

JULY 2019



fieldguides®

Birding Tours

Summer is at its midpoint in the northern hemisphere. Memories of spring migrants recede slowly and fondly, and in the States, the Memorial Day cookouts, June weddings and graduations, and July 4th festivities have run their jubilant courses. Songs of our neighbors, whether orioles and vireos, or loons and snipe, are less frequent, replaced gradually by rising choruses of cicadas and crickets. As the shorebirds materialize on their southward treks, we birders, too, start setting our sights on new destinations to explore.

Our Scheduling Committee has been hard at work on the upcoming schedule, and since our spring newsletter, we've added three new itineraries we know will be popular: **Great Rivers of the Amazon III: Mamiraua, Amana & Tefe** (Dec 1-14, 2020), **Uruguay: Birds & Wines in the Land of the Gauchos** (Nov 28-Dec 10, 2020), and **Amazing Angola** (coming in May 2021). But perhaps these destinations are still a few years away for you, and closer to home might fit the bill. After all, since our founding we've always encouraged fellow birders to take a thoughtful approach to their birding lives and travel: begin by learning the birds in your own region first, then gradually work farther afield, moving toward the next region or continent as knowledge, skills, and appreciation ripen. What better time to begin than this fall?

Our short adventures to **Louisiana** (Nov 7-11) and **Cape May** (week-long tours starting Sep 21 & 29) still have a few spaces left, and both offer marvelous opportunities to see a broad cross-section of local species and migrants, plus specialties such as Yellow Rail or Saltmarsh Sparrow. Out west, our energetic **California** (Sep 10-19) and **Oregon** (Sep 4-14) tours travel from coastal lowlands to the high

sierra, recording everything from western sapsuckers to Pacific seabirds. If you're thinking of more distant destinations, in Europe our popular fall tour to the south of **France** likewise combines the best of coastal and montane birding, starting in the famed Camargue wetlands and finishing in the empyrean Pyrenees during a pivotal period for migration (departures Aug 31 and Sep 4). For birders inclined toward points farther south, we have room on autumn tours to **Brazil** (Aug, Sep, Oct), to **Peru** (Oct), and to **Colombia, Mexico, Chile, and Jamaica** (Nov). Check page 11 and our website for details.

This newsletter includes an **InFocus** feature on our 18 departures to Middle America—Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean islands—to help orient you to the heart and soul of each tour. Although our South America offerings run year-round, those in Middle America are limited to December through March, a time when many of us slip a short distance away toward warmer climes. Right now is an optimal time to think about winter plans, before flights and tour spaces become booked up. Does spending Christmas in Costa Rica or New Year's in Trinidad or Panama sound like fun? Well, with our festive guides (and those fabulous tropical birds), it will be!



Rancho Naturalista, Costa Rica (Daphne Gemmill), Swallow-tailed Kite (Doug Clarke), Emerald Toucanet (Reg David), Cloud-forest Pygmy-Owl (Ned Brinkley).

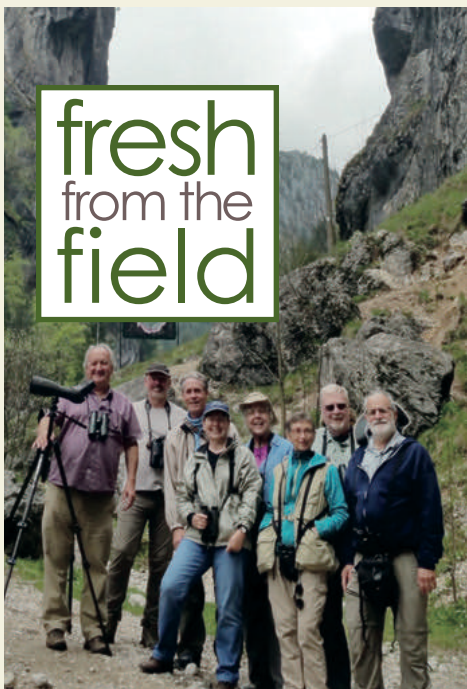
Our Peeps

At Field Guides, we know that our tours will encounter a great variety of birds and wildlife (after a few decades, we stopped fretting!). We believe our deepest work is to sustain caring, constructive relationships: among office staff, field guides, tour participants, and the many people around the world who contribute to the smooth operation of our tours. Here are a few snapshots of people who make what we do not just possible but truly pleasurable. And we see from your wonderful photos—with thumbs up and raised cups—that you all appreciate them as much as we do. Three cheers for all our peeps, all around the world!

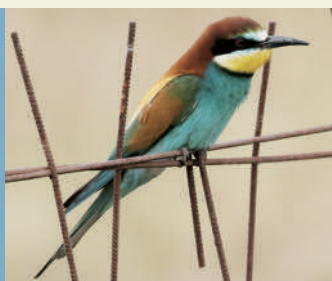


Gerard Ravoajanahary (Madagascar), Anavaj "Wat" Chaimongkol (Thailand), Dwayne Swaby & Raymond Condappa with Jay VanderGaast (Jamaica), Ron Allcock with Megan Edwards Crewe (Guyana), Zet Freiburghaus (Antarctica), cheers for the Jaguar! (Brazil), Andrew Amankwaa (Ghana), Diego Cueva with Jesse Fagan and Marcelo Padua (Colombia), Uditha Hettige (Sri Lanka), Captain Mika Appel (Antarctica), hooray for White-bellied Heron! (Bhutan), Uthai Treesucon (Thailand), celebratory tea on the Menangkul River with Hamit Suban and Megan (Borneo), Kathleen Rodell with new buddy (Peru), Cory Gregory encouraging a new birder (Colombia), Lebo & Sangay (Bhutan, where there are no surnames!).

fresh from the field



The **Hungary & Romania** tour with guides Terry Stevenson and Lajos Nemeth-Boka was a smashing success this year, taking in the Danube Delta, Carpathian Mountains, and captivating highlands and wetlands at the height of spring. In addition to a superlative 18 Great Bustards displaying at Kiskunsag, Pallas's Gulls and many other waterbirds on the Danube from a "floating hotel," and a trio of Wallcreepers waltzing around the **Bicaz Gorge**, the group enjoyed close studies of **Black Woodpecker** at the nest, fishing **Common Kingfisher**, and singing **Ortolan Bunting**. A visit to the imposing Castelul Bran ("Dracula's Castle") in Transylvania made a good birding stop, and some participants this year arranged with us for cultural visits to Bucharest and Budapest before or after the tour. (Photos by participant Joshua Horner.)



Our **Spain** tour in springtime is a perennial favorite. Guides Chris Benesh and Godfried Schreur report a beautiful trip, remarkable butterflies, wildflowers, birds, and mammals, including a fine encounter with several **Spanish Ibex** (here an adult male) and fancy reptiles such as this **Iberian Emerald Lizard**. The wetlands of La Mancha and the Coto Doñana trembled with thousands of shorebirds and wading birds, among them plenty of Greater Flamingos, and travel through the stark Extremadura steppe produced grassland species like this **European Bee-eater**, this **Little Bustard**, and twenty raptor species, including **Black Kite** (here one in the south, attacked by a brave **Iberian Magpie**). (Photos by participants Barry Tillman and Leslie Flint and guide Chris Benesh.)



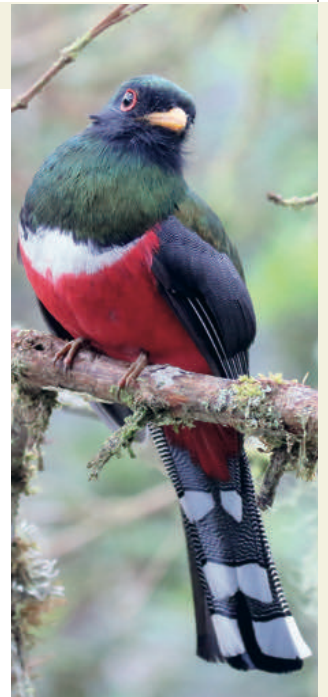
Tom Johnson was pleased to see that **Puerto Rico** has begun to recover well from the impact of Hurricane Maria and pleased to report that the birding this year was splendid. Other than the Puerto Rican Parrot (whose stronghold is temporarily closed), all of the island's endemics, plus West Indian beauties like Antillean Euphonia and Green-throated Carib, put in memorable appearances, as did a flock of Masked Ducks. Participants especially enjoyed these displaying, courting **White-tailed Tropicbirds** at Cabo Rojo, the inquisitive **Puerto Rican Screech-Owl** in the Luquillo Mountains (related to Flammulated Owl, thus maybe not a screech-owl), and a quizzical **Puerto Rican Tody**. Identification of the lizard captured by this proud *caribaeorum* **American Kestrel**, however, has remained elusive! Tom's already looking forward to returning to the isle next year (Mar 15-21), this time with Cory Gregory co-leading. (Photos by guide Tom Johnson.)

Check our website for 2020 dates! 3

fresh from the field



Jewels of Ecuador is a well-named tour! Guide Willy Perez had a tough time singling out highlights among so many great birds. Was it the Ocellated Tapaculo or White-throated Screech-Owl at Yanacocha? The White-necked Parakeet at Copalinga, or Red-faced Parrots at Washapamba? Or maybe the Andean Potoo at Guango? Surely, the lek full of displaying Andean Cocks-of-the-rock is worth a mention! But in the end, the visit to Papallacta Pass with Giant Conebill, Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe, Paramo Tapaculo, and a spectacular Spectacled Bear took the prize, Willy—right? Here, a male **Masked Trogon**, a duo of **Chestnut-breasted Coronets**, and a quorum of **Ochre-breasted Antpittas** deliberate the Bird (Bear?) of the Trip. The jury is still out. (Photos by participant Bill Byers.)



Although Great Mynas are rather common, it's not every day you see one sing from the back of a **Great Indian Rhinoceros**, as participants did on this year's **Northeast India** tour. In fact, the group saw 12 rhinos together at a mud wallow, "a sight right out of the Pleistocene!" says guide Phil Gregory. This region is full of incredible birds, with Phil noting "a nest of the rare Pallas's Fish-Eagle, Blue-naped Pitta, Greater Adjutant, White-winged Duck, River Tern, Purple and Green cochoas, Scarlet Finch, Bugun Liocichla, Spotted Elachura, and Black-breasted Wren-Babbler," in addition to the lovely **Blue-bearded Bee-eater**, **Green-tailed Sunbird**, **Black-throated Parrotbill**, and the impossibly blue **Grandala**. Oh! And a Tiger! (Photos by guides Phil Gregory & Saurabh Sawant.)



Reading the itinerary for **Beyond the Ports of Portugal** gives goosebumps. Marcelo Padua (here demonstrating port appreciation) crafted the tour to take in the finest wineries, landscapes, and bird hotspots of this peaceful, picturesque country. Birding began in the north, in the fair **Douro Valley**, then moved southward into the Guadiana Valley and the rolling Castro Verde plains, home to bustards, sandgrouse, larks, and other open-country species like Great Spotted Cuckoo and this **Eurasian Hoopoe**. Balancing the birding were tours of wineries and vineyards, with tasting of wines new to most—from grapes with names like Antão Vaz, Alvarinho, and Lourenço. Around Lisbon, wetlands and cork oak woodlands held many newly arrived species, like this **Black-winged Stilt**. (Photos by participants Wolfgang Demisch and Don Taves.)





Both of the winter's **Jamaica** tours, guided by Chris Benesh and Eric Hynes with Dwayne Swaby as local guide, had fine encounters with all 27 island endemics, among them the **Jamaican Woodpecker**, **Arrowhead Warbler**, and **Jamaican Oriole** shown here, plus several endemic subspecies, such as this dozing *jamaicensis* **Northern Potoo**. The guides recount: "Sampling Blue Mountain coffee at a tiny plantation in Hardwar Gap, drinking coconut water from freshly harvested coconuts, and trying out some authentic jerk food (with a cold Red Stripe beer for some) made us appreciate Jamaica all the more!" To cap the week, the tours visited Rocklands Bird Sanctuary, where **Red-billed Streamertails** and Jamaican Mangos perched on fingers to feed! (Photos by guide Chris Benesh and participant Greg Griffith.)



Phil Gregory's **Ghana** tour enjoyed good weather and great wildlife watching, including these young male **African Bush Elephants** that combined bath time and play time. The trek to see the amazing White-necked Rockfowl at its cave furnished a lifer for all, and 3 of the bizarre **Nkulengu Rail**, its name an approximation of its haunting call, were found on a night roost! Phil was thrilled to report 3 Egyptian Plovers, White-crested Tiger-Heron, African Finfoot, a displaying Standard-winged Nightjar, Yellow-footed Honeyguide, Gambaga Flycatcher, and Yellow-casqued Hornbill among other high points. More widespread African birds, such as the **Red-necked Falcon**, **Red-throated Bee-eater**, and **Red-cheeked Cordonbleu** here, enlivened every day afield. (Photos by participant Gregg Recer.)



This year's **Southwestern Ecuador Specialties** tour, guided by Willy Perez, began with leks of displaying Club-winged and White-bearded manakins and finished with a pair of the recently rediscovered Pale-headed Brush-Finch! In between, the images here—**Long-wattled Umbrellabird**, **Pinnated Bittern**, **Green Thorntails**, and **Crescent-faced Antpitta**—reveal but the tip of the avian iceberg. In the bird-soaked Tumbes and Chocó eco-regions, even veteran participants had that kid-in-a-candy-store experience, with special birds in foothills like Jocotoco and Watkins's antpittas, El Oro Parakeet, Black-and-white Tanager, and Gray-capped Cuckoo and with wonders such as Rainbow Starfrontlet and Black-crested Tit-Tyrant in higher elevations. (Photos by guide Willy Perez and participants David & Judy Smith and Brian Armstrong.)

Check our website for 2020 dates! 5

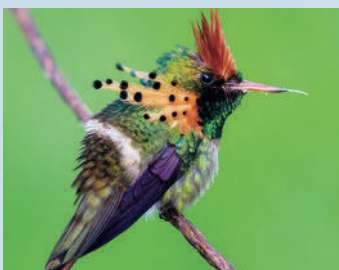
InFocus

Middle America

Just a few hours from air hubs in the United States, the many birding destinations for the holidays and for escapes from winter weather. We offer both **shorter** (10-16 days) that are more mobile affairs, typically with longer walks and the best of local culinary offerings. We are also happy to arrange private tours

For those with limited time, but a great desire to see some beautiful birds and landscapes, and even ancient archaeological sites, the Panama Canal, artisanal villages, or working coffee fincas, we welcome all—first-timers and veterans alike—on our departures to places you’ve already heard so much about and really should visit. Most of these tours combine lowland and highland birding, and all work well for people who prefer shorter walks. “Lite” birders often join their birding spouses.

SHORTER & MORE RELAXED



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

From comfy Asa Wright Nature Centre (fine birding from the veranda), we venture in search of Bearded Bellbirds sounding off over the forest, Oilbirds peering at us in their cave, Scarlet Ibis flocks in mangrove swamps, and tropicbirds at the nest. An assortment of motmots, jacamars, toucans, woodcreepers, antbirds, and manakins makes this a grand introduction to tropical birds.



BELIZE

Based near Mayan ruins at Lamanai Outpost Lodge, then at Hidden Valley Inn on Mountain Pine Ridge, we visit habitats from scrub to highland forests in search of more than 200 species, among them New World pearls like Jabiru, Agami Heron, Sungrebe, King Vulture, the rare Orange-breasted Falcon, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, White-whiskered Puffbird, Gartered Trogon, Tody Motmot, and Black Catbird.



OAXACA

The Valley of Oaxaca is home to a delicious mash-up of Mexican cuisines—and to remarkable bird diversity. Flashy Red Warbler, Orange-breasted Bunting, and Dwarf Jay vie for top honors with Lesser Roadrunner, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, and Fulvous Owl. Pre-Columbian ruins, a rug-weaving demonstration, a Zapotec meal, and a visit the world’s stoutest tree enrich our days in the field.



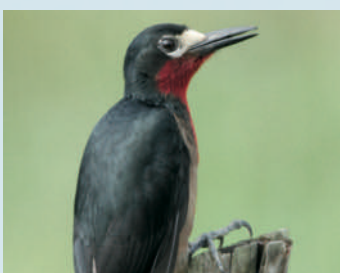
HOLIDAY COSTA RICA

Rancho Naturalista, in the verdant Talamanca Mountains, is among the world’s best naturalist lodges. In the private nature reserve, special birds like Snowcap, Tawny-chested Flycatcher, and White-crowned Manakin brighten our hikes, and we make excursions into Tapanti National Park and stunning Irazu Volcano National Park, home to Resplendent Quetzal and Fiery-throated Hummingbird.



JAMAICA

Home to half of the island’s endemic birds, Green Castle Estate serves as cozy base for our explorations of the Blue Mountains, John Crow Mountains, and Cockpit Country, looking for gems like Crested Quail-Dove, Orangequit, and Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo (and fine Blue Mountain coffee!). With patience, a Red-billed Streamertail, a spectacular hummingbird, may well perch on your fingertip to feed!



PUERTO RICO

Marshlands and montane woodlands, beaches and dry forests make for a potpourri of Antillean birding within the United States. In just a week, we see a fair swath of the island, seeking out such marvels as Key West Quail-Dove, Elf-in-woods Warbler, Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo, Green Mango, West Indian Whistling-Duck, and the endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird.



BAHAMAS

On visits to Abaco, Eleuthera, and Andros, we stroll quiet pinewoods and coppice looking for Bahama Woodstar, Great Lizard-Cuckoo, Loggerhead Kingbird, the rare Bahama Oriole, and Cuban Parrot. A host of wintering warblers, including Kirtland’s Warbler, and enchanting West Indian butterflies round out this refreshing respite of roseate beaches, seafood delicacies, and Kalik beer.



CANOPY TOWER & LODGE

Canopy Tower, in lowland forest, and Canopy Lodge, at the foot of Cerro Gaital, set the standard for ecotourism. Our combined tour here records nearly a third of Panama’s 996 species, among them such beauties as Blue Cotinga, Green Shrike-Vireo, Spectacled Owl, Sunbittern, and Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo. A visit to the Panama Canal is included in all three itineraries here.

nations of Middle America—Mexico, Central America, and Caribbean islands—make ideal getaway places for **shorter tours** (5-10 days) that are relatively relaxed in pace, with fewer changes of lodgings, and **longer tours** with more lodgings. All tour groups stay in comfortable, sometimes elegant lodgings, and we often sample the local cuisine for your group of friends or bird club, for groups of 6 or more people. Contact our office for details.

Many of our tour participants who have already visited Middle America long to return for longer stays and deeper explorations. We are delighted to offer nine departures that fit the bill, whether you're looking for a bit more in-depth and specialized birding, more remote locations, or more invigorating walks—or all of the above. On most of these tours, there are plenty of days with shorter walks, too, especially on the Yucatan Peninsula and Central Mexico & Baja tours.

LONGER & MORE ENERGETIC



COSTA RICA: THE CLASSIC

On this quest from the Caribbean up to the paramo of the Talamanca Mountains and down to the Pacific, some 500 species are likely, among them icons like Great Green Macaw, Snowy Cotinga, Flame-throated Warbler, Orange-collared Manakin, Fiery-billed Aracari, and Three-wattled Bellbird, all in deservedly world-famous sites: Cerro de la Muerte, Monteverde, La Selva, Braulio Carrillo, Carara.



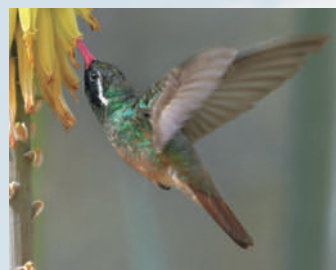
COSTA RICA: THE EDGES

Our adventuresome Edge tour (in 2 parts) revels in bird-rich borderlands with specialties like Turquoise Cotinga, Charming Hummingbird, Baird's Trogon, and White-crested Coquette in the south; Wrenthrush, Prong-billed Barbet, Nicaraguan Grackle, Keel-billed Motmot, and Yellow-breasted Crake in the north. On both parts, we lodge in comfort, in locations abounding in birdlife and steeped in history.



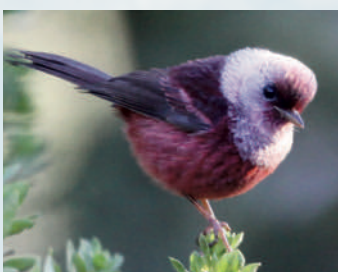
WESTERN PANAMA

Rainforest meets coral reef on the island of Bastimento, where we begin birding, with eyes and ears open for Black-and-white Owl, Keel-billed Toucan, Golden-collared Manakin, and Nicaraguan Seed-Finch. In the Chiriqui highlands, we take equally splendid lodging on Mount Totumas, home to Black Guan, Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher, Streak-breasted Treehunter, and Three-wattled Bellbird.



CENTRAL MEXICO & BAJA

Among Mexico's true natural wonders, gatherings of Monarch butterflies and Gray Whales bookend this bold tour, from the Sierra Chincua, where Monarchs cloak the trees, through Tepozteco National Park and the ruins of Xochicalco, with Bumblebee Hummingbird and Black-chested Sparrow, and on to Baja, where intimate encounters with Gray Whales and Whale Sharks may change a person forever.



GUATEMALA

Mayan temples, dramatic volcanic landscapes, sublime coffee: Guatemala is also blessed with birds like Pink-headed Warbler, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Resplendent Quetzal, Azure-rumped Tanager, and a host of hummingbirds. Lake Atitlán and colonial Antigua offer fine birding, and an extension to Tikal holds the chance to see Orange-breasted Falcon and Ocellated Turkey.



LESSER ANTILLES

Our Lesser Antilles getaway island-hops across this archipelago, each hop bringing a new mélange of Caribbean birds, cuisines, and cultures, usually in breathtaking settings. In addition to jewels like Whistling Warbler, Imperial Parrot, Bridled Quail-Dove, Blue-headed Hummingbird, Guadeloupe Woodpecker, and Montserrat Oriole, we often cross paths with a few trans-Atlantic vagrants!



YUCATAN PENINSULA

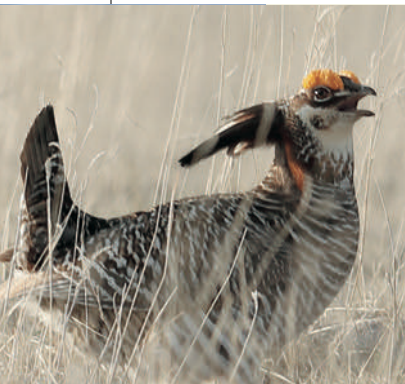
The magnificent Mayan temples and pyramids of Coba, Chichen Itza, and Uxmal brim with birdlife: Yucatan Jay, Orange Oriole, Ruddy Crake, and Turquoise-browed Motmot enrich visits to these ruins. Black-throated Bobwhite, Mexican Shearwater, and a huge flock of American Flamingos shape our itinerary to the west, while charming Cozumel Island adds an endemic vireo and hummingbird.



CANOPY CAMP, PANAMA

The new Canopy Camp features stylish, elevated tents with private bath, a new level in comfort for the rugged Darién region. Sought-after species here include Dusky-backed Jacamar, Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Double-banded Graytail, Golden-headed Manakin, Orange-crowned Oriole, and Black Oropendola. Nests of Crested Eagle and Harpy Eagle have been wondrous additions in recent years.

fresh from the field

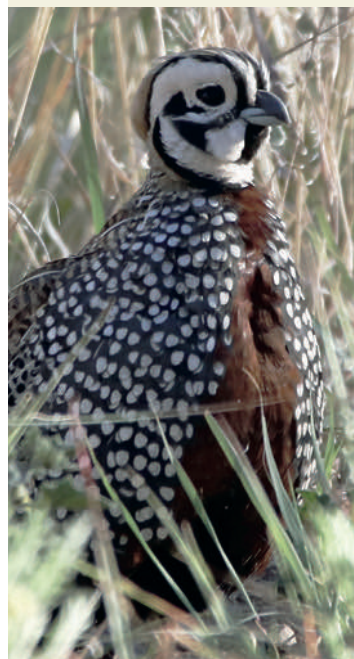
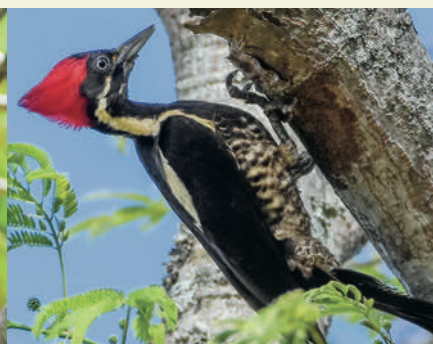


Colorado in early spring is the place to witness some of North America's premier wildlife spectacles: the courtship rituals of five grouse species that perform elaborate communal displays. Early mornings at the leks of **Greater Prairie-Chicken** (here eyeing an airborne rival), Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Gunnison Sage-Grouse, and Greater Sage-Grouse form the winding route of the **Colorado Grouse** tour, which gets underway in western

Kansas now. On both tours, guides Tom Johnson, Doug Gochfeld, Cory Gregory, and Ned Brinkley said participants raved about classics like Mountain Plover, Black Rosy-Finch, McCown's Longspur, Dusky Grouse, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, **Mountain Bluebird**, and **Clark's Nutcracker**, plus those big mammals—Moose, Elk, and American Bison. (Photos by participant Scott Harvell and guides Cory Gregory and Doug Gochfeld.)



A happy Jay VanderGaast returned to guide the classic **Costa Rica** tour in March. Jay worked at Rancho Naturalista for 6 years, and his old friends, avian and human alike, lined up to greet him! Is there a country more perfectly suited for birding? These images of **Collared Aracari**, **Lesson's Motmot**, **Streak-chested Antpitta**, and **Lineated Woodpecker** hint at the kaleidoscope of birdlife, notably "more Great Green Macaws than I've ever seen," a showy Snowy Cotinga, Pied Puffbirds hanging out with a sloth, nesting Sunbitterns with chicks, Resplendent Quetzals excavating a nest, strutting Black Guans, a sneaky Wrenthrush, Fiery-throated Hummingbirds at a cool restaurant, and a vocal Three-wattled Bellbird to close the tour. Jay notes, too: "We also saw some fine reptiles and amphibians, like Strawberry Poison Dart Frog and Cloudy Snail-eater!" (Photographs by participants Jay Pruett and Eric Dudley.)



Cory Gregory guided **Arizona Nightbirds** and **Arizona: Birding the Border** tours back to back this spring, with wonderful news from both. First-time visitors stood in awe of southeastern Arizona's beauty, as here in **Cave Creek Canyon** of the Chiricahua Mountains, where both tours explored, also visiting the lovely Santa Rita and Huachuca ranges. As photos of eye-level **Flammulated Owl**, arm's-length **Montezuma Quail**, monarchical **Buff-collared Nightjar**, and cheery **Painted Redstart** attest, this part of the United States is birdy! In fact, no place in the United States has a greater variety of breeding birds, and, as Cory reminds us, nowhere else has Elegant Trogon and Five-striped Sparrow! (Photos by participants Bill Parkin and Fred Dalbey and by guide Cory Gregory.)





A birding pilgrimage to take in Black-capped Vireo and Golden-

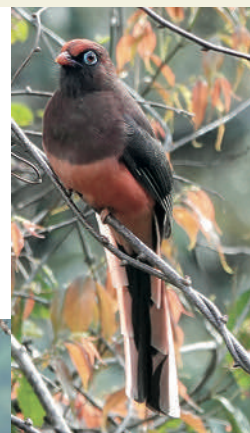
cheeked Warbler—and across the Pecos River in search of Colima Warbler—is the origin of the **Texas's Big Bend & Hill Country** tour. Micah Riegner, guiding with Chris Benesh, reports that the "birding was rich and rewarding," with those Texas specials immensely enjoyed, plus nifty bonuses like Morelet's Seedeater, Short-tailed Hawk, Slate-throated Redstart, and Tropical Parula. Smartly plumaged Black-headed Grosbeak, **Scott's Oriole**, and **Vermilion Flycatcher** added panache along the way. The **Golden-cheeked Warblers** at Lost Maples State Natural Area played hard to get, but this male at last put on a show, mobbing a snake! (Photos by participants Lisa Spellman and Dixie Sommers and guide Micah Riegner.)



A fetching **Bahama Woodstar** at Levy Nature Preserve, a **Kirtland's Warbler** and a **Great Lizard-Cuckoo** at Governor's Harbour, and a **Cuban Parrot** at Bahama Palm Shores were among many fond moments on the **Bahamas** tour. Guide Jesse Fagan loves this annual excursion, a quick tour that takes in key habitats on Eleuthera, Great Abaco, and Andros islands. In addition to endemic species like the eponymous Bahama Oriole, Swallow, Yellowthroat, Woodstar, and Warbler, our group enjoyed West Indian Woodpecker, Cuban Emerald, Olive-capped Warbler, Western Stripe-headed Tanager, Red-legged Thrush, and Greater Antillean-Bullfinch, along with a nice variety of wintering warblers, with Palm, Cape May, Black-throated Green, and Northern Parula all in one tree during breakfast. (Photos by guide Jesse Fagan.)

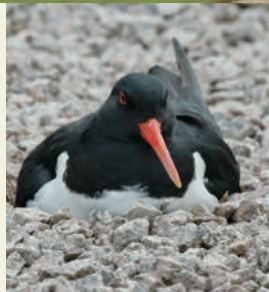


A dream tour to a fascinating kingdom, **Bhutan** exceeded expectations again this year, with **Ward's Trogon** and **Great Hornbill** here showcasing just two of the 342 species recorded. Guide Megan Edwards Crewe and a fine local support crew led the troops through gloriously wild country, with prizes like Ibisbill, Beautiful Nuthatch, the critically endangered White-bellied Heron, Himalayan Monal, and Fire-tailed Myzornis much appreciated, and visits to the amazing dzongs of Punakha, Drugyel, and Trongsa punctuating the birding perfectly. Megan writes of the spectacular weather that permitted views of high Himalayan peaks, except for "the dusting of snow we had on Chele La, against which the Blood Pheasants glowed like jewels on velvet." (Photos by participants Margaret Fritze, Jonathan Newman, and Michael Boss.)

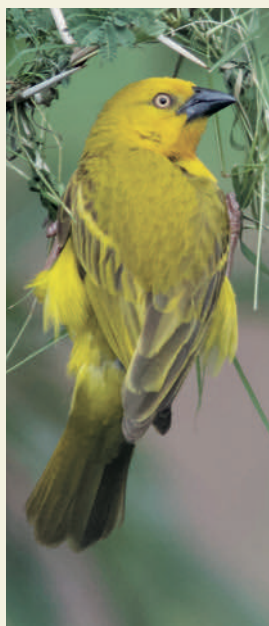


Check our website for 2020 dates! 9

fresh from the field



Birds of Britain returned to our schedule, guided by ex-pats Megan Edwards Crewe and Willy Perez. In this very British photo, the group leaves Blickling Hall after watching a Barn Owl bring a mouse to the nest. Nesting birds seemed to be everywhere, with a Eurasian Thick-knee pair shepherding two chicks, a Bearded Reedling feeding fledglings, and this **Eurasian Oystercatcher** still on eggs. Birdsong, as from this ebullient **Sedge Warbler**, greeted the group each morning. Other special species like Common Nightingale, Eurasian Dotterel, Dartford Warbler, Temminck's Stint, and Eurasian Stonechat put in cameo appearances along the way. In a moment of guide grandeur, Willy donned the helmet of Anglo-Saxon king Rædwald! (Photos by participants Jeanette Shores and Ed LeGrand and guide Willy Perez.)



Nairobi National Park. Kilimanjaro. Ngorongoro Crater. Serengeti. Tarangire. Lake Nakuru. Kakamega Forest. Great Rift Valley. Mount Kenya. **East African Highlights** is verily the "grand tour" of this region. Veteran guide Terry Stevenson writes of vast herds of wildebeest, gazelle, and zebra, prides of lion, towers of giraffe (here with **Yellow-billed Oxpeckers**), Black Rhinoceroses, Leopards, Cheetahs, and this rare **Caracal**. And yes, birds! How does one play favorites on a tour of 450+ species, among them White-bellied Go-away-bird, Secretarybird, Yellow-collared Lovebird, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Black-headed Gonolek, Kori Bustard, Great Blue Turaco, White-spotted Flufftail, and 21 raptors, from Pygmy Falcon to Crowned Eagle? Here, a **Holub's Golden Weaver** weaves a nest, while a regal **Bateleur** takes a rest. (Photos by participant Ken Havard.)



Guide Dave Stejskal relished his return to the **Belize** tour, where his group here is all smiles after a sighting of Orange-breasted Falcon at Thousand Foot Falls. In this Mountain Pine Ridge area, they also found 18 King Vultures, a Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle, a close White Hawk, and a cooperative Black-throated Shrike-Tanager. In the lower elevations, at Lamanai and Irish Creek, a Jabiru at the nest, an Agami Heron, a **Russet-naped Wood-Rail**, an Ornate Hawk-Eagle, two White-whiskered Puffbirds, a pair of **Tody Motmots**, and this exuberant **Yellow-throated Euphonia**. Wintering and migrant birds like Acadian Flycatcher, Swainson's Warbler, and Upland Sandpiper kept binoculars busy, as did fancy mammals like Yucatan Howler Monkey, Kinkajou, Paca, and Neotropical Otter. (Photos by participant Doug Clarke.)



Meet Micah!



Micah Riegner joined Field Guides full-time just this year, after guiding with Bret Whitney, John Coons, Chris Benesh, Dan Lane, and Tom Johnson in 2017-2018. On those tours, the participants (and fellow guides!) reported being delighted with his many contributions and his upbeat spirit. Micah seems tailor-made to become a Field Guide. As a youngster, he traveled with his parents in

Mexico and Costa Rica on college field courses, learning Spanish from his mother and a great deal about birds and tropical ecology from his father. In college, he realized his most abiding passion was for the Neotropical avifauna, and he worked as a guide and field assistant annually in Brazil, where he was fascinated by mixed-species flocks—and particularly by the woodcreepers, which became the subject of his Master's thesis at Prescott College. On islands in the Rio Negro near Manaus, Micah studied Straight-billed, Striped, and Zimmer's woodcreepers (all three often present among large mixed flocks), specifically how they foraged and what they ate. Dr. Mario Cohn-Haft, known to many friends of Field Guides, was Micah's primary advisor. Micah also confesses a fondness for antbirds in Amazonia, a predilection shared by many of us in the company!

Among Micah's many interests are mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. He has guided mammal tours, in fact, and on a private mammal tour later this year he'll be looking for obscure species such as the recently discovered Dwarf Marmoset of Brazil's Rio Aripuanã. When not guiding,

Micah often travels his native Arizona with birding and herpetologist friends in search of birds, snakes, and lizards. He also makes several scouting trips per year into new parts of Brazil, continuing his study of woodcreepers informally. He and mentor/buddy Bret Whitney sometimes join forces in outings to such places, some never visited by tours (or even by ornithologists). In the field, he's keen to learn as much as he can about every bird he sees, and to that end, he has become an accomplished watercolorist (his woodcreepers here below). He sees his artwork in a relationship of synergy with field work, each enriching the other as a means to know birds more intimately. Fortunately, he's been able to learn from some talented artists like master bird illustrator Larry McQueen and the inimitable Fiona Reid, a mammalogist friend of the family who wrote and illustrated the premier guides to American mammals. In spare time, Micah works to improve his Portuguese, enjoys experimenting with Mexican and Southeast Asian cuisines, and dreams up new itineraries to wild spaces of Brazil, Bolivia, and beyond. He'll be making his second foray to the Philippines this year (and we can't wait to hear the report).

Micah's schedule is packed! He recently co-led in Big Bend with Chris Benesh and Northern Arizona with John Coons, and several upcoming tours to California and Brazil are full, but you can get to know Micah on **Cape May** (Sep 21-27), with Cory Gregory, or in Brazil on **Roraima Adventure** (Oct 23-Nov 3), with Tom Johnson. Or ring in the New Year with Jesse Fagan and Micah on **Panama's Canopy Lodge** (28 Dec-4 Jan)! Next year you'll find Micah in Suriname, Central Mexico & Baja, Oaxaca, Colorado, Cape May, Alberta, Bolivia, Peru, Louisiana, and Arizona—then back with Bret on the **Great Rivers of the Amazon III**, exploring the little-known Rios Japura and Tefe. We know you'll enjoy his company and skill on any of these tours.



A selection of upcoming 2019 tours with space available

AUGUST

- 2 **Brazil: Parrots & Cotingas — The Mighty Mouth of the Amazon** with Marcelo Padua
- 31 **France: Camargue & Pyrenees** with Megan Edwards Crewe & Marcelo Padua

SEPTEMBER

- 4 **France: Camargue & Pyrenees** with Jay VanderGaast & Willy Perez
- 4 **Oregon: From the Coast to the Cascades** with Cory Gregory & Doug Gochfeld
- 10 **Slice of California: Seabirds to Sierra II** with Chris Benesh
- 21 **Fall for Cape May I** with Cory Gregory & Micah Riegner
- 21 **Safari Brazil: The Pantanal & More** with Marcelo Padua & Dan Lane
- 29 **Fall for Cape May II** with Tom Johnson

OCTOBER

- 11 **Machu Picchu & Abra Malaga, Peru** with Dan Lane
- 23 **Brazil: Roraima Adventure** with Micah Riegner & Tom Johnson

NOVEMBER

- 7 **Louisiana: Yellow Rails & Crawfish Tails** with Cory Gregory
- 10 **Colombia: The Llanos & More** with Dan Lane & local guide
- 10 **Chile** with Willy Perez & local guide
- 23 **Mexico: Yucatan & Cozumel** with Chris Benesh & local guide
- 24 **Jamaica** with Cory Gregory & local guide

DECEMBER

- 1 **Holland -- Birds & Art: Waterfowl Spectacle & Dutch Masters** with Godfried Schreur & Jay VanderGaast
- 21 **Holiday Costa Rica: Rancho Naturalista** with Dan Lane & local guide
- 27 **Panama's Canopy Camp: Lowland Darien** with John Coons & local guide
- 27 **Trinidad & Tobago** with Tom Johnson & local guide
- 28 **Arizona Winter Specialties** with Chris Benesh
- 28 **Panama's Canopy Lodge: El Valle de Anton** with Jesse Fagan & Micah Riegner
- 28 **Ecuador's Wildsumaco Lodge** with Willy Perez

See our website for complete information.

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CONSERVATION Field Guides contributes to a number of conservation organizations, including most recently Rainforest Trust, to preserve habitat for Neotropical birds.



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