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Birding Tours Worldwide

OUR TOURS

JAN PIERSON

This year we moved our annual Field Guides meeting temporarily from Arizona, where we've been gathering for years, to Grand Lake, Colorado. We're used to visiting the Centennial State on our two April Colorado Grouse departures, but August was a novelty.

Some of our guides and office were jazzed to do a little pre-meeting eclipse-chasing in Wyoming, so we switched venues to make that work. And what raves from the chase...some awe-inspiring experiences at the moment of totality! Grand Lake itself allowed us all some extra bonuses—access to amazing vistas, cool western birds, plus some fabulous mammals to boot in the high country of the Rockies.

Our guides have busy schedules around the globe and can't all regularly visit the office in Texas, so it was wonderful to have the chance for nearly 30 of us to catch up in person for a few days. The long-distance migrant this year? Our own "Sicklebill" Phil Gregory, making a stopover en route back from the UK to Australia. And getting her lifer "biz meeting" was Tour Manager Mandy Mantzel—it's great to have her in the family! We had a couple of productive long group sessions on various

topics, and we all shared a lot of laughs and more than few great stories from the past 12 months—some day we are going to have to gather these into a book!

We run our annual meeting the same way we aim to run our tours: lots of planning and attention to detail, being attentive and responsive, double-checking on everyone, and bringing laughter and fun to the process. Thinking about our meeting reminded me of this comment from a recent Slice of California tour participant. "I've traveled with Field Guides on three other trips. I like the people-centered philosophy of your company. The trips are beautifully organized and thought out, and the guides are superb. The office staff, too, is a big reason

I like Field Guides. They are very responsive, patient, and no question is too trivial." We love to hear that—it's who we are. We receive many hundreds of tour evaluations annually, and we read them carefully. We can't promise any eclipses or totality next year, but rest assured we will all be working hard to generate raves from you. It has been a wonderful year past—let's go have a great tour experience together in 2018!

At top, one of our 2017 Colorado Grouse groups with guides Chris Benesh and Dave Stejskal, photo by participant Herb Fechter. Above, an Aplomado Falcon that put in a surprise appearance on our Texas's Big Bend & Hill Country trip, by guide Doug Gochfeld. And at right, guide Bret Whitney gets folks focused on the target in this image by guide Tom Johnson from Great Rivers of the Amazon II.



OUR GUIDES

IN YOUR WORDS AND OURS

To judge by what we hear from you, **Marcelo Padua** is not only on a first-name basis with all of Brazil's birds—"Marcelo's knowledge of Brazil and its birds is both broad and deep, and he willingly shares it," or "his birding skills are beyond super human!" from recent comments—but all of its people as well. "Everyone seemed to know Marcelo everywhere we went," is something we often hear (and they probably do). In the coming year Marcelo will be doing tours to all corners of Brazil—Brazil Nutshell, Alta Floresta & The Northern Pantanal, Jaguar Spotting, and Mouth of the Amazon to name just four—but it won't be all Brazil. He'll also be initiating a new *Birds & Wine* tour to Portugal and joining Megan for her new France tour. And he'll begin the year birding the Heart of Chile.



During the past four years, we've never stopped hearing good things about **Tom Johnson**, and we're so pleased to have him as a part of our team. Here are just a few examples of what participants on his tours have told us: "Tom's passion for birding was obvious, and his skill at finding birds phenomenal." "I loved the way Tom described the different environments and explained in advance what we could expect to see." And "Tom is an exceptional guide and a great traveling companion. We enjoyed every day with him." There's no lack of good material. Next year, Tom has a very diverse schedule, with tours to Antarctica; to Costa Rica and Mexico; in North America from Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, and California to Pennsylvania and Cape May; and in the Caribbean and Southern Argentina.

For several years now, Field Guides has wanted to offer an Israel tour, but with everyone's already full schedules, we simply had not gotten to it—until, that is, **Doug Gochfeld** joined us in 2016. Doug, who has a strong interest in bird migration, spent several months banding migrants in Israel, and he'll put that experience to use on his new Israel tour next March. Doug has spent this year and last co-leading our groups to far-flung locales—Alaska, Panama, New Guinea, Australia, and Vietnam to name a few—and participants invariably describe him as "technically excellent and extremely personable" as well as professional, courteous, and enthusiastic. "Doug will be a real asset to Field Guides for years to come!" said a recent participant, and we agree. Next year Doug's schedule will include—in addition to Israel—tours to Cambodia, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, and Australia; Alaska, Colorado, Cape May, and a new tour to Florida; and a trip south over New Year's to Trinidad.



Participants on **Willy Perez's** tours never fail to mention his positive attitude in their post-tour comments (Willy shown here with Sacha Lodge guide Oscar Tapuy.) "He is a joy to travel with" or "he has a great sense of humor and many interesting stories" are what we often hear from you. But of course he's more than a great traveling companion—he knows the birds and he knows how to show them to his groups. "Willy was the epitome of the perfect guide—getting everyone on the bird, showing us pictures and describing what we were looking for or had just seen, carefully telling us the night before how to prepare for the following day—and all this with a delightful sense of humor." So where can you find Willy in 2018? Well, his native Ecuador certainly—7 tours to all parts of that very special country—as well as Chile and Northwestern Argentina.



After a short hiatus from guiding to help raise his three young children, **Jay VanderGaast** returned to a full schedule of tours the past few years, and we couldn't be happier—though as you can see from this photo of Jay in Papua New Guinea, a tour can sometimes turn into a busman's holiday for him. "Friendly, knowledgeable, and persistent" and "A great spotter who makes sure everyone sees the birds" (although in this photo, maybe not everyone). These are some of the things we hear from Jay's tours, along with "Jay is an excellent guide; helpful and very, very knowledgeable. He adapted to the needs of each participant." Next year Jay will be heading across the Pacific for two tours to Papua New Guinea, one of which also includes Australia, and a tour to Thailand. He'll have a couple of tours in Canada—to Alberta for wintering owls and Point Pelee for spring migration—and he'll head south to Jamaica, Costa Rica, and Brazil's Mouth of the Amazon.

We all react differently to seeing a new bird—but according to the author Margaret Atwood, seeing a Red-necked Crake while staying with Phil and Sue Gregory led to her naming a novel after that bird (*Oryx and Crake*). And while most of us don't go quite that far, participants on **Phil Gregory's** tours do celebrate often the fabulous birds he shows them, from Red-crowned Cranes and White-necked Rockfowl to Rufous-necked Hornbills and Long-tailed Ground-Rollers, all while appreciating Phil's "patience and attentiveness to the group's needs; Phil makes every effort to insure that all participants see the bird." Phil's 2018 schedule includes trips to Japan (those cranes), Cambodia, Ghana (rockfowl), Madagascar (ground-rollers), Mongolia (hornbills), and a new tour to Northeast India. That's Phil holding a reconstructed egg of Madagascar's extinct Elephant Bird at right.



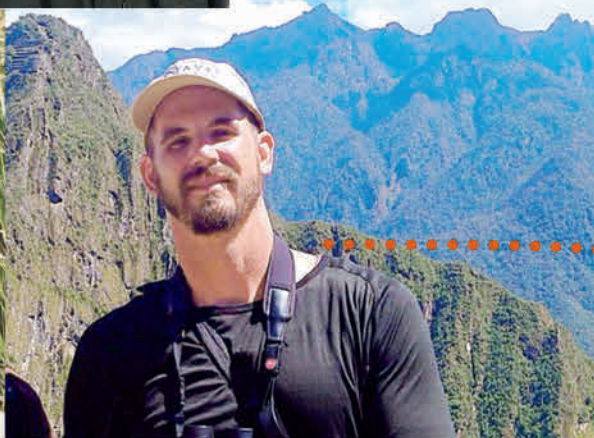


If you take a tour with **Megan Edwards Crewe** (here with Dave Stejskal and Jan Pierson), you'll find that many of the other participants will have traveled with her before. "I always look for Megan's tours," is a comment we hear a lot—maybe because as one participant new to her tours told us, "I thought Megan was a delight. After one conversation, you feel like you have known her for years." But along with her people skills, it's her birding skills that bring people back. "She's an excellent spotter and quick getting the birds in the scope," and "It's amazing how fast she can find a bird in the smallest window in the canopy." Next year Megan's schedule includes a new France tour to the Loire Valley, as well as her regular Camargue & Pyrenees tour and Classical Greece; Neotropical tours to Trinidad, Guyana, Belize, and Costa Rica; tours in Asia to Sri Lanka, Borneo, and Bhutan; and of course, Cape May.

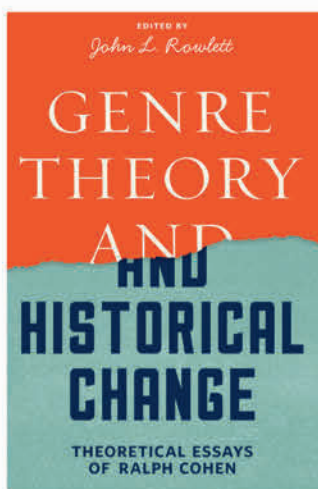
One of the things we hear regularly about **Chris Benesh** is how much participants learn from him, how skillful he is not just at finding the birds, but at describing their features and behavior—in other words, just how much he communicates about the birds he is showing you. The trick is, he also makes it a lot of fun. "Some of us were talking about him," writes a recent participant, "and we agreed that we'd need a thesaurus to come up with enough superlatives to describe him. He makes it look easy even though we know it's not. He's a good teacher, and he's also a very funny man—we laughed a lot." 2018 will find Chris in North America, with tours to Alaska, Texas, Newfoundland & Nova Scotia, California, and Arizona; in Panama and Mexico; and in Spain and Australia.



"Extremely patient, knowledgeable, considerate, had amazing sense of hearing, he made every effort to make sure everyone got to see the birds..." and "Cory has outstanding spotting and direction skills..." are the kinds of comments we've been hearing about **Cory Gregory** since he joined Field Guides in 2016. And there's more, "Friendly, good humored, and enthusiastic...it's easy to see he enjoys what he does and is eager to make sure everyone is having the best experience possible." Well, that sounds like a Field Guides guide to us and we're delighted to have Cory as part of our crew. 2018 will see him in Middle America with tours to Costa Rica and Mexico—and he'll sneak down to Colombia for the Santa Marta Escape; he'll be in North America for Colorado Grouse, Big Bend, Maine, Alaska, Newfoundland & Nova Scotia, and a new tour to Oregon, before he heads to Australia.



Since joining Field Guides ten years ago, **Jesse Fagan** has become a key member of our team—and a very popular one. As you'd expect, he's excellent in the field—"His field skills, bird knowledge, and overall tour management were all top notch..." and "He's such a fine guide in the field" are examples of some of what you write. But he's also a great traveling companion, or, as one participant on a recent tour with Jesse put it, "He's excellent at the dinner table..." which is, of course, important if you're spending a week or two with someone. Next year Jesse has a wide-ranging schedule: in Middle America—Panama and Honduras, where you can use his newly published *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America*; Colombia and Peru for three tours each and Brazil for one; Uganda and Morocco; and then a brief respite in the Bahamas.

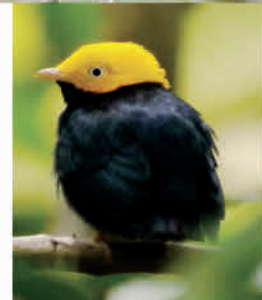


Amazonia—or Amazon.com?

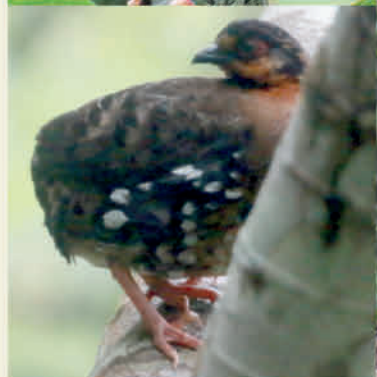
Those of you who have followed our Peppershrike's preoccupation with the subject of genre while on birding tours with him will be pleased to learn that his long-awaited collection of theoretical essays by literary scholar Ralph Cohen was released this month by the University of Virginia Press to widespread critical acclaim. Garry Hagberg, editor of the journal *Philosophy and Literature*, had this to say: "John Rowlett, both in his thoughtful and moving introduction and his exacting editing throughout this absorbing volume, has performed a great service to the entire world of literary scholarship. A volume of enduring interest and relevance."



Dan Lane and Jesse Fagan and their **Peru's Magnetic North** group reported a marvelous tour this last July, enjoying many of the area's birds—Rusty-tinged Antpittas in the open, several tyrannulets, close Johnson's Tody-Flycatcher, the rarely encountered Jelski's Black-Tyrant, the large and gawky Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, the fiery Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, the newly-described Varzea Thrush—as well as the two standouts pictured here, Long-whiskered Owllet and Marvelous Spatuletail (with 51 species of hummingbirds seen on the tour). Among the nearly forty tanager species seen was this heavenly Paradise Tanager with its remarkable combination of colors; and that's a Golden-headed Manakin at right. (Photos by participants David & Judy Smith and guide Jesse Fagan)



Borneo is at the top of many birders' wishlists, and a quick glance at the photos from Dave Stejskal's June tour give us a clue as to why. Rhinoceros Hornbill (middle) has one of the more striking bird profiles, even among the hornbills, of which 8 species were seen on the tour; providing some competition in the profile department are the pretty Blue-eared Kingfisher (top right) and Golden-naped Barbet (top left), which posed for this close portrait. Red-breasted Partridge (below the barbet) is a shy endemic that is not always seen—or seen this well; a pair of Buff-rumped Woodpeckers (you can see one disappearing into the nest hole) were among the 13 woodpecker species seen on the tour. (Photos by Participant Don Burlett and guide Dave Stejskal)



In June, Phil Gregory and his tour group visited the steppes, deserts, and boreal forests of **Mongolia** on our inaugural tour to this ancient country. A few of the sights they encountered—along with stunning landscapes and a traditional nomadic culture—include the birds pictured here. Mongolia is one of the best places to see the rare Saker Falcon (far left); Phil notes that the falconry trade has put pressure on the bird, with chicks fetching \$2500 in a country with a monthly wage less than \$100; to the right of the falcon, a White-winged Snowfinch and a majestic Steppe Eagle; and above, a White-naped Crane, rare in Mongolia and just about everywhere else. (Photos by participant Becky Hansen)

A selection of early 2018 tours with space still available:

JANUARY

- 6 Costa Rica: Birding the Edges I with Tom Johnson & Cory Gregory
- 14 Costa Rica: Birding the Edges II with Tom Johnson & Cory Gregory
- 20 Jewels of Ecuador I with Willy Perez
- 27 The Heart of Chile with Marcelo Padua

FEBRUARY

- 4 Panama's Canopy Tower with Chris Benesh
- 10 Cambodia with Phil Gregory & Doug Gochfeld
- 24 Colombia: Santa Marta Escape with Richard Webster
- 27 Borneo I with Dave Stejskal

MARCH

- 3 Brazil Nutshell with Marcelo Padua & Marcelo Barreiros
- 4 Southwestern Ecuador Specialties with Willy Perez
- 10 Costa Rica with Jay VanderGaast
- 17 Jewels of Ecuador II with Mitch Lysinger
- 31 Bahamas: Endemics & Kirtland's Warbler with Jesse Fagan

APRIL

- 5 Colorado Grouse I with Tom Johnson & Cory Gregory
- 7 Bhutan with Richard Webster & Megan Edwards Crewe
- 21 Texas Coast Migration Spectacle II with John Coons
- 21 Texas's Big Bend & Hill Country with Chris Benesh & Cory Gregory

MAY

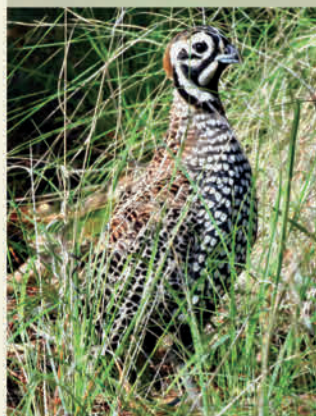
- 5 Spain with Chris Benesh & Godfried Schreur
- 5 Classical Greece with Megan Edwards Crewe
- 13 Spring in Cape May with Tom Johnson & Doug Gochfeld
- 19 Arizona: Birding the Border II with Dave Stejskal
- 19 Uganda: Shoenbill Endemics & Gorillas with Jesse Fagan
- 22 Pennsylvania's Warblers & More with Tom Johnson & Micah Riegner
- 26 Maine in Spring with Eric Hynes & Cory Gregory
- 31 Alaska I (Part One) with Chris Benesh & Doug Gochfeld

JUNE

- 7 Alaska I (Part Two) with Chris Benesh & Doug Gochfeld

See our website for complete information.

We offer two **Arizona: Birding the Border** tours, each with Arizona resident guides John Coons or Dave Stejskal. Dave's group is pictured here on their first afternoon in Madera Canyon where they began the tour with a big helping of owls, including this little Elf Owl, the smallest owl in the world—and though widespread in Arizona, it's rarely seen this well. Southeast Arizona is known for more than its owls—a variety of hummingbirds (the envy of us Easterners), Elegant Trogons, colorful tanagers, and Mexican vagrants and occasional breeders, like this very dapper Rufous-capped Warbler. (Photos by participant Herb Fechter)



Arizona's Second Spring is offered in late July/early August when the summer rains turn the desert green and keep temperatures low and bird activity high. Sightings on our two recent tours—with John Coons and Cory Gregory or with Chris Benesh—included good views of both the range-restricted Lucifer's Hummingbird and Montezuma Quail at left top and bottom; nice looks at Western Screech-Owls; and a beautiful tropical Tufted Flycatcher, a bird rarely encountered in the US. (Photos by participant Jeanette Shores and guides Chris Benesh & Cory Gregory)



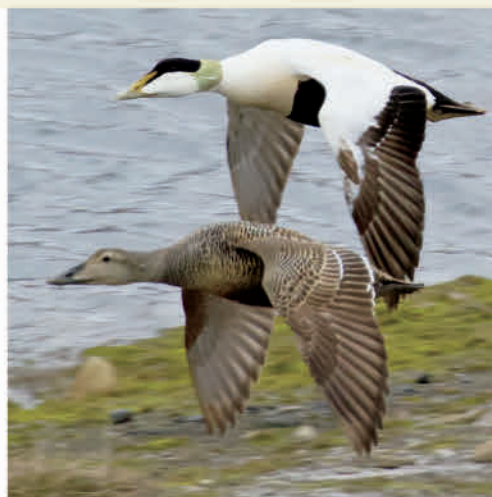
From Arizona to **Morocco** is something of a stretch, though both share mountains and deserts and a distinctive birdlife. Jesse Fagan reports that this year's tour to the country was one of the best he's had for birds, with large numbers of shorebirds, nearly a dozen larks, and most of the regional endemics including Northern Bald Ibis and this pretty Tristram's Warbler, top left. Moussier's Redstart, left, is another NW African endemic and a delight to see so well, as was the more subdued Atlas Flycatcher. (Photos by guide Jesse Fagan)

fresh from the field



Doug Gochfeld joined Tom Johnson this spring for the first run of Tom's new **Pennsylvania Warblers & More** tour. There were some very nice warblers seen by the group—29 species, in fact. Shown here are a flashy Blackburnian (left) caught landing in a conifer, a subtly marked Mourning, a target for many of the group so a particular thrill to see, and a migrant Wilson's. Upland Sandpiper, a long-distance migrant, was seen in a field—and in flight—with Henslow's Sparrows, Ruffed Grouse, and Pileated Woodpeckers. (Photos by guides Tom Johnson & Doug Gochfeld)

John Coons reports that the abundance of birdlife, Polar Bears, whales, walrus, and constant great scenery on his **Norwegian Arctic: Spitsbergen & The Svalbard Archipelago** tour last July made for an unforgettable trip to the High Arctic. Pictured here from the tour, a pair of Common Eiders take flight; an iconic Ivory Gull (top middle), a High Arctic breeder that even winters in the pack ice; a newly arrived Purple Sandpiper; and this noble Polar Bear that, as John describes, was first spotted lying contentedly on the ice until a Minke Whale surfaced nearby and the bear got up to investigate. (Photos by participant Ed Harper)



Summer in **Newfoundland & Nova Scotia** means many things, according to Cory Gregory, who joined Chris Benesh for our recent tour of two of Canada's Atlantic provinces, including lots of gannets—a few shown at right in the breeding colony at Cape St. Mary's. Other sights included this handsome Black-and-white Warbler among a dozen-and-a-half breeding warblers; a female Gray Seal perched atop a rock—looks like it might just roll off; and a tundra-dwelling Willow Ptarmigan that put on a great show for the group, even vocalizing on the wing. (Photos by participant Mona Gardner and guides Chris Benesh & Cory Gregory)



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Last spring, guides Chris Benesh and Godfried Schreur and their group—shown here beneath one of the *molinos* of the La Mancha region—teamed up for our **Spain: La Mancha, Coto Donana & Extremadura** tour, which combines birding and beautiful scenery. A few of the birds seen include Squacco Heron above at Donana; Black Stork, seen less frequently than the White Storks, whose nests dot the landscape; an appropriately named White-headed Duck; and a Great Reed Warbler singing its heart out. (Photos by participant Chuck Holliday and guide Chris Benesh)

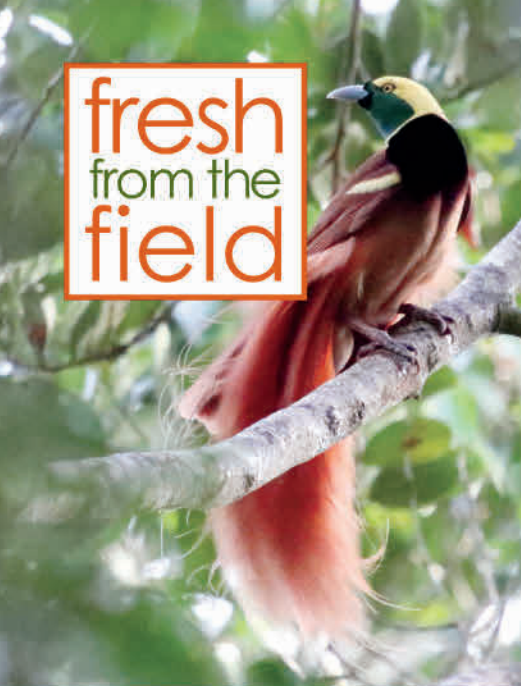


Nocturnal Curassow (above) was one of the highlights of Bret Whitney's recent **Brazil's Rio Roosevelt** tour. As Bret describes it, "Seeing the curassow was the kind of birding experience one absolutely will never forget! And then, discovering that we had been standing for 10 minutes in a bivouac of army ants, as the ants climbed our legs (and everything else) in the disorienting darkness, firmly cemented the memory for all of us!" —as you'd expect it to. You can see a bit of our lodge on the sandbar along the Rio Roosevelt. These little Sharp-tailed Tyrants, a specialty of the isolated grasslands of the region, put on quite a show, and Rufous Potoo, easier to find this year, was another trip highlight. (Photos by participant Valerie Gebert and guide Bret Whitney)



There are no army ants in Cape May, New Jersey, but from the photos here we can see that there are many great birds, and Tom Johnson and Doug Gochfeld had a good time showing them to their **Spring in Cape May** tour group. This Gull-billed Tern with a juicy frog in its bill (at left) looks as though he's found dinner, though the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron appears to still be looking. Seeing night-herons at their breeding colony was one of the highlights of the tour. There were warblers aplenty, 25 species of them, including this migrant Magnolia, and to top things off, gorgeous Red-headed Woodpeckers. (Photos by guides Tom Johnson & Doug Gochfeld)

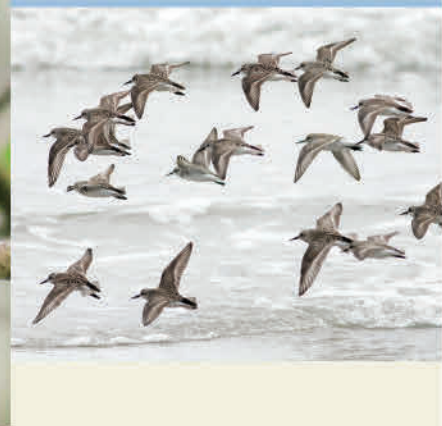
fresh from the field



Birds-of-paradise are both the rewards and the frustrations of a **Papua New Guinea** tour; from the looks of it, Jay VanderGaast, joined by Doug Gochfeld, reaped many rewards—and no doubt a few frustrations—on this year's tour. The King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise (at right) was a group favorite, mainly because of its amazing head plumes that can be more than twice the length of its body; Greater BoPs (at far right) provided a most memorable encounter, with five males in full-on display mode; and the perched Raggiana added to the overload. Of the 22 species of dove seen on the tour, the huge Southern Crowned-Pigeon above is probably the flashiest in what is a very fancy assortment of Columbids. (Photos by participant Myles McNally and guide Doug Gochfeld)



The ancient walled city of Carcassonne makes for a convenient picnic stop with a lovely view on our **France: Camargue & Pyrenees** tour—this year with Megan Edwards Crewe and Marcelo Padua on the first tour and Jay VanderGaast and Cory Gregory on the second. A few of the birds seen on this always popular trip included the Eurasian Hobby at top left and the Short-toed Snake-Eagle below it—this is a good tour for raptors, many of which are on their way south through the high passes of the Pyrenees—and this Alpine Accentor, which proved quite tame. (Photos by participant Bill Byers and guide Cory Gregory)



Eric Hynes—shown above at front right with Cory Gregory and participants—reports that this year's **Maine in Spring** tour will be remembered for many things: a wonderful group of birders, the highest species total to date for this tour, and a serious survey of lobster rolls. The birds shown here are enough to make most of us happy—point blank looks at Common Loon; Razorbill against a blue sky; a host of Semipalmated Sandpipers; a pretty Black-throated Blue Warbler among twenty warbler species on the tour. How to pick a favorite? This tour returns in May 2018, and Eric will have a new itinerary, **Maine in Fall**, coming in 2019. (Photos by participant Carla Bregman and guide Eric Hynes)

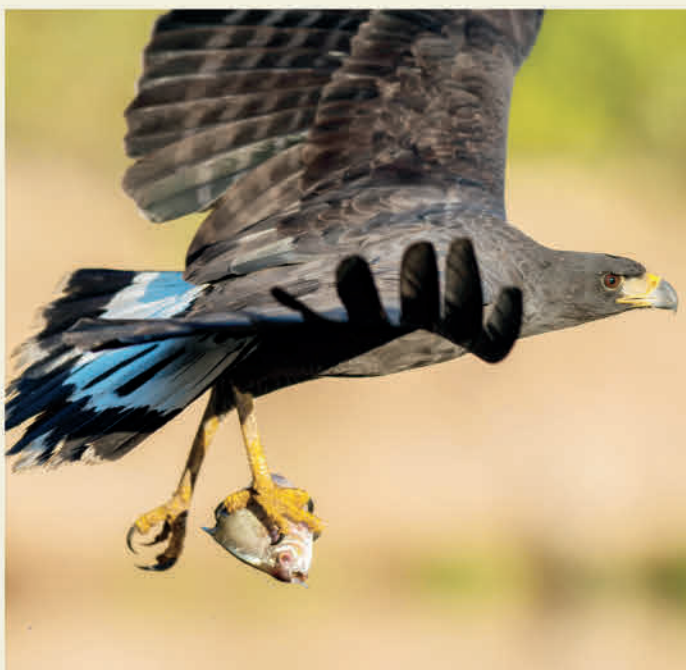
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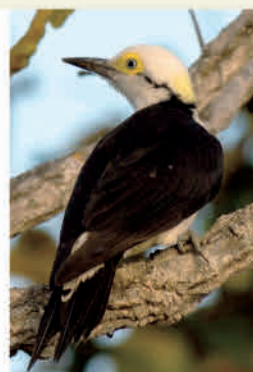
"We absorbed as much as we could of this magical island during our short stint," Eric Hynes (joined by Godfried Schreur) writes of his recent **Iceland** tour. In addition to the beauty, the history, and the delicious seafood, much of the magic is pictured here: from top left, a Black-legged Kittiwake with its chick; Black-tailed Godwit, which has to be one of the most beautiful shorebirds; an Arctic Tern fishing; Rock Ptarmigan (numerous this year, including cooperative males in display); and a Black Guillemot. (Photos by participants Doug Clarke & Don Taves and guide Eric Hynes)



There's a lot to see almost everywhere if you're looking for it, though it's true some places have more to see than others. California, for example, as evidenced by these shots from Chris Benesh's and Tom Johnson's two recent **Slice of California** tours: Black-footed Albatross, at left, seen on the pelagic out from Half Moon Bay—always a highlight of the tour; a pretty Black-throated Gray Warbler; Yellow-billed Magpie, a species endemic to California; and Long-billed Curlew, one of the many shorebirds we see along our route. (Photos by participants Doug Clarke & Karen Chiasson)



Pictured here are a few of the many birds seen on Marcelo Padua's recent **Rainforest & Savanna: Alta Floresta & the Pantanal, Brazil** tour, which combines stays in the pristine rainforest on the Rio Cristalino with the wilds of the Pantanal. At left, a Great Black Hawk showing a late-evening, bluish shadow on its tail, carrying a just-caught fish in its talons; to the right, a White Woodpecker, or maybe a mostly White Woodpecker, here showing off its yellow eye-patch; Spangled Cotinga, a brilliantly colored rainforest species; and Guira Cuckoo. (Photos by participant Tim Liguori)



fresh from the field



There was great birding in **Alaska** this year for both our tours (Tour I with Chris Benesh & Tom Johnson and Tour II with Megan Edwards Crewe & Doug Gochfeld). Among the many sights, from left: Bristle-thighed Curlews (above) displaying overhead or almost stumbled upon—and the unexpected bonus of running into a Rock Ptarmigan (for one group) on the way to the curlew; seeing Northern Fulmar on their nesting cliffs at St. Paul and watching their graceful flight along the cliff edges; being dazzled by Bluethroats atop shrubs; seeing Crested and Parakeet auklets perched on the same ledge; and stunning views of male Townsend's Warblers. (Photos by participants Tony Quezon & Steve Rannels and guide Doug Gochfeld)



Just a few of the mammals seen on Terry Stevenson's **East Africa Highlights** tour last July were Lion (a young male here), Leopard, and Cheetah two days running in the Serengeti and Black Rhino the very first day—with, of course, a whole bunch of others. Of the 429 bird species seen, it's hard to choose, but a few of them here: a tiny Pygmy Falcon that looks as though it may have just finished a meal; a regal Gray Crowned-Crane; a flock of endemic Fischer's Lovebirds visiting a water hole in the Serengeti; and a Rufous-naped Lark at the Ngorongoro Crater. (Photos by participants Jean Rigden & Mary Krentz)

This photo of Machu Picchu, from our second **Machu Picchu & Abra Malaga, Peru** tour with Jesse Fagan and Cory Gregory (Jesse guided the earlier tour as well), is interesting in that in addition to the ruins, it shows the terraces where food was grown. A few of the birds that grace the area or are found higher in the Andes include the Golden-naped Tanager at right and the Barred Fruiteater below it. The fruiteater showed up at lunch for one group. Junin Canastero (right of the tanager) and Parodi's Hemispingus are two Peruvian endemics found respectively in puna on the West Slope of Abra Malaga and in bamboo on the East Slope. (Photos by guides Jesse Fagan & Cory Gregory)



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Shown on this page, three tours to one of our favorite places to bird—Ecuador! We'll begin with our recent **Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge** tour with Mitch Lysinger. Hoatzin (at right) shows up a lot in Sacha photos—this strange-looking blue-faced bird is a classic of Amazonian swamps, and Mitch writes that he and his group enjoyed some comical moments with the birds. Opal-crowned Tanager (top left), along with its buddy Opal-rumped, was seen repeatedly and close from the towers at Sacha. Yellow-billed Jacamar, a specialty of hilly terra firme forests, was one of five jacamar species seen. And this Yellow-margined Flycatcher made its ID easier by calling and perching in the open. We've added a **second 2018 departure with Mitch, Jun 29-Jul 8**. Contact us to hold a space. (Photos by participant Nancy Barnhart and guide Mitch Lysinger)



One of the highlights for our **Galapagos** tours this year (one with Jesse Fagan and the other with Willy Perez) was watching Waved Albatrosses, at far right, in their courtship display, which according to Jesse, involves clacking, clucking, waddling, and dancing. The albatrosses nest almost exclusively in the Galapagos, so this is the best place to see them. The Lava Gull, below the albatross, is a rare gull endemic to the Galapagos that was also caught with its mouth open, revealing its scarlet mouth lining. The 150 or so individuals of the endemic Floreana (Charles) Mockingbird (top left) are now found only on two small islets off the coast of Floreana. Galapagos Hawk and Sharp-beaked Ground-Finch were also nice to see. The ground-finch is endemic to the island of Genovesa and will soon become Genovesa Ground-Finch. (Photos by participants David Stickney & Eric Dudley and guide Jesse Fagan)



Long-wattled Umbrellabird, (above right) is a bird of the Choco lowlands that was one of the main targets of Willy Perez's new **Cloudforests of Ecuador: All the Best of the Wild Northwest** tour, and as you can see, this stunningly weird bird with its single long wattle was seen very well, even displaying, by both groups. At upper right, Rufous-crowned Antpitta, a rare and lovely antpitta seen at Mashpi Shungo. And below the antpitta, a gorgeous Flame-faced Tanager at a feeder, one of just *tons* of tanagers seen on the tours. This smiling group has no doubt been seeing some great birds with Willy, at left. (Photos by participant Carl Manning, guide Willy Perez, and tour manager Mandy Mantzel)

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9433 Bee Cave Road / Building 1, Suite 150 / Austin, TX 78733
800-728-4953 / 512-263-7295 / fax: 512-263-0117
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