

ITINERARY  
**SOUTHERN ARGENTINA**  
***The Pampas, Patagonia & Tierra del Fuego***  
*October 29 - November 14, 2024*



*The Elegant Crested tinamou is a near-endemic found in the arid scrub of southern Argentina. We've seen these beautiful, cryptic birds well on our tours. Photograph by guide Tom Johnson.*

*We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides Southern Argentina tour:*

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

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

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

**O**n the coast of Patagonia, a crisp ocean breeze meets you at your perch atop a low, rocky promontory. A pebbly beach curves away to the horizon, speckled with the glistening-wet shapes of dozens of Magellanic Penguins. The braying, flipper-waving display of the males produces a semaphoric symphony in black and white, and the breakers sound like applause. This is Punta Tombo, where Magellanic Penguins form one of the largest gatherings of their kind at their age-old colonial breeding grounds.

Punta Tombo is one of many thrilling stops on our travels through Southern Argentina. We will sample the riches of the coast again on the famed Valdes Peninsula, breeding grounds for herds of Southern Sea Lions and gigantic Southern Elephant Seals. The pinniped colonies attract other visitors as well, in the form of scavenging Kelp Gulls and Brown

Skuas, and the seas immediately surrounding the peninsula shelter a breeding population of the rare Southern Right Whale.

Patagonian shrub/steppe in Chubut Province (home to the Valdes Peninsula and Punta Tombo) and farther south in Santa Cruz province provides ideal habitat for a specialized assemblage of birds that includes Lesser (Darwin's) Rhea, Elegant Crested-Tinamou, Burrowing Parakeet, Chilean Flamingo, Scale-throated Earthcreeper, Chocolate-vented Tyrant, Patagonian Mockingbird, and a few species endemic (or very nearly so) to Argentina such as Band-tailed Earthcreeper, Patagonian Canastero, Lesser Shrike-Tyrant, Rusty-backed Monjita, and Carbonated Sierra-Finch.



*The endemic White-throated Cachalote looks like a flycatcher, but it is actually an ovenbird. Like many other furnariids, these birds build substantial nests. We'll look for them near Las Grutas. Photograph by guide Tom Johnson.*

The short, arid *monte* scrub around San Antonio Oeste, an important area just north of Chubut added to our itinerary several years ago, is home to a fascinating mix of birds. A short visit here in an excellent hotel gives us a good chance of uncovering a few very special birds: the little-known Hudson's Black-Tyrant, the scarce endemic Cinnamon Warbling-Finch, and the gorgeous Black-crowned Monjita. Those alone are worth a visit, but this is also home to a few birds that have proven to be difficult on our other Argentinean offerings, namely the endemic White-throated Cacholote, Sandy Gallito, White-banded Mockingbird, and Straneck's Tyrannulet.

Nearly three days on Isla Grande with birding time in the forests and coastlines of the far south at Ushuaia will provide us ample time to find a number of the Tierra del Fuego specialties, which include Magellanic Diving-Petrel (now rare), Kelp Goose, Flying Steamer-Duck, White-throated Caracara, and a good chance at the stunning Magellanic Woodpecker. Two rarities of the far southern Andes, White-bellied Seedsnipe and Yellow-bridled Finch, are, with some work, possible as well. We will also take a boat trip on the famous Beagle Channel where we'll see numerous seabirds, including a variety of tubenoses, cormorants, gulls, and waterfowl. This narrow channel connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans can yield a number of surprises, the greatest of which to date have been multiple King Penguins, nesting Gentoo Penguins, and rare Westland Petrels, virtually unknown in South American waters before our first sighting here in 1990.

For our next birding stop, we'll be based near the growing town of El Calafate, from which we'll visit nearby Los Glaciares National Park. From El Calafate we will search for rarities that include the local and seldom-seen Patagonian Tinamou and the recently re-discovered Austral Rail (both very difficult recently). While either of these birds would be a lucky find indeed, there are yet plenty of other specialties occurring here more commonly. White-throated Treerunners twist and twitter their way through the *Nothofagus* forest, and Rufous-tailed Plantcutters abound in the scarlet 'Notro' (*Embothrium coccineum*). Out on the Patagonian steppe, Andean Condors take wing, Least Seedsnipe shuffle along roadsides, and Great Shrike-Tyrants may be found standing guard. Los Glaciares National Park offers some of the most spectacular scenery in all of South America, as Perito Moreno Glacier, with a leading edge three miles long and two hundred feet high, looms above the turquoise waters of Lago Argentino. The western end of the lake is bordered by dark forests of Southern Beech (*Nothofagus sp.*), providing habitat for the scarce Spectacled Duck and the magnificent

Magellanic Woodpecker, among many others, while the open, muddy margins near El Calafate provide refuge for the unique and mega rare Magellanic Plover (placed in its own family).

We'll end our tour in the warm embrace of the Argentine Pampas in Buenos Aires province. The lush grasslands and marshes that make up the Pampas, land of the *gaucho*, support a diverse concentration of birds including Greater Rhea, Southern Screamer, Black-necked and Coscoroba swans, Dot-winged Crake (rare), South American Painted-Snipe, Sulphur-bearded Reedhaunter, Hudson's Canastero, Bay-capped Wren-Spintail, Freckle-breasted Thornbird, Firewood-gatherer, Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Bearded Tachuri, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, Brown-and-yellow Marshbird, and Long-tailed Reed-Finch among many others.

Whether you're after rheas and penguins, or wren-spinetails and pipits—and especially if you want them all—join us for an unforgettable springtime in Southern Argentina!

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

### Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking, much of it on paved roads or well-groomed tracks or trails. No single walk exceeding 3 miles in distance, most much shorter. An optional hike in Tierra del Fuego to look for White-bellied Seedsnipe and other montane birds at Paso Garibaldi involves walking uphill on uneven ground.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We cover lots of ground on this tour, and some days will feature long periods of time in the bus and lots of roadside birding, with plenty of getting in and out. In Tierra del Fuego, we offer one half-day outing by boat to watch albatrosses, penguins, and other seabirds, but seas in the protected Beagle Channel are typically not rough. This boat trip is optional.
- **PACE:** Early morning (5:00-6:30 a.m.) breakfasts followed by birding, with a break for lunch (either picnic or restaurant). In the afternoons, we often bird again or travel to our next destination. On a few occasions, we will take a post-lunch break before birding again, but most of the days on this tour will be quite long.
- **ELEVATION:** Most birding will take place at low elevations (sea level or not far above), with several days spent in lower montane elevations below 3000 feet.
- **WEATHER:** Spring is just reaching the southern parts of the country in November, and temperatures are often cold (down to near freezing at night), whereas lower elevations in the north can be quite hot (90s F). Rain is a possibility at any time; snow and ice are unlikely but possible at higher elevations in Tierra del Fuego.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion, though with a full-sized bus, this is not difficult. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we use modern, indoor restrooms, but on occasion, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

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

Argentina is such a vast place that to really do it justice, one needs to bird for a couple of months here. If you don't have two months to spend, our Argentina offerings do an excellent job of covering the avifauna. Few tours that we offer see such a large percentage of the country's total avifauna on a regular basis as these tours. Since we do try to sample a wide variety of habitats during this SOUTHERN ARGENTINA tour, some of the distances covered on our birding days and on days that are primarily travel days are great (the greatest ones are covered in airplanes).

***This tour may be combined with NORTHWESTERN ARGENTINA: The Chaco, Cordoba & Northern Andes, October 12-30, 2024.***



## About the Birding Areas

**The Pampas**—The area of Argentina known as the Pampas (generally reaching 375 miles to the south and west of Buenos Aires) is a vast, flat plain very near sea level originally vegetated with tall, native grassland. Today, primarily because of the introduction of non-native grasses and trees, huge areas of the Pampas bear little resemblance to the land it once was. Still, birding here during the austral spring is nothing short of phenomenal! The grassy fields, fresh water and salt water marshes, woodlots, ponds, estuaries, and watercourses that make up this area are all alive with birds, and the air is full of song at this season. We'll have nearly three full days, based in a comfortable hotel in San Clemente, to sample all of these habitats and to look for the area's special birds. In addition to those species mentioned above, some of the specialties that we'll search for include Dot-winged Crake, Olrog's Gull, Snowy-crowned Tern, Ash-colored Cuckoo, White-throated Hummingbird, Tufted Tit-Spinetail, Curve-billed Reedhaunter, Rufous-capped Antshrike, Warbling Doradito, and Black-and-rufous Warbling-Finch. Weather at this season is usually very pleasant, with cool mornings and daytime temperatures in the high 70s to low 80s F. Spring showers are a possibility at this time of year, and these might affect our access to some areas. Mosquitoes are often nuisances here, especially in wooded areas when there is no wind. We'll end our tour in this rich region on this year's tour.

**The Valdes Peninsula and Punta Tombo**—Extending some fifty miles into the Atlantic and connected to the coast of Chubut by only a thin neck is the Valdes Peninsula. Formed mostly of beige sandstones, the sheer cliffs, sandy playas, and blue bays of the peninsula are home to one of the most spectacular concentrations of marine mammals in the world. Here, Southern Sea Lions breed by the thousands (most are gone during our visit, however), and the peninsula represents the world's sole mainland site where Southern Elephant Seals, by far the largest pinniped in the world, breed in abundance. The wide shallow bays of the peninsula are also home to the globally endangered Southern Right Whale, the females of which will have just calved.

The Valdes Peninsula and the Punta Tombo area, the latter the site of a huge Magellanic Penguin colony which we will visit, support a shrub/steppe floral community typical of northern Patagonia. The waist-high shrubs that dominate the landscape are all cloaked in small, leathery, or succulent leaves, an adaptation to the very arid climate here. The scene here is generally reminiscent of some areas of the Mohave or western Sonoran deserts of the southwestern United

States, with many shared plant genera. Spring mornings here can be quite chilly, but daytime temperatures, mostly dependent on wind conditions (it can be very windy here), vary from pleasant to quite warm.

Northern Patagonia is home to a very distinctive avifauna, and some of the area specialties that we'll search for here include Elegant Crested-Tinamou, White-headed Steamer-Duck, the beautiful and scarce Tawny-throated Dotterel, Burrowing Parakeet, Gray-bellied and Lesser shrike-tyrants, Rusty-backed Monjita, Band-tailed Earthcreeper, Patagonian Canastero, Patagonian Mockingbird, Patagonian Yellow-Finch, and Carbonated Sierra-Finch. This is also excellent habitat for Guanaco, the largest of the two wild South American camelids.

**The San Antonio Oeste/Las Grutas area**—The San Antonio Oeste/Las Grutas area in s.e. Rio Negro province is situated in the transition zone of the arid, short *monte* habitat (somewhat Chaco-like, but shorter and sparser) and the northern Patagonian steppe zone, which is largely treeless. Several species that are restricted to Chaco-type habitats reach their southern limits in this region, and it's also home to a few fine specialties of the country, most notably the poorly known Hudson's Black-Tyrant, the endemic Cinnamon Warbling-Finch, and the Argentine breeding endemic Black-crowned Monjita. We'll bird a variety of scrub and groves of short trees during our two days here looking for these birds and others (White-throated Cacholote, Sandy Gallito, Straneck's Tyrannulet, White-banded Mockingbird, etc. – maybe even the very rare Yellow Cardinal) that are difficult to see at our other venues.

**The Ushuaia area**—Ushuaia, on the southern shore of Isla Grande, Tierra del Fuego, is often labeled the southernmost city in the world (when smaller Puerto Williams, Chile, is ruled out). Its population has swelled in recent years, primarily as a result of the growing tourism industry, from only a few thousand residents to nearly 80,000 today. Overlooking the Beagle Channel on one side and flanked by snow-capped mountains on the other, it is an exhilarating place. The area is characterized by glacier-scarred mountains, remote lakes, dark forests comprised mainly of three different species of giant *Nothofagus* trees, and wild coastline.

We will divide our nearly three full days here, based in a very comfortable hotel, between nearby Tierra del Fuego National Park (protecting some 130,000 acres), the Paso Garibaldi area a short drive out of Ushuaia, and the Beagle Channel. The local avifauna is relatively small but quite special and includes such scarce or local species as Magellanic Diving-Petrel (rare & difficult), Kelp and Ashy-headed geese, Flightless and Flying steamer-ducks, White-throated Caracara, White-bellied Seedsnipe (very rare), Snowy Sheathbill, Chilean Skua, Austral Parakeet, the fabulous Magellanic Woodpecker, Ochre-naped and Dark-faced ground-tyrants, Dark-bellied, Blackish (rare), and Gray-flanked (rare) cinclodes, the endearing Thorn-tailed Rayadito and White-throated Treerunner, Patagonian Sierra-Finch, and the rare Yellow-bridled Finch. Weather here is likely to be the coldest (and possibly the wettest) that we will experience on the tour.



*The White-throated Treerunner is a member of the ovenbird family, although it looks and act much like a nuthatch. We'll watch for these tiny birds in Tierra del Fuego National Park. Photograph by guide Tom Johnson.*

**The Southern Patagonian Steppe and Los Glaciares National Park** —Lying in the rainshadow of the Andes (as in Chubut), the southern Patagonian plateau is quite arid and is strafed almost incessantly by dry, penetrating westerlies that have long since given up their moisture to the forests on the Chilean side of the mountains and the vast glaciers of the upper elevations. One of the true scenic highlights in South America is the stunning Perito Moreno Glacier in Los Glaciares National Park. With a leading edge that frequently calves huge fragments of blue ice into the turquoise waters of Lago Argentino with a thunderous clap, this river of ice is three miles wide and 200 feet tall! Unless you have been here before, you've probably not seen anything like this blue and white glacier. Los Glaciares National Park, approximately 1,300,000 acres in extent, also holds a great deal of forest, primarily *Nothofagus* of moderate height. We'll have a full day to enjoy the pristine scenery and to bird the park and surrounding campos in search of such birds as Spectacled Duck (scarce), Andean Condor (relatively common here), Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Austral Pygmy-Owl, Chilean Flicker, White-browed and Spot-billed ground-tyrants, Fire-eyed Diucon, Rufous-tailed Plantcutter, Chilean Swallow, Austral Thrush, Long-tailed Meadowlark, Patagonian Sierra-Finch, and Austral Blackbird. In and around El Calafate, there will be ample time to dig out many of the area's specialty birds including, Lesser (Darwin's) Rhea, Patagonian Tinamou (very rare), Silvery Grebe (the southern *occipitalis* race, which is probably a distinct species), Austral Rail (very rare), Magellanic Plover, Cordilleran and Austral canasteros, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, Chocolate-vented Tyrant, Great Shrike-Tyrant, Austral Negrito, Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch, and Diuca Finch.



*The Magellanic Plover is an odd shorebird that breeds in far southern Argentina and Chile. We'll look for this interesting and very rare bird when we visit Los Glaciares National Park near El Calafate. Photograph by guide Tom Johnson.*

## **Itinerary for Southern Argentina The Pampas, Patagonia & Tierra del Fuego**

**Day 1, Tue, 29 Oct. Departure for Buenos Aires.** Overnight flight departs tonight for Buenos Aires.

**Day 2, Wed, 30 Oct. Arrival in Buenos Aires.** Flights arrive in Buenos Aires around mid-morning today, and we'll transfer to our comfortable hotel in downtown Buenos Aires (about a 40-minute drive from Ezeiza International Airport). We'll meet for lunch (your guide will leave a message for you at the front desk or in your room regarding time), and we'll also go over the plan for the next couple days. If weather/time permits, we will likely make a birding outing to nearby Costanera Sur, a fantastic urban birding site. Night in downtown Buenos Aires.

**Day 3, Thu, 31 Oct. Flight to Trelew.** We'll plan to fly from the domestic airport in B.A. (about 15-20 minutes from our hotel; less likely from the more distant Ezeiza International) to the town of Trelew after breakfast this morning. Upon arrival at the Trelew airport, we'll load into our comfortable bus and drive to the Magellanic Penguin colony at Punta

Tombo. Lunch today will likely be on the road en route to Punta Tombo. Birding will be along the roadside in generally flat, arid country and along the trail system at the penguin reserve, where these birds will be very easily approached. Morning temperatures can be quite cool, especially if there's wind, but the day should warm to the high 70s or even 80s F.

Some of the possibilities today, besides the penguins, include Lesser (Darwin's) Rhea, Southern Giant-Petrel, Imperial and Magellanic cormorants, White-headed Steamer-Duck, Blackish Oystercatcher, Brown (Falkland) Skua, White-throated Cacholote, Band-tailed Earthcreeper, Patagonian Mockingbird, Diuca Finch, and Carbonated Sierra-Finch. Dinner will probably be on the late side today (8:00 p.m. or later) at a restaurant a short walk from our hotel. Night in Trelew.

**Day 4, Fri, 1 Nov. Puerto Madryn area.** Today we'll spend time birding around Punta Loma and the base of the Valdes Peninsula. We'll continue our search for birds of the coastal desert grasslands such as White-winged Black-Tyrant, Carbonated Sierra-Finch, Lesser Shrike-Tyrant, Plain-mantled Tit-Spintail, Patagonian Mockingbird, the locally scarce Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant, and more. We'll also have a good chance to check out coastal birds like giant-petrels, Snowy Sheathbill, and marine mammals like the impressive Southern Right Whale. Night in Puerto Madryn.

**Day 5, Sat, 2 Nov. The Valdes Peninsula.** We'll depart our hotel early after breakfast and drive to Peninsula Valdes, continuing east to the eastern shore of the Valdes Peninsula, where we plan to spend the day viewing a variety of special birds and hopefully some interesting mammals as well. Big numbers of Southern Elephant Seals can be seen resting on the beaches, and we should see more Guanacos and, hopefully, the perfectly strange and charming Patagonian Cavy or Mara. Lunch will be in a roadhouse cafe at the eastern end of the peninsula.

Habitats here are extremely arid with a few green oases punctuating the landscape, and birds of interest include Darwin's Nothura, Northern Giant-Petrel (we may have close encounters with both this and the very similar Southern Giant-Petrel), Cinereous Harrier, Variable (Red-backed) Hawk, Tawny-throated Dotterel, Common Miner, Austral (Patagonian) Negrito, Southern Martin, Short-billed Pipit, Patagonian Yellow-Finch, and Mourning Sierra-Finch. Be prepared for intense sun (hat and sunscreen needed) and often dry, dusty conditions along the roads. Night in Puerto Madryn.



*We've had some good views of the odd Snowy Sheathbill on previous tours. These birds may be found along the coast of southern Argentina during their non-breeding period, so we'll watch for them on the Valdes Peninsula and in the Beagle Channel. Photograph by guide Tom Johnson.*

**Day 6, Sun, 3 Nov. Puerto Madryn to Las Grutas.** We will depart this morning for the town of Las Grutas at the head of Golfo San Matias in Rio Negro province. We have a long drive of about three hours ahead of us, and we will pass

through a lot of short Patagonian *monte* habitat. Once we leave the Valdes Peninsula area, stops will be few before we reach Las Grutas as we'll need as much time as possible to locate the scarce specialty birds of this area. We'll bird the scrubby habitats near our hotel this afternoon for such specialties as Burrowing Parakeet, Sandy Gallito, Lesser Shrike-Tyrant, White-banded Mockingbird, and, hopefully, Carbonated Sierra-Finch. Prepare for windy conditions and intense sun (if it's clear) today. Night in Las Grutas.

**Day 7, Mon, 4 Nov. San Antonio Oeste/Las Grutas region.** After an early breakfast, we'll plan to bird much of the day in the San Antonio Oeste area and in the nearby resort town of Las Grutas. One of our remote targets, the endangered Yellow Cardinal—severely threatened now due to its popularity as a cage bird—is known reliably from just a couple of accessible sites in the country. The spot we'll check on the tour is a historic site, but we were rewarded with great views of a pair in 2018. While in the area, we'll keep our eyes peeled for Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, Black-crowned Monjita, White-throated and Brown cacholotes, and Cinnamon Warbling-Finch as well. Night in Las Grutas.

**Day 8, Tue, 5 Nov. Flight to Ushuaia.** We'll leave early in the morning from Las Grutas and drive back south to the airport in Trelew, where we'll catch our midday flight to Ushuaia. Be prepared for colder temperatures upon our arrival in Ushuaia. From Ushuaia, we'll head to our nearby accommodations for the next three nights. The area near our hotel can hold some great birds including Dolphin Gulls, Chilean Skua, both Flightless and Flying steamer-ducks, Ringed Kingfisher, and more. Late this afternoon, we might make a short visit to the Ushuaia dump where we should get good looks of the scarce and local White-throated Caracara. Night in Ushuaia.



*On our pelagic trip onto the Beagle Channel we'll get the chance to see Black-browed Albatross against a backdrop of snowy mountains. Photograph by guide Tom Johnson.*

**Day 9, Wed, 6 Nov. Tierra del Fuego National Park; Beagle Channel.** After breakfast at our hotel, we'll drive to nearby Tierra del Fuego National Park where we plan to spend the entire morning, returning to Ushuaia around lunchtime. Birding will be along roadsides or along good, easy trails. Be prepared for wet weather and remember that mosquitoes in the forest here can be nuisances. Possibilities in and near the park today include such prizes as Great Grebe, Black-faced Ibis, Austral Parakeet, the elusive Magellanic Woodpecker, Thorn-tailed Rayadito, White-throated Treerunner, and Patagonian Sierra-Finch.

After lunch back at our hotel, we will board our boat (a very large, stable catamaran) for the trip onto the Beagle Channel. The waters of this narrow strait are generally quite calm with the seas becoming rough outside of our regular route where the channel widens to meet the Atlantic. Those sensitive to motion sickness should nevertheless take any needed medication prior to our departure. Weather here is somewhat unpredictable, with wind/cold/rain – even snow – all

being possible. The large, enclosed cabin will be a welcome refuge in the event of bad weather, but we'll plan to spend most of our time on the outer decks. Drinks, snacks, and light meals are available on the boat.

During the course of our pelagic birding we might encounter Magellanic and Gentoo penguins, Black-browed Albatross, Southern Fulmar, both Flying and Flightless steamer-ducks, Kelp Goose, Andean Condor, Snowy Sheathbill, Chilean Skua, Dolphin Gull, and South American Tern, with less likely birds such as King Penguin, Cape, White-chinned, and Westland petrels, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Magellanic Diving-Petrel, and Blackish Cinclodes among additional rarer possibilities.

The boat will head back to Ushuaia in the late afternoon/early evening after we reach Isla Pinguino, and we'll have a chance to pick up any of the pelagics that we may have missed on our way back to Ushuaia. We'll enjoy a leisurely late dinner back at our hotel. Night in Ushuaia.

**Day 10, Thu, 7 Nov. Garibaldi Pass and Ushuaia area birding.** After breakfast at our hotel this morning, and depending on the weather, we'll drive about one hour to Garibaldi Pass, a montane site that has a small but rarely seen avifauna (including Gray-flanked Cinclodes, Ochre-naped and Dark-faced ground-tyrants, Yellow-bridled Finch, and a chance at the seldom-seen White-bellied Seedsnipe). Your leaders will conduct a hike here at a sufficiently slow pace to allow as many folks as possible to participate in this excursion, but it is optional. If you like to hike with hiking poles, this would be the day to bring them! The terrain here is mountainous and steep, with an elevation range of roughly 1500-2500 feet on the hike. We may spend a considerable amount of time hiking on steep slopes searching for our target species. Be prepared for cold/wet weather today (including the possibility of snow). Night in Ushuaia.

**Day 11, Fri, 8 Nov. To El Calafate.** We plan to have an early breakfast at our hotel before we head to the airport for our morning flight across the Strait of Magellan to El Calafate. We will have plenty of time after our arrival in El Calafate, and after check-in and lunch at our comfortable hotel in town, to bird a nearby lagoon that often holds various ducks and nesting Cinereous Harriers – and maybe even a Magellanic Plover or two! Night in El Calafate.



*We'll watch for the Austral Parakeet in the Ushuaia area. These parrots are found farther south than any others in the Americas. Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.*

**Day 12, Sat, 9 Nov. Los Glaciares National Park.** We'll spend most of our day in the intensely scenic Los Glaciares National Park. We'll be on the road to the park after our early breakfast, making a few stops in the treeless campos between El Calafate and the *Nothofagus*-forested slopes of the park. We will take time to enjoy the wonderful Perito Moreno Glacier, Lago Argentino, and the snow-covered peaks of the southern Andes. Some of the birds we'll hope to see today include Spectacled Duck, Austral Pygmy-Owl, Chilean Flicker, Great Shrike-Tyrant, and Rufous-tailed Plantcutter. We'll have another shot at the stunning Magellanic Woodpecker here as well, in case that one has eluded us. Birding will

be along mostly level roadsides, but we'll want to descend a moderately steep wood and metal walkway to get optimal views of the glacier. We'll have lunch in the field today, weather permitting, of course. Night in El Calafate.

**Day 13, Sun, 10 Nov. The Southern Patagonia Steppe; afternoon flight to Buenos Aires.** After breakfast at our hotel this morning, we will load up our bus with our luggage and head out for one final morning of birding and breathtaking scenery. This morning's activities will be dictated mainly by what birds we are still looking for and what areas remain to be visited. Probably much of our time will be spent in the steppe habitat that surrounds El Calafate and Lago Argentino, where we might find a Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, the monotypic Magellanic Plover, an Austral Canastero, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, Chocolate-vented Tyrant, or conceivably a group of rare Patagonian Tinamous. We will return to the El Calafate airport for our midday departure for the domestic airport in Buenos Aires. If we arrive back in town with some time to spare, you might wish to stroll the pedestrians-only Lavalle and Florida streets with their innumerable shops, restaurants, and sidewalk entertainers. Night in Buenos Aires.

**Day 14, Mon, 11 Nov. The Pampas.** We'll drive south of Buenos Aires today to sample the rich avifauna of the Argentine Pampas. We'll take our time, stopping frequently to scan the innumerable marshes, grassy fields, and ponds for a large variety of species. We'll pull into the seaside resort town of San Clemente del Tuyu in the late afternoon/early evening, having had lunch along the way.

Among the many possibilities today are Greater Rhea, Spotted Nothura, White-tufted Grebe, Stripe-backed Bittern (rare), Maguari Stork, Southern Screamer, Coscoroba Swan, Giant Wood-Rail, Snowy-crowned Tern, Ash-colored Cuckoo (rare), Gilded Hummingbird, Checkered and Green-barred (Golden-breasted) woodpeckers, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Curve-billed Reedhaunter, Sulphur-bearded Reedhaunter, Wren-like Rushbird, Rufous-capped Antshrike, Sooty Tyrannulet, Bearded Tachuri (rare), Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Warbling Doradito, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, White-browed Meadowlark, Brown-and-yellow Marshbird, Red-crested Cardinal, Black-and-rufous Warbling-Finch, Long-tailed Reed-Finch, and many more. Night in San Clemente del Tuyu.

**Day 15, Tue, 12 Nov. San Clemente area.** We'll visit a wide variety of habitats in the San Clemente area today, and we will want to get as early a start as possible after breakfast at the hotel. After a full morning's birding near Punta Rasa, lunch will be back in town. Afternoon will find us back in the field to search for other specialty birds of the area, including the elusive South American Painted-Snipe, Olrog's Gull, Hudson's Canastero, and Bay-capped Wren-Spinetail. Depending on conditions, we may attempt to tromp around in some wet areas in search of rails (including Dot-winged Crake) and the painted-snipe. Night in San Clemente del Tuyu.

**Day 16, Wed, 13 Nov. San Clemente area; to Buenos Aires and flights home.** We'll have most of the morning today to look for any birds of the Pampas that we may still need to see before heading north to Buenos Aires and the Ezeiza International Airport for our flights home. Our lunch en route today will effectively be our final meal together since there will be no opportunity to get together for a meal at the Ezeiza International Airport this evening after checking into our various flights home.

**Day 17, Thu, 14 Nov. Arrival in US and connections home.**

## About Your Guides

**Dave Stejskal's** love of birds took firm root at the age of nine. After teenage years consumed by birding and basketball, he went on to graduate from the University of Arizona in Tucson, the desert city he and his wife, Julie Hecimovich, call home. Dave is particularly skilled at identifying birds by their songs and calls and eagerly shares his knowledge with others.

Since he joined Field Guides in 1985, Dave's more than 300 tours took him north to arctic Alaska, south to Tierra del Fuego (guiding tours in nearly every country in between and of course many to his home state of Arizona), and across the Pacific to Asia and Southeast Asia--including Thailand, Vietnam, China, and Borneo--and his enthusiasm for finding and watching birds proved to be contagious. Dave retired from guiding full-time in 2022, but he is back to help with this tour!

*Dave is an exceptional guide and trip leader. He is tenacious in locating birds and draws on a lifetime of experience and knowledge. He also is skilled at working with a variety of clients, all different in their backgrounds and dispositions. J.K.; Suriname*

**Doug Gochfeld** was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, and his interest in birds was sparked at a young age (he participated in his first CBC at the age of 7), in part by his father. This interest soon spiraled into a full-blown obsession for Doug, and aside from a several year adolescent and teenage sabbatical, he has been a dedicated and passionate birder ever since. He is especially interested in seabirds, long-distance migration, and avian vagrancy, but takes pleasure in all aspects of the natural world. He's always excited to share his enthusiasm in, and knowledge of these subjects, and much more, on his tours.

He has guided dedicated pelagic birding trips off the East Coast of North America for many years, and worked aboard vessels (for NOAA and others) as a seabird observer for weeks at a time. He has guided birding groups on expedition cruises in the Antarctic, the Arctic, and the Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand. Before beginning to guide a full slate of tours all around the world for Field Guides in 2016, he traveled extensively as a working birder. These field jobs included several years of guiding on remote St. Paul Island, in Alaska's Pribilof Islands, and several seasons spent monitoring migration at the legendary migration hotspots of Cape May, New Jersey, and Eilat, Israel.

In addition to finding peace, excitement, and fascination in birds, he absolutely loves to communicate his insights into the bird world with all those who are interested, and interpreting this world for participants is a pastime that comes naturally to him. Whether close to home or halfway around the world, on land or at sea, this penchant for education and sharing is noted by participants, and his enthusiasm for finding and enjoying birds has proven to be contagious.

*"Doug Gochfeld is one of the very best guides in the world IMHO! His hearing and bird-spotting skills are almost super-human. He is also witty; can handle people well; and executes all of the trip arrangements (lodgings, mealtimes, transportation, human comforts) with precision. Bird guiding is a tough job, and I just can't say enough about how well he does it." C. B., Israel Migration Magic*

Dave & Doug will be accompanied throughout the tour by a **local guide**.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for Dave's & Doug's complete tour schedules; just click on their photos.

## Financial Information

**FEE: \$8450 from Buenos Aires** (includes flights within Argentina)

**DEPOSIT:** \$850 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** May 2, 2024

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$950

**LIMIT:** 12

**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 call her!

**DOCUMENTS:** For US citizens a **passport**, valid beyond the date of your return, is necessary for entry into Argentina. US citizens are not currently required to obtain a visa.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Argentinean consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

**Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

**LUGGAGE:** Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The **tour fee** is \$8450 for one person in double occupancy from Buenos Aires. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 16, all meals from lunch on Day 2 through lunch on Day 16, the flights within Argentina (Buenos Aires/Trelew, Trelew/Ushuaia, Ushuaia/El Calafate, and El Calafate/Buenos Aires), all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Argentina, airport taxes, visa, 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 \$950. 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/](https://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 \$850** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 160 days prior to departure, or **by May 2, 2024. 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 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.

DJS 3/24; peg 4/24