

ITINERARY
SPRING IN SOUTH TEXAS
March 7 – 15, 2020



Most of the wild population of the endangered Whooping Crane winters on the Texas Coast at the Aransas Wildlife Refuge, which may be the best place to see these birds. Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.

We include here information for those interested in the 2020 Field Guides Spring in South Texas 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 from a previous year's Field Guides tour, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

It is said that timing is everything, and we think that this short tour combines the best of birding in South Texas with perhaps the most pleasant season to be afield there. It is carefully scheduled to include the magnificent Whooping Cranes before they depart for their northern breeding grounds and the spring arrival of those few Neotropical specialties of the lower Rio Grande that withdraw south of the border during the winter. All in all, we feel that this itinerary offers an outstanding value for birders.

The southern fourth of Texas forms a triangle extending far to the south along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. The tip of this triangle lies at the same latitude as Nassau in the Bahamas and La Paz, Baja California. Its proximity to the humid tropics along the Gulf coastal slope of eastern Mexico has allowed some fifty species of Neotropical birds to range over the border into the United States. Some of these, like the colorful Green Jay and personable Great Kiskadee, are fairly common and widespread. Others are vagrants, not occurring every year, but eagerly sought and immensely rewarding when discovered. It is these South Texas specialties around which our itinerary is planned.

The lower Texas coast consists of a chain of offshore barrier islands separated from the mainland by shallow lagoons and bays. Here one finds a greater variety of waders than in any other part of the country, including such beauties as Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill, White Ibis, and Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, about thirty species of shorebirds, and a large variety of gulls and terns. But the undisputed royalty of the Texas coastal avifauna is the magnificent Whooping Crane. At once the tallest and one of the rarest birds in North America, this species is perhaps the biggest single success of the endangered species program. It has struggled back from a low of only fourteen birds in the early 1950s to its present population of over 400 in the wild and a smaller number in various captive-breeding programs. We will visit the brackish marshes and ponds where these stately birds stalk blue crabs just before they depart for the nesting grounds in Saskatchewan.

Just inland from the coast is a level plain covered with tall-grass savannas punctuated by groves of live oaks. This habitat is found almost completely within the boundaries of huge private ranches. Historically these have been jealously guarded from public entry, but in recent years several have allowed access by closely supervised natural history groups. A number of bird specialties that one associates with the subtropical woodlands along the lower Rio Grande occur in these live-oak groves (called “mottes” locally), but the primary focus of our quest will be one of the rarest—the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, which maintains its stronghold north of the border here, with pairs sparsely scattered through the oaks.



Morelet's Seedeater is known in the U.S. from just a few locations in the Rio Grande Valley. We'll make a stop near Falcon Dam to look for these tiny birds, which have been recently split from the former White-collared Seedeater. Photograph by guide Tom Johnson.

Further inland occur dense thickets of thorny brush and taller subtropical woodlands along the Rio Grande and its former channels, known as *resacas* to the natives. A variety of raptors inhabit this plain, from the beautiful White-tailed Hawk and vulture-like Crested Caracara of the savannas to the rare and little-known Hook-billed Kite of the dense subtropical tangles along the Rio Grande. Our tour will also coincide with the start of the spectacular migration of Broad-winged and Swainson's hawks, and Turkey Vultures. There may well be a sprinkling of accipiters and perhaps a kettle or two of Anhingas ballooning up on early thermals from their roosts in the woodlands along the Rio Grande.

Of course, it is the Neotropical specialties of the region that will draw us most strongly. Spring is an excellent time, as those few that typically migrate out of the region for the winter (Red-billed Pigeon, Cave Swallow, Couch's Kingbird) will be returning to nest, and vagrants that irregularly disperse to the region from adjacent Mexico during the non-breeding season may still be present.

There is nothing that will tell you more clearly that you are somewhere very special than a raucous morning chorus of Plain Chachalacas or the raucous calls of Great Kiskadees. A northward spreading of many tropical species has been noted since bird records have been kept in the region. Green Jays and Buff-bellied Hummingbirds, once confined to the lower Rio Grande, now nest north to Corpus Christi. Some species that were first recorded in this country just a decade or two ago are now regular residents in small numbers (e.g., Clay-colored Thrush), and species new to the United States are discovered virtually every year. In past years these have included Crane Hawk, Collared Forest-Falcon, Stygian Owl, Yellow-faced Grassquit, White-throated Thrush, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Masked Tityra, and Green-breasted Mango.

For those afflicted with an interest in butterflying, South Texas has much to offer. Many new and wonderful butterfly gardens have been planted in the Rio Grande Valley right in the areas we are seeking our birds. Casual butterflying on previous tours yielded Zebra and Julia heliconians, Mexican Bluewing, Two-barred Flasher, Ruby-spotted Swallowtail, and Sickie-winged Skipper among highlights. Similarly, casual surveying of dragonflies and damselflies can yield species rarely seen away from the Rio Grande Valley.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: We will enjoy full birding days while in South Texas. This will require being out early most days, and generally we will head out at dawn to take advantage of the early morning hours of bird activity. Given that we are in the vast state of Texas, some afternoons and an occasional morning will demand a drive of an hour or more to reach the next birding locale. While we'll make every effort to see all species encountered, we will concentrate in some areas on the specialties that make South Texas unique. This might entail returning to an area we have already visited to increase our chances of finding a rarity or specialty.

Most of our birding will consist of walking on fairly level ground. We will average a few miles of walking most days, and a fair bit of standing waiting for birds to show up. A folding stool can be useful for relieving the strain of standing. Also, hot days can be physically taxing.

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 Chris.

About the Birding Areas



Coastal Areas—The offshore barrier islands are long, narrow sandbars with tall dunes and grassy rear-dune meadows. Shallow lagoons are found between the islands and the mainland. The ponds, marshes, and mudflats around these lagoons are home to a wealth of water and marsh birds including Reddish, Snowy, and Great egrets, Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned night-herons, Tricolored, Great Blue, and Little Blue herons, White and White-faced ibises, beautiful Roseate Spoonbills, and in the marshes, Least bitterns, Clapper Rails, Seaside Sparrows (scarce), Boat-tailed Grackle, and Sedge Wren. Shorebirds, both resident and

migrant, range from the large, showy American Oystercatcher and Long-billed Curlew to the endangered Piping Plover. About thirty species can be expected at this time of year. Terns likewise are very diverse, with Royal, Sandwich, Caspian, Least, Gull-billed, and Forster's terns regular. For such a southern location gulls are surprisingly varied as well, with hundreds of Laughing Gulls in snappy breeding plumage, and Herring, Ring-billed, and Franklin's gulls likely.

Live-oak Savanna—Tall-grass savannas occur on sandy soils inland from the coast. These are dotted with live-oak groves (mottes) and woodlands of various sizes. The oaks are festooned with two species of bromeliad, and these are nest sites for the rare Tropical Parula. The rarest owl north of the border, the diminutive Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, a diurnal bird hunter, also occurs in the oaks. Other species more typical of the subtropical woodlands along the Rio Grande are present as well, some having extended their ranges northward in the recent past. These include Green Jay, Great Kiskadee, Couch's Kingbird, and Buff-bellied Hummingbird. Other species of interest found as breeders in this habitat include Wild Turkey, the black-backed Lesser Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Summer Tanager, Vermilion Flycatcher, and such spectacular raptors as the beautiful White-tailed Hawk and the carrion-feeding Crested Caracara.

Semi-arid Brushlands—Between the coastal savannas and the subtropical woodlands along the lower Rio Grande lies a broad, level to gently rolling plain covered—in its original state—with low, dense thorny brushlands. The bird life of these brushlands is similar to that of much of the arid Southwest, with such species as Greater Roadrunner, Scaled Quail (here occurring with Northern Bobwhite), Harris's Hawk, Chihuahuan Raven, Bewick's and Cactus wrens, Curve-billed Thrasher, Verdin, Pyrrhuloxia, and Black-throated and Cassin's sparrows. Other species of interest that live in or migrate through this habitat include Cave Swallow, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, wintering Green-tailed Towhee, and Hooded Oriole.



The colorful Green Jay adds tropical flair to the bird-life of Texas. Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.

Rio Grande Riparian Woodlands—Along the lower Rio Grande from near its mouth upstream almost to Laredo (about 250 air miles) are taller, lush woodlands composed of a mixture of subtropical and temperate trees. These woodlands have mostly been cleared for a variety of irrigated crops (sugar cane, citrus fruits, cotton, winter vegetables, and small grains) upstream to about Roma, where the flood plain narrows to a mere strip along the immediate river bank. Relatively small but important fragments of this unique habitat are preserved in Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, and other, less-known sites. These areas are famous among birders for the wealth of Neotropical species that are resident or have straggled up from Mexico from time to time. A complete list would run to fifty or so species, but the regulars include Least Grebe, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (and occasionally the magnificent goose-sized Muscovy Duck), Neotropic Cormorant, Plain Chachalaca, Red-billed Pigeon, White-tipped Dove, Common Pauraque, Gray Hawk, Hook-billed Kite (increasingly rare), White-tailed Kite, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Great Kiskadee, Couch's and Tropical kingbirds, Green Jay, Long-billed Thrasher, Clay-colored Thrush, Olive Sparrow, and the gorgeous Altamira and Audubon's orioles.

Border Wall Update—For those concerned about the recent news from South Texas, the Border Wall has been in the news almost daily over the past year or more, with quite a bit of information circulating through social media and in the press. We suspect that a lot of you are wondering just how a border wall might affect birding in south Texas. The potential loss of habitat and access to birding sites has caused a great deal of concern among naturalists and conservationists working and living in the area. Field Guides has been offering tours to Big Bend and the lower Rio Grande Valley for almost thirty-five years and knows these areas exceptionally well.

Without question, some specific areas would be impacted, but even with a border wall under construction, the overall birding experience should be only minimally impacted. Why is that? As it turns out, many of the most productive birding sites are north of the proposed wall. It is possible to observe most of the specialty birds of the region without setting eyes on the Rio Grande. Mind you, it would be a shame not to take in the river view as part of the south Texas birding experience, and it will likely remain a feature of our tours to the region.

Itinerary for Spring in South Texas

Day 1, Sat, 7 Mar. Rockport. You will be met at the Corpus Christi airport (the airport closest to Rockport) just outside the baggage claim area at 3:00 p.m. by your guide. We will drive the thirty miles to Rockport with a few roadside stops for birds, arriving there about 5:30 p.m. You'll want to have your binoculars available for the drive, but travel clothing will be fine as we will only make brief stops at a few roadside areas. Your guide will have a telescope if needed, so you won't have to unpack yours if you bring one. Night in Rockport.

Day 2, Sun, 8 Mar. Rockport. This morning we'll take a boat trip to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge to see the magnificent Whooping Cranes and a great variety of other wading, shore, and water birds. The boat has enclosed seating with adequate visibility if the weather is not pleasant for being on deck. We will be in protected waters of the bay system, and the entire trip should be quite smooth. Only those persons extremely susceptible to motion sickness will need to take precautions. Clothing requirements will vary with the weather, but generally a light jacket or heavy shirt should be sufficient in case of cool breezes off the water. After returning to the dock we'll have lunch and drive northward to the refuge and vicinity to seek other species of interest. Comfortable walking shoes will be adequate for this excursion. Night in Rockport.



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks are common in South Texas wetlands. Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.

Day 3, Mon, 9 Mar. Rockport/Padre Island. After some morning birding around Rockport, we'll return to the hotel, pack, and depart for Mustang and Padre islands (now joined), part of the barrier island system off the lower Texas coast. We will visit a variety of coastal habitats and leave the islands at Corpus Christi, continuing to nearby Kingsville for the night. Again, comfortable walking shoes will be adequate for today's activities. Clothing requirements will vary with the weather, but temperatures should be pleasant at this time of year. Night in Kingsville.

Day 4, Tue, 10 Mar. King Ranch; to Brownsville. Today we will depart Kingsville early and spend all morning and part of the afternoon on the King Ranch that traditionally hosts several pairs of nesting Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls. There is also some chance of Tropical Parula at this locale. Later we will continue to South Padre Island (for migration and wetlands birding) keeping a watchful eye for Aplomado Falcons, before heading on to the Brownsville area where we will seek out flocks of parrots and parakeets heading for roost or nesting sites.

Footwear for the ranch should be sturdy and provide ankle protection from nettles and thorns. We might be doing some off-road walking on level (but sandy) ground through the mesquites and oaks. Chigger protection should be employed today (and on all coming days of the tour), and particular care should be taken to avoid ticks, unfortunately prevalent in this area. Seasonal temperatures of interior South Texas are usually quite warm with lots of sun, so lightweight clothing and protection from the sun will be in order for the rest of the trip. Night in Brownsville.

Day 5, Wed, 11 Mar. Brownsville/Santa Ana NWR. We will visit a couple of areas in and around Brownsville before driving forty-five miles up the Rio Grande to the well-known Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. Here we will spend the afternoon seeking the Neotropical specialties that make South Texas a must for birders. We will continue to McAllen for the night. For today and the rest of the trip, footwear and clothing needs will be essentially the same as for yesterday. Night in Mission.

Day 6, Thu, 12 Mar. Lower Rio Grande Valley. We will spend part of today in Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park as well as other nearby areas, continuing our search for the Neotropical specialties of the area. We may return to Bentsen in the evening to try for owls and Common Pauraque at dusk. Night in Mission.

Day 7, Fri, 13 Mar. Falcon Dam area. Depending on our luck the last couple of days, we may want to return to some area near McAllen early, or we may want to depart directly for the area of the Rio Grande below Falcon Dam, about an hour's drive upriver. Regardless, we will spend most of the day in the latter area seeking species that do not normally range down along the lower Rio Grande, such as Muscovy Duck (seen for the first time in several years on our 2017 tour) and Audubon's Oriole. Planned birding stops over the next couple of days will include a search for the diminutive Morelet's Seedeater along the Rio Grande in Zapata or further upstream. Night in Zapata.

Day 8, Sat, 14 Mar. Falcon Dam area. We will again spend an entire day at various locations along the Rio Grande in the vicinity of Falcon Dam, likely including visits to Chapeno, Salineno, and perhaps venturing upriver as well. Night in Zapata.

Day 9, Sun, 15 Mar. To Corpus Christi. We will depart early this morning, with our destination determined by whatever species we are still lacking. Later in the morning we will proceed to Corpus Christi, where we will plan to have lunch before arriving at the airport by 1:00 p.m. **Please schedule homebound flights no earlier than 2:00 p.m.**

About Your Guide

Chris Benesh grew up studying natural history in California, where he was inspired by his father to take up birding as a teenager. After earning a degree in zoology from UC Santa Barbara in 1987, Chris moved to Austin to join the Field Guides staff. Since then, his life has undergone a wonderful transformation. The intervening years at Field Guides have taken him to many corners of the world and across both the Arctic and Antarctic circles!

Chris takes an interest in nearly anything that flies, and you might catch him sneaking a peek at a passing aircraft or stopping to examine a butterfly or odonate. You might also notice him getting especially excited at the sighting of a rare or wonderful mammal (heck, he can get excited about a squirrel!).

Chris's passion for education has led to his serving on the Arizona Bird Committee, leading the occasional workshop, presenting at birding conventions, and—we must add—thoroughly explaining in admirable detail the nuances of flycatchers to tour participants and colleagues alike. These days, most of his “down time” is spent at home in Tucson watching his two wonderful kids, Sean and Linnea, grow.

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

*“I would travel with **Chris Benesh** anywhere, any time. He is calm, pleasant, and good-humored. He is not only brilliant at spotting and finding birds, but equally brilliant at ensuring that every member of the group gets a great look at the bird.”*
B.M., Arizona's Second Spring

Financial Information

FEE: \$3275 from Corpus Christi

DEPOSIT: \$350 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: November 8, 2019

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$575

LIMIT: 7

Other Things You Need to Know

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

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: On Day 1, please plan to arrive in Corpus Christi by 2:30 p.m. to meet your guide at 3:00 p.m.; on Day 9, please plan to depart from Corpus Christi after 2:00 p.m.

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 \$3275 for one person in double occupancy from Corpus Christi. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 8, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through lunch on Day 9, 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 Corpus Christi, airport taxes, 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 \$575. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

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

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$350** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by November 8, 2019. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

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

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

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

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

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. **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 with InsureMyTrip (www.insuremytrip.com) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. 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 reverse side of the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

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

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

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