

ITINERARY
VIETNAM

February 20 - March 12, 2027



The Vietnamese Cutia is a near-endemic of the mixed pine forests in southern Vietnam, and also along the border with Laos in the north. We've had good luck finding them on our tours. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

We include here information for those interested in the 2027 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 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 two and a half 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 fulvetas, 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.



*Siamese Fireback is one of several pheasants we'll watch for on the tour. This is a SE Asian specialty.
Photograph by guide Dave Stejskal.*

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.



Collared Laughingthrush is an endangered Vietnamese endemic. We'll seek these beauties near Dalat, where we've seen them on past tours. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

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 that may take some extra effort to find (Germain's Peacock-Pheasant at Cat Tien NP, Collared Laughingthrush at Mt. Langbian, and Red-collared Woodpecker at Cuc Phuong NP are all good examples).

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

Note on bird hides/blinds:

We do not use bird photography hides on this tour, due to their detrimental effect on particularly sought after species in Vietnam, via the scourge of bird-trapping. The use of photographic hides/blinds and the setting-up of artificial baiting/feeding stations are two practices that are now very common among bird photographers, and birders, in many parts of the world, and are sometimes not unlike backyard feeding stations. Unfortunately, the construction of hides/blinds in the forest often involves habitat modification and disturbance, while the artificial feeding of birds increases dependency on unnatural foods (which can be seen in the pigments of some individuals that have become acclimated to feeding stations), and increases the risk of predation at feeding sites. While these alone may not be reasons not to patronize bird hides, in Vietnam, predation comes not only from natural predators but also from human predators trapping for the lucrative cage bird trade or, in the case of some species, for the dinner table. Trapping at hides/blinds and baiting/feeding stations in Vietnam has already resulted in the local extirpation of endemic bird species at several locations, most notably Orange-breasted Laughingthrush. We, along with our ground operator, choose not to support the practice here, where its detrimental effects are starkly noticeable.

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, but sometimes on mountain trails that have slippery, steep, muddy, and/or rocky sections and obstacles such as fallen limbs, roots, and rocks (walking sticks *strongly* recommended). You can opt out of these most challenging of walks.
- **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, though you will have the option to wait at the bus during any hikes on those transit days.

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 (now split, with this taxon being called Annam Limestone-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.



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 sometimes best seen by small boat, paddled by a local oarsman, though often, a walk on foot is a better bet - we'll see what the local conditions at the time of our visit dictate. A morning visit here will often produce good looks at 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, either as we drive back to Hanoi from Cuc Phuong, or when we first drive south to Cuc Phuong.

The south-central Annam Highlands—This relatively unknown region of Vietnam near the Lao border shares some of its highland species with both the mountains of Tonkin to the north and the Langbian Plateau to the south. However, their long geographic isolation has produced a number of unique species and subspecies, a few of which we'll search for in our several days of birding across a couple of sites in the region. In the middle elevations, 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, while our morning or two at higher elevation will be in patches of protected montane evergreen forest above settled areas where that forest has been cleared (mostly for terraced rice paddies). In the Mang Den area, we will search the remnant evergreen patches for Yellow-billed Nuthatch, Brown Hornbill, White-winged Magpie, Ratchet-tailed Treepie, Short-tailed Scimitar-Babbler, the black-crested form of Sultan Tit (subspecies *gayeti*), Rufous-faced Warbler, Gray-headed Parrotbill, and Black-hooded and White-cheeked laughingthrushes, as well as the now-difficult-to-see (thanks to bird trapping, perhaps near photography blinds) Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush. 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 also visit the higher elevation, and infrequently-birded, Ngoc Linh Mountain area, where Golden-winged Laughingthrush was discovered a bit over a decade ago. This area also holds a number of other fun species, some of which remain poorly known, including the beautiful Black-crowned Barwing (also relatively recently discovered), the standout Red-tailed Laughingthrush, and multiple species of minlas, flycatchers, and an isolated subspecies of Golden-breasted Fulvetta.

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, Annam 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 Mrs. Gould's Sunbird (the distinctive endemic subspecies here, which may one day be split into Annam Sunbird), Red Crossbill (another endemic race here, and the southernmost crossbills in the world), plus many, many others.

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. This used to be a good area for finding Orange-breasted Laughingthrushes making their way through the understory, though trapping pressure has dramatically reduced their numbers, and we can no longer count them as expected. 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-endemics Black-headed Parrotbill and Annam Prinia.



The Great Slaty Woodpecker is the largest remaining woodpecker in the world. These birds depend on lowland forests, making them vulnerable to habitat destruction. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

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.



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, 20-21 Feb. Departure from home. Please plan to depart the US on Day 1, in order to arrive by mid-day on Day 3 to start the tour (losing Day 2 while crossing the International Date Line). Our office will be happy to advise and arrange the best flights for you.

Day 3, Mon, 22 Feb. 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, 23 Feb. Drive to Cuc Phuong National Park; birding at Van Long Reserve en route. After an early breakfast in Hanoi, we'll load our things onto our bus and make the drive to the southwest of the city, to 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 nearby Cuc Phuong National Park, arriving at the park headquarters around midday or early afternoon. 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, 24-25 Feb. 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, 26 Feb. Morning birding at Van Long Reserve and early afternoon flight to Pleiku; drive to Dak To.

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 bird the edges of shallow marshes on foot, or float through them by small boat (whichever method is better based on recent conditions) 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 have the potential to see 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 hill-country town of Pleiku to the south. We'll be met by our new driver and bus once we arrive at Pleiku and then make the 2-hour ride to the highland town of Dak To to the southwest. Night at Dak To.



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, 27 Feb. Early morning drive to, and birding at, Ngoc Linh, then to Tu Mo Rong. After a brief hit of coffee for those who need, we will leave very early, and drive a couple of hours to a newly opened area of montane evergreen forest in the shadow of Mount Ngoc Linh, the highest peak in Vietnam's Central Highlands, Ngoc, where we will have a field breakfast. We'll bird a mountain trail, where we will hope for a glimpse of the recently discovered, very range restricted, endemic Golden-winged Laughingthrush. The trail where we will look for the laughingthrush has some steep sections, and is very likely to be wet, slippery, and have roots and large steps. We'll keep a sharp eye out for other birds in this rich forest as well, including Black-crowned Barwing, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Indochinese and Rusty-capped Fulvetas, and more. We will have a field lunch similar to our breakfast, then continue to bird, choosing our plans based on the local weather conditions, but hoping to maximize our time in this remote and rich area. We will then make our way to Tu Mo Rong. Night in Tu Mo Rong.

Day 9, Sun, 28 Feb. Ngoc Linh birding, drive to Mang Den. After an early breakfast, we will head back to the Ngoc Linh area for some more birding in this special place. Other specialties of the area that are seldom seen elsewhere in Vietnam, include Ashy Wood-Pigeon, Indochinese Fulvetta, Eye-ringed Shrike-Babbler, Black-eared Parrotbill, and Annam Golden-breasted Fulvetta. In addition, we'll be on the lookout for the eye-popping Red-tailed Laughingthrush. We will then head back to Tu Mo Rong, get back onto our big bus after lunch, and head for Mang Den. Depending on what time we get to Mang Den, we may have time for some starter birding in these interesting foothills. Night at Mang Den.

Day 10, Mon, 1 Mar. Birding Mang Den. We'll have a full day to search for the many special birds that inhabit these forests, including, Our targets here include such range-restricted birds as Yellow-billed Nuthatch, Black-hooded Laughingthrush, Brown Hornbill, White-winged Magpie, Ratchet-tailed Treepie, Short-tailed Scimitar-Babbler, Large Scimitar-Babbler, and White-cheeked Laughingthrush. Even the scarce endemic Gray-crowned Crocias resides in the evergreen broadleaf forests here! The shy endemic Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush is around, but has become more difficult in recent years, perhaps due to trapping pressure. We have also found some other poorly known critters here over

our past few visits, including a Colugo (possibly of an undescribed species), and the huge Kon Ka Kinh Giant Earthworm. Night at Mang Den.

Day 11, Tue, 2 Mar. Morning birding at Mang Den; LONG DRIVE to Yok Don National Park. After a brief birding excursion in the Mang Den area for one final morning, we'll drive south to Yok Don National Park, with a stop for lunch en route. This will be a 5-6 hour drive all-told, and we hope to arrive in time to explore the dry deciduous forest around the banks of the Srepok River at 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 Falcon, Collared Falconet, and Burmese Nuthatch, Night at Yok Don National Park.



White-rumped Falcon is a Southeast Asian specialty that can be found in a small area of Vietnam. We'll keep our eyes peeled for this small raptor when we visit Yok Don National Park. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Day 12, Wed, 3 Mar. Yok Don National Park to Dalat. LONG DRIVE. We will have a morning birding session in Yok Don, before the long, but in some parts 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, 4-5 Mar. 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, 6 Mar. 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 likely have lunch at our accommodation in Di Linh. Comfortable hiking shoes should be adequate during our visit. Night in Di Linh.

Day 16, Sun, 7 Mar. 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.

Days 17-19, Mon-Wed, 8-10 Mar. 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, 11 Mar. 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, 12 Mar. Departure day. 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. This 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 fascinated with the avifauna (and other fauna and flora!) of the Southeast Asia and Australasia region, has guided a regular suite of Field Guides tours to the region, from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar, to Borneo and Papua New Guinea. His strongest interests in birding are migration, vagrancy, and patterns of distribution, and he's also especially keen on seeing mammals and insects. He is 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 kept everyone in mind for getting to see the birds, we enjoyed the time with him, and we really appreciated this daily eBird lists with detailed, interesting commentary/notes. Doug's eBird reports are a treasure!" B.M., 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: \$8750 per person from Hanoi, ending in Ho Chi Minh City

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$1000

DEPOSIT: \$875

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: August 24, 2026

LIMIT: 8

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 still 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 the rooms we request have air conditioning, private bathrooms, and hot water showers. Bath facilities at all of our accommodations are 'western' style.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour begins in Hanoi (Noi Bai International Airport, HAN) and ends in Ho Chi Minh City (Tan Son Nhat International Airport, SGN), Vietnam.

Arrival: Hanoi (HAN) on February 22, by noon.

Departure: Ho Chi Minh City (SGN) on March 12, at any time.

Please wait to purchase airline tickets until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate. At that time, we'll be glad to assist with your flight arrangements at no service fee.

DOCUMENTS: Be sure to verify the latest entry requirements for each country you will visit or transit.

Passport: A valid passport is required for international travel. It should be in good condition, valid for at least 6 months beyond your return date, and have at least one blank page for each country on your itinerary.

Visa: U.S. and Canadian citizens must obtain a **visa or e-Visa** prior to travel. We will provide visa instructions at the appropriate time. Non-US citizens should consult the consulates of each destination for current entry requirements.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$8750 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, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, 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 is \$1000 for those requesting a single room. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please send your deposit of \$875 per person; see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or by August 24, 2026.** We will bill you for

the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later. Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

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 full 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 full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. 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 purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to protect your investment in case of injury or illness to you or an immediate family member before or during a trip. Because we must remit early and substantial deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer refunds for cancellations outside of our Cancellation Policy. If a participant is unable to join or continue a tour due to illness, all related expenses will be their responsibility, and no refunds can be issued for missed days. Please wait to purchase insurance until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate, as most policies are non-refundable.

For full details, visit our Trip Cancellation Insurance page at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/>.

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. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

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

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

NCP 7/2020; 7/22 peg; 5/25 DG; peg5/26