

ITINERARY
VIETNAM

November 21-December 11, 2020



The Rufous-faced Warbler has a wide distribution in southeast Asia. This colorful little songbird is one of many Old World warblers we will seek on this tour. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

We include here information for those interested in the 2020 Field Guides Vietnam tour:

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

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

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

Few names evoke such a variety of images and emotions—from Americans in particular—as that of Vietnam. After half a century of struggle, economic hardship, and ambivalence toward the West, this culturally and biogeographically rich country of nearly 85 million people is at peace, is thriving economically, and is now cordially and enthusiastically welcoming western tourism.

Vietnam is home to one of the richest but most poorly known avifaunas of any Southeast Asian country, with a number of endemic, near-endemic, and highly threatened species found here. Although intense agriculture, population pressures, and the long era of strife in this small country have taken their toll on the native wildlife and habitats, several fine reserves and national parks dot the length of the country and shelter some of Southeast Asia's rarest birds and

mammals. Local and western ornithologists are presently identifying new areas of importance throughout the country that harbor an assortment of globally threatened species and will eventually be recommended for protection under either national park or reserve status.

Our nearly three weeks in the country will allow us to sample the richest sites presently accessible to tourists. Near Hanoi, the lovely forests of Cuc Phuong NP, Vietnam's first national park, are home to a variety of birds we are unlikely to see elsewhere. Dramatic limestone outcrops punctuate the landscape and a good paved road reaches the remote interior of the park. We'll have nearly three full days to search for the likes of Silver-breasted Broadbill, Red-collared Woodpecker, Bar-bellied, Blue-rumped, and Eared pittas, White-winged Magpie, Ratchet-tailed Treepie, Rufous-throated and Black-browed fulvettas, Indochinese Yuhina, the recently described Limestone Leaf-Warbler, Fujian Niltava, Limestone Wren-Babbler, or even the lovely Green Cochoa. Before continuing south, we'll visit a small limestone karst reserve nearby with hopes of seeing the Critically Endangered Delacour's Langur on the rocky outcrops overlooking a shallow reservoir, as well as a good variety of marsh birds present in the expansive reed beds and shallow waters.

After a short flight from Hanoi to the city of Danang on the central Vietnamese coast, we'll drive into the highlands of south-central Annam, one of the centers of avian endemism in the country, and an area that we've just added to our itinerary after a successful scouting trip there in 2016 and tours in 2017 & 2018. Our focus for our nearly four full days in this region will be two Vietnamese endemics, Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush and the attractive Black-crowned Barwing, both described to science only recently! The rich highland forests here are loaded with other birds, too, and we'll keep an eye out for other regional specialties.

From here, after a short flight to Ho Chi Minh City, we'll make our way north from 'Saigon' (as most of the locals still refer to it) to Cat Tien National Park, arguably the richest single lowland forest birding site in the entire country and one of the few intact lowland forest areas in the south of Vietnam. Among the park's more numerous and widespread species can be found a host of rarely encountered as well as near-mythical birds, including Siamese Fireback, the local Germain's Peacock-Pheasant and near-endemic Orange-necked Partridge (the latter seen by only a handful of observers—very difficult), Green Peafowl, Great Hornbill, Lesser Adjutant, Gray-headed Fish-Eagle, Black-and-red Broadbill, Blue-rumped Pitta, and Gray-faced Tit-Babbler.



Black-crowned Barwing is a near-endemic, found only in a few locations in Vietnam and Laos. We've had good luck finding them on our tours. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Birding the low, forested mountains between Cat Tien and highland resort city of Dalat to the north might yield a look at the scarce Yellow-vented Pigeon, Red-vented Barbet, White-cheeked and Orange-breasted laughingthrushes, or the near-endemic Black-hooded Laughingthrush. Continuing north to Dalat, we'll search the high-elevation broadleaf and pine forests on the Langbian Plateau for such sought-after species as the Collared Laughingthrush, Vietnamese Greenfinch, or even the recently rediscovered endemic Gray-crowned Crocias. Recent taxonomic revisions have given us many new endemic targets to look for besides these, though, and others await elevation to full species status.

Indochinese Barbet, Vietnamese Cutia, Dalat Shrike-Babbler, Black-crowned Fulvetta, and Black-headed Parrotbill have all recently been added to our 'list of things to do' while here. We'll fly from Dalat back to Saigon for a final Vietnamese feast and an overnight before we bid *adieu* to this fascinating country.

We've tried to minimize the long travel days on this survey tour of Vietnam and have limited the one-night hotel stays to just a few. There will be a few unavoidably long days, though, but the rewards at each new destination will surely make up for these. Each site that we plan to visit is rich in widespread tropical Asian birds, and we'll try to see as many of these as we can at a reasonable pace. Also, in all of the areas visited, there are at least a few special birds of restricted range in residence that may take some extra effort to see (the Germain's Peacock-Pheasant at Cat Tien NP, the Collared Laughingthrush at Mt. Langbian, and the Red-collared Woodpecker at Cuc Phuong NP are all good examples).

Join us in November for this intriguing offering that is sure to delight even the most seasoned Asian traveler!

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:** Good amounts of walking, usually 1-3 miles in morning, 1-2 miles in afternoon, usually on wide roads or tracks in the lowlands, sometimes on mountain trails that have slippery, steep, muddy, and/or rocky sections and obstacles such as fallen limbs, roots, and rocks (walking sticks recommended).
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** Participants should be able to step up (and step down) 10-12 inches to get into and out of our vehicles. We bird from a small boat on one occasion, and so an ability to climb into and out of the boat (via the bow, the front of the boat) is necessary. Land leeches require proper preparation (see the Information Bulletin).
- **PACE:** Early morning starts, usually with predawn (5:00 a.m.) breakfast. On several days, we will bird through the day with a picnic lunch, but on many days, we return to our lodgings for lunch. On most lowland days, there will be an after-lunch break followed by an optional afternoon birding session. On some days, we will travel by vehicle to the next destination in the afternoon. There will be several nighttime excursions to look for birds, mammals, and other creatures, but we will usually return to the lodging by 10:00 p.m.
- **WEATHER:** Weather in Vietnam varies, depending on the location and elevation, from the 50s in highest elevations in the early morning to the high 90s in the lower elevations. Humidity will be high in some locations, such as Cat Tien.
- **ELEVATION:** Sea level to 7000 feet.
- **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. 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:** Participants should be prepared to make comfort stops in nature, as there are simply no other options (away from our lodgings) on many sections of this tour's route.
- **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 the guide for the tour.

About the Birding Areas

Cuc Phuong National Park—Cuc Phuong was established as Vietnam's first national park in 1962, and recently the accommodations for visiting tourists have greatly improved (about a dozen private rooms with private bath, hot water, air conditioning, etc.). The terrain here, 25,000 hectares in all, is peppered with numerous limestone outcrops and small hills blanketed in luxuriant, tall, seasonal evergreen forest. The main road that winds through this forested limestone maze to the park's center gives visiting birders access to remarkably undisturbed habitat. Nearly three full days here should

provide us with an excellent chance to see such specialties as White-winged Magpie and Ratchet-tailed Treepie, Limestone Wren-Babbler, and Rufous-throated Fulvetta. Other birds of interest include Silver Pheasant (rare), Green-eared Barbet, Brown Hornbill, Red-headed Trogon, Red-collared Woodpecker, Pied Falconet, Blue-rumped, Bar-bellied, and Eared pittas, Blue-winged Leafbird, Indochinese (Yellow-breasted) Green-Magpie, Lesser Racket-tailed and Hair-crested drongos, Chinese Blackbird (recently split from Eurasian Blackbird), Japanese and Gray-backed thrushes, White-tailed Flycatcher, Fujian Niltava, Asian Stubtail, Sultan Tit (the yellow-crested form here), Gray-eyed Bulbul, Scaly-crowned Babbler, Large Scimitar-Babbler, the local Black-browed Fulvetta (recently split from Mountain Fulvetta), and Fork-tailed Sunbird, to name just a few. The recently described Limestone Leaf-Warbler (*Phylloscopus calciatilis*) also calls the forests here home.



The Mountain Scops-Owl can be difficult to see, but we have managed some very good looks on our tours. We'll look for these small owls at Cuc Phuong. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Van Long Nature Reserve—A short drive north of Cuc Phuong is this limestone karst and wetland reserve, home to the largest remaining population of the Critically Endangered Delacour's Langur. The langurs and many of the waterbirds present at this shallow, reedy reservoir are best seen by small boat, paddled by a local oarsman. A morning visit here will often produce good looks of the langurs taking the morning sun on the jagged karst outcrops, while White-browed Crakes and Pheasant-tailed Jacanas feed among the emerging aquatic vegetation. We'll make a short visit here as we drive back to Hanoi from Cuc Phuong.

The south-central Annam Highlands—This relatively unknown region of Vietnam near the Lao border shares many highland species with both the mountains of Tonkin to the north and the Langbian Plateau to the south. But their long geographic isolation has produced a number of unique species and subspecies, a few of which we'll search for in our nearly four full days of birding the area. The terrain and the plant communities are similar to what we'll see in the Dalat area, with extensive tracts of open pine forest interspersed with large areas of beautiful evergreen broadleaf forest. It's the latter habitat where we will spend the majority of our time searching for the recently described Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush in the Mang Den area and the beautiful Black-crowned Barwing in the Lo Xo Pass area to the northwest of Mang Den. We are also now adding the remote and infrequently-birded Ngoc Linh Mountain area, where Golden-winged Laughingthrush was discovered barely over a decade ago, and which also holds some other very infrequently seen and poorly known birds. The rich forests here are also home to a number of birds that are more likely to be seen here than farther south in the Dalat area, and we'll be on the lookout for Pin-tailed Pigeon, Brown Hornbill, Blue Pitta, Black-eared Shrike-Babbler, Yellow-billed Nuthatch, the black-crested form of Sultan Tit (subspecies *gayeti*), Rufous-faced Warbler, Short-tailed Scimitar-Babbler, Gray-headed Parrotbill, Eyebrowed Wren-Babbler, and Plumbeous Redstart.



Cat Tien National Park—The vast majority of lowland forest in southern Vietnam has been either cleared for agriculture and settlement or was a victim of defoliation attempts during the long civil war. Cat Tien National Park, established in 1978 and covering an area of more than 35,000 hectares, is one of the few places in the south that escaped this fate. Its forests, bamboo thickets, swamps, marshes, and streams boast an extraordinary collection of rare or little-known species, as well as a fine variety of more widespread Indochinese birds. Among the more than 400 species recorded to date from the park, our search will focus on a number of scarce birds including two threatened pheasant species—Green Peafowl and the near-endemic Germain's Peacock-Pheasant, the nearly mythical Orange-necked Partridge, rediscovered here in 1991 after being unrecorded since it was first described from Vietnam in 1927, the ornate Siamese Fireback, the impressive White-bellied and Great Slaty woodpeckers, the local Red-vented Barbet, Oriental Pied- and Great hornbills, Banded Kingfisher, Ashy-headed (Pompadour) Green-Pigeon, Gray-headed Fish-Eagle, Collared Falconet, Woolly-necked Stork and Lesser Adjutant, Bar-bellied and Blue-rumped pittas, Banded, Dusky, and Black-and-red broadbills, and the nearly endemic Gray-faced Tit-Babbler.

Di Linh—A chain of low, forested mountains lies just a short distance to the southeast of the small town of Di Linh. A good paved road passes between two of the tallest peaks, still mostly covered with fine broadleaf evergreen forest, and it is in this stretch at about 1200 meters elevation that we will concentrate our birding efforts. One of our highest priorities here while we bird along the roadside will be locating a responsive pair of endemic Orange-breasted Laughingthrushes making their way through the understory. Other species to watch for in this area include Barred Cuckoo-Dove, the scarce Yellow-vented Pigeon, Great Hornbill, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Crested Goshawk, Silver-breasted and Long-tailed broadbills, Indochinese Cuckooshrike, the secretive Dark-sided Thrush, the lovely Spotted Forktail, Red-billed Scimitar-Babbler, the local White-cheeked Laughingthrush, the endemic Vietnamese Cutia, and the near-endemic Black-headed Parrotbill.

Dalat—Isolated from the highlands to the north in central Annam, the Dalat highlands, rising to more than 2400 meters (about 8000 feet, but we'll be birding considerably lower), have played a significant role in the evolution of several endemic species and numerous subspecies (still a few good candidates for a split!) of birds found more commonly a short distance to the north. Most of this mountainous terrain is cloaked in pine forest, but the more interesting species inhabit the broadleaf evergreen forest occupying the numerous drainages and higher ridges. Dalat itself is a bustling resort town that many Vietnamese and Western tourists visit to escape the tropical climate of the south, and we will be based in the cool air here for three nights, with ample opportunity to search for the area's specialties. In addition to the endemics mentioned in the introduction, we will search for the likes of Rufous-throated and Bar-backed partridges, Indochinese Barbet, Wedge-tailed Pigeon, Jerdon's Baza, Rusty-naped Pitta, Long-tailed Broadbill, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Long-tailed and Gray-chinned minivets, Slender-billed Oriole, Lesser Shortwing, Slaty-backed and Spotted forktails, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Green-backed and Yellow-cheeked tits, Black-throated Tit (the distinctive gray-crowned *annamensis* race), Hume's (Brown-throated) Treecreeper, Brown Prinia, Gray-bellied Tesia, White-spectacled Warbler, Pygmy Cupwing (Wren-Babbler), Mountain Fulvetta, Clicking (Chestnut-fronted) Shrike-babbler, Blue-winged Minla (the distinctive endemic race *orientalis*), White-tailed Robin, the scarce Green Cochoa, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Black-throated and Gould's Sunbird (distinctive endemic subspecies here), Red Crossbill (another endemic race here), plus many, many others.



The brilliant Gould's Sunbird is a widespread species, however, the subspecies found near Dalat is distinct, and endemic to the region. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Itinerary for Vietnam

Days 1-2, Sat-Sun, 21-22 Nov. Departure from home. You will need to leave the US by Saturday, November 21, in order to arrive by mid-day on Monday, November 23, to start the tour. Day 2 will be lost as we cross the International Date Line on our long flights to Vietnam. Our office will be happy to advise you and arrange the flights that are best for you.

Day 3, Mon, 23 Nov. Arrival in Hanoi. Please plan to arrive at Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport around or before 12:00 p.m. (noon) today. Once you clear Vietnamese customs, look for a person holding a sign that says Field Guides or your name. The driver will take you to our comfortable hotel in nearby Hanoi, where we'll rest up from our long flight. The plan for today is to relax during mid-day and then to spend part of the afternoon visiting a few of the many interesting cultural and historical sights in Hanoi, an opportunity that simply can't be passed by. You'll want to have your binoculars with you today since we'll try to get in a bit of birding in town between our stops. Night in Hanoi.

Day 4, Tue, 24 Nov. Drive to Cuc Phuong National Park; birding in the park. After an early breakfast in Hanoi, we'll make the drive to the southwest of the city to nearby Cuc Phuong National Park, arriving at the park headquarters by late morning. After checking into our comfortable private quarters, we'll have the balance of the day to do some birding in the park. Night at Cuc Phuong NP headquarters.

Days 5-6, Wed-Thu, 25-26 Nov. Cuc Phuong National Park. We'll have two full days to explore the roads and trails of the park. The birding here will be in mostly flat terrain, but it may be necessary to hike a well-maintained trail that is steep in parts. Most of our birding will take us to the beautiful forest in the center of the park (about a forty-five minute drive from our lodging), where the majority of good trails in the area radiate from the park substation. Comfortable footwear should be adequate. We plan to do some owling within the park on one or more nights. Nights at Cuc Phuong NP headquarters.

Day 7, Fri, 27 Nov. Morning birding at Van Long Reserve and early afternoon flight to Danang; drive to Kham Duc. After an early breakfast in the park, we'll load our things onto our bus and make the short drive to dramatically scenic Van Long Nature Reserve. We'll be taken by boat through the shallow marshes here to get a good look at the

Critically Endangered Delacour's Langur taking the morning sun on the jagged karst outcrops of the reserve. We'll get some great looks at a variety of waterbirds working the shallows here, too, before we move on in the late morning to the Hanoi airport for lunch and then our short early afternoon flight to the coastal town of Danang to the south. We'll be met by our new driver and bus once we arrive and Danang and then make the 3.5-hour ride to the highland town of Kham Duc to the southwest. Night at Kham Duc.



We will spend a morning at Van Long Nature Reserve, where we'll look for water birds and the endangered Delacour's Langur amid a fantastic landscape. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Day 8, Sat, 28 Nov. Morning birding at Lo Xo Pass; arrive Tu Mo Rong, and afternoon birding at Ngoc Linh. After an early breakfast at our comfortable hotel, we'll drive to the south of town to Lo Xo Pass, close to the Lao border. This is the most easily accessed site in the world to see the very local endemic Black-crowned Barwing. After our arrival at Tu Mo Rong, we'll drive to a newly opened area of montane evergreen forest in the shadow of Mount Ngoc Linh, the highest peak in Vietnam's Central Highlands, where we will hope for a glimpse of the recently discovered very range restricted endemic Golden-winged Laughingthrush. Night in Tu Mo Rong.

Day 9, Sun, 29 Nov. Ngoc Linh to Mang Den. After an early breakfast, we will head back to Ngoc Linh to search for other specialties of the area that are seldom seen elsewhere in Vietnam, including Ashy Wood-Pigeon, Indochinese Fulvetta, Eye-ringed Shrike-Babbler, Black-eared Parrotbill, and Red-tailed Laughingthrush. In the afternoon we'll drive south to the highland resort town of Mang Den. Night at Mang Den.

Day 10, Mon, 30 Nov. Mang Den. With a climate and elevation similar to that of Dalat to the south, local developers had a dream of making Mang Den into another resort town like that popular city north of Saigon. Geography and accessibility conspired against those plans and Mang Den continues to be a rather quiet mountain town without the throngs of tourists that one sees in Dalat. The improved infrastructure of the Mang Den area, all in anticipation of the tourists that never came, is still there, so it's relatively easy to access the good patches of forest that remain in the area and our accommodations are surprisingly comfortable. We'll have more than two full days to search for the many special birds that inhabit these forests, including, above all, the shy endemic Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush. Other targets here include such range-restricted birds as Brown Hornbill, White-winged Magpie, Ratchet-tailed Treepie, Yellow-billed Nuthatch, Short-tailed Scimitar-Babbler, and Black-hooded and White-cheeked laughingthrushes. Even the scarce endemic Gray-crowned Crocias resides in the evergreen broadleaf forests here! We'll have full mornings and afternoons to search for these and others. Night at Mang Den.

Day 11, Tue, 1 Dec. Morning birding at Mang Den; afternoon drive to Yok Don National Park. After birding the Mang Den area for one final morning, we'll drive south to Yok Don National Park, with a stop for lunch en route. Depending on when we arrive, we should be able to explore the banks of the Srepok River and the dry deciduous forests of Yok Don before nightfall. Specialties here that are rarely seen elsewhere in the country include Fulvous-breasted, Rufous-bellied, and Black-headed Woodpeckers, Alexandrine and Blossom-headed Parakeets, White-rumped Pygmy-Falcon, Collared Falconet, and Burmese Nuthatch, Night at Yok Don National Park.

Day 12, Wed, 2 Dec. Yok Don National Park to Dalat. Early morning before the long but scenic drive south to the vibrant mountain city of Dalat, a former French hill station at the southern extreme of the Central Highlands, on the Langbian Plateau. We'll likely have a couple of hours after we check into our lovely hotel in town to bird a nearby forested ravine before we call it quits for the day. Night in Dalat.

Days 13-14, Thu-Fri, 3-4 Dec. Dalat area. With nearly three full days to explore this rich area, we should have an excellent chance to locate a number of the rare and local endemics and other specialties found in the region. One day here will find us ascending a steep but drivable road to the remaining evergreen broadleaf forest near the summit of Mount Langbian just outside of town. Another day may find us walking the road adjacent to Ho Tuyen Lam, a local reservoir, where a mix of native pine and patches of evergreen broadleaf forest host a number of species not likely to be found elsewhere on the tour. We also plan to visit a remnant patch of forest just outside of town with hopes of finding the recently rediscovered Gray-crowned Crocias, among others. Trails through these forests and the surrounding pine woodlands are few, with some being steep in parts and potentially muddy in some sections. Rain in the highlands at this time of year is a strong possibility, so plan accordingly when we depart our lodging for the day. We may plan on a picnic lunch on one of our days here. Comfortable hiking shoes or boots should be adequate for most days, but rubber boots or NEOS may be desirable if there has been recent rain. Nights in Dalat.

Day 15, Sat, 5 Dec. Morning birding near Dalat; afternoon drive to Di Linh and Deo Nui San pass. After a final morning to chase down anything that would still be new for us here, we'll load up our bus and continue to the south and the small town of Di Linh. From here, it's a short distance to a relatively little-used paved road to a forested mountain pass where we plan to spend the remainder of the day birding along the roadside, returning to Di Linh and our hotel late this afternoon. We'll plan on having a restaurant lunch along the way today. Comfortable hiking shoes should be adequate during our visit. Night in Di Linh.

Day 16, Sun, 6 Dec. Deo Nui San Pass; afternoon drive to Cat Tien. We'll leave our basic hotel in town before dawn, planning on a picnic breakfast at the pass itself. We have the entire morning to bird the productive roadside habitats at the pass and just below. Birding here on a good day can be fantastic and we'll have plenty to keep us busy before we head back down the mountain. We will then drive south, stopping for lunch en route to the ferry dock across the Dong Nai River from Cat Tien National Park, where we will spend the final four days of this tour. We'll plan to have lunch at our lodge in the park after we arrive. After check-in, we should have some time this afternoon to get our first taste of the rich avifauna of Cat Tien. Our lodging for these next few nights is surprisingly good, and should prove to be an excellent and comfortable base for exploring the rich habitats of the park. Night at Cat Tien NP.



Vietnam is home to a number of spectacular galliformes, including the gorgeous Siamese Fireback. We've had great views of these large pheasants in Cat Tien on previous tours. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Days 17-19, Mon-Wed, 7-9 Dec. Cat Tien area. We'll have three full days to explore the roads and trails throughout the park. The trails are good and level for the most part, but there may be a few wet or overgrown spots. Rubber boots or NEOS during our stay here will be desirable in muddy areas and can also be used to discourage leeches (if it is indeed wet enough for these). We'll spend at least part of one of our days in the remote northern sector of the park, if the road is open, where a number of scarce species have been known to occur. Another excursion that we'll plan to undertake is a morning hike into a remote forest lake in the park's interior. The trail is good, but it is a 5 km hike one-way and will take us a few hours to walk in (at a birder's pace), so make sure you carry plenty of water in this warm tropical climate. We'll look for nightbirds on one or more of our nights here. Nights at Cat Tien NP.

Day 20, Thu, 10 Dec. Morning birding at Cat Tien NP; afternoon drive to Ho Chi Minh City. We'll have most of this morning to bird Cat Tien before lunch in town and then cross the Dong Nai once more and load up our bus to head down south to Ho Chi Minh City. Time, birds, and traffic permitting, we may have a little time this afternoon to see some of the sights of this vibrant city before our final dinner together near our hotel. Night in Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 21, Fri, 11 Dec. We'll board our flights bound for home today and travel through the night to the US. We will regain the day we lost coming over as we fly back to the east, thus arriving back in the US on the same day in time for connecting flights home. *Bon voyage!*

About Your Guides

Doug Gochfeld was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, and his interest in birds was sparked at a young age, in part by his father. This interest soon spiraled into a full-blown obsession for Doug for a few years before he abruptly shelved it, in favor of baseball, for several adolescent years. He picked up his interest in birds again in College and once again became a dedicated/obsessed birder. For several years before starting to lead a full slate of tours for Field Guides in 2016, he traveled extensively as a working birder. These field jobs have included multiple seasons monitoring migration at the legendary migration hotspots of Cape May, New Jersey, and Eilat in Israel. He also guided on St. Paul Island, in Alaska's Pribilof Islands, for parts of four years.

Doug is a Leica Pro Staff member, and he has been a regular leader at birding festivals in Texas, Ohio, Florida, New Mexico, and Virginia. He has worked in Alaska, Suriname, and Brazil studying the breeding and wintering ecology of shorebirds, which hold a special place in his heart. His strongest interests in birding are migration, vagrancy, and patterns of distribution, and he's always excited to share his enthusiasm in, and knowledge of, these subjects and much more on his tours, whether close to home or halfway around the world.

Doug co-led our 2016 and 2018 tours to Vietnam.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for Doug's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

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

Financial Information

FEE: \$7575 from Hanoi, ending in Ho Chi Minh City

DEPOSIT: \$750

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: July 24, 2020

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$950

LIMIT: 8

"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. He communicates well, especially the plans for each day. Bird guiding is a tough job, and I just can't say enough about how well he does it." C. B.; Israel Migration Magic

Other Things You Need to Know

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

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations in the major cities and sites throughout the tour (Hanoi, Kham Duc, Dalat, Cat Tien NP, and Ho Chi Minh City) are in good to excellent, comfortable hotels with private hot showers and air conditioning. Our hotel in Mang Den isn't as luxurious but is nonetheless very comfortable with air conditioning and private hot showers. Our Di Linh hotel is basic but clean, with private baths and hot showers. At Cuc Phuong NP, we will be staying in simple but comfortable rooms or bungalows at the park headquarters. All of the rooms that we will be requesting have air conditioning and private hot water showers and bath facilities. Bath facilities at all of our accommodations are 'western' style.

DOCUMENTS: A current **passport** valid for six months beyond your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Vietnam. US citizens must also obtain a **tourist visa** for Vietnam and application should be made well in advance. We will provide you with the necessary visa application form with the final tour packet.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Vietnamese 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: Please note that the tour begins in Hanoi and ends in Ho Chi Minh City. 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.**

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$7575 for one person in double occupancy from Hanoi. It includes all lodging from Day 3 through Day 20, all meals from dinner on Day 3 through dinner on Day 20, all ground transportation, the Hanoi/Da Nang flight within Vietnam, entrance fees, and the guide services of your 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 Vietnam, airport taxes, visa fees, alcoholic beverages (any exceptions will be noted in this tour's Information Bulletin), 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, complete the enclosed Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$750** 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 July 24, 2020. We will**

bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later. Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

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

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

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

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

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

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

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, 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. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> 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 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 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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