bird anywhere at any time and still show you the birds, but most importantly, a good time. Jesse holds a B.S. and an M.S. in mathematics from Texas Tech University. He is currently living in Lima, Peru.

“Jesse is a fantastic guide. He really knows calls, infinitely patient in getting everyone on the difficult birds, fun to be with.” L. F. Colombia: Bogota, the Magdalena Valley, and Santa Marta.

For Jesse’s complete tour schedule, visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/>; just click on his photo.

Financial Information

FEE: \$6275 from Lima

DEPOSIT: \$625 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: January 24, 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$1050 (Single rooms may not be available in all areas.)

LIMIT: 8

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which includes a booster for those eligible to have one). Note too, that many travel destinations may still require proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may be a requirement for some travel destinations.

Other Things You Need to Know

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

A NOTE ON WATER RISK: Rivers are the roads of Amazonia. Participants should be warned that most of our lodgings are located on the banks of broad rivers, deep in places. We will be traveling in long boats with extremely experienced boatmen, but we expect to take in some water through splash, so valuables should be stored in waterproof containers or packed in plastic. As with any river trip, there is always a slight risk of capsizing. Hence this tour is not for participants who can't swim or who would be nervous on a river. Life jackets are available on the motorized canoes and wearing them is mandatory.

DOCUMENTS: A **passport** is necessary for US citizens to enter Peru. 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 be issued a tourist card by the airline on which you travel into Peru.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Peruvian 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 limit your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase or duffel and one carry-on/backpack. 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 **\$6275** for one person in double occupancy from Lima. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 10, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 10, the flights from Lima to Puerto Maldonado and return, all ground and river transportation, entrance fees, lodge staff, boatmen, and the guide services of the tour leader. Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Lima, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local guides, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is **\$1050**. (Single rooms may not be available in all areas.) 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, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$625** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by January 24, 2024**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets 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.

TOUR LIMITS: Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open. However, on occasion, we will send along a guide in training on a tour. In these cases one seat in the van or bus will be taken by the guide in training. Our guides will have a rotation system within the vehicle so that clients share the inconvenience equally. We hope this minor inconvenience will be more than offset by the advantages of having another guide along.

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 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend 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, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (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 information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

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 registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any

changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

NCP 7/2020

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