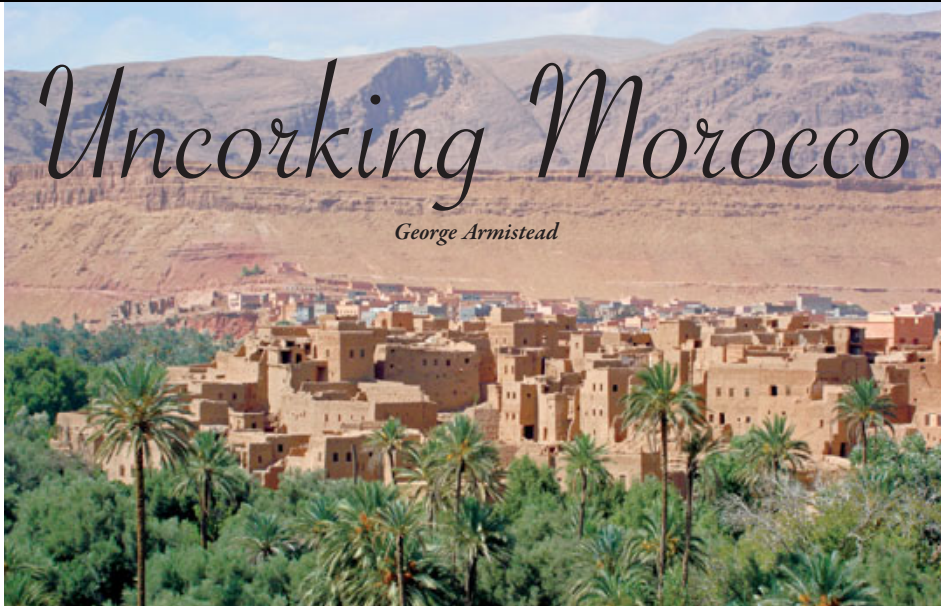


## Uncorking Morocco

*George Armistead*



Tinerhir in the Todra Valley. [Photo by guide George Armistead]

**T**he golden-pink sands of the Sahara at Erg Chebbi are the stuff of legend. So are the adobe casbahs, tinged peach and highlighted pistachio, the bustling and marvelous medina in Marrakesh, the Berber families that pepper the vast steppes. These evocative and authentic Moroccan scenes are suffused with Saharan and

Mediterranean influences and leap to the forefront of anyone's experience within this panoramic country. They have formed the backdrop for dozens of movies—epic films require epic settings and Morocco has those in spades. But perhaps the country's most endangered habitat is one that many people take for granted—its oak forests.

*Continued on page 10*

## Scheduling for 2010

It's our April issue, and of course that means it's time to publish our complete schedule of 2010 tours. Our hard-working Scheduling Committee (Peggy Watson, Dave Stejskal, Jay VanderGaast, Bret Whitney, and Maggie Burnett) has been considering all the angles since December and, with lots of guide input, now has a schedule of more than 130 departures in place for us (there are currently 107 distinct itineraries in our advertised schedule, so there's a lot to choose from!). Here's a quick look at the new additions, including a couple returning after a break of a few years. Be sure to call or email our friendly office folks if you want to plan some birding fun — they know the ropes and can help get you started. Or you can pick up an itinerary for any tour on our website. And check out our complete listing for next year with dates and guides beginning on page 5.

—Jan Pierson

### New tours:

Cambodia (Feb)

Dominican Republic (Apr; back after a break)

*Birding Plus*: Ireland in Spring (May)

Central Peruvian Endemics: The High Andes

(May; also back after a break)

Bolivia's Wild Wild East (Jul-Aug)

Sri Lanka (Oct-Nov)

## Arizona's Second Spring

*John Coons*

**D**uring my frequent travels I encounter people from all over North America, and when they find out I've lived in Flagstaff, Arizona for 30-plus years, I am invariably met with, "The temperature in Panama this winter won't be too different for you," or, "I'll bet you've forgotten what snow looks like." Even though only a few cities in the continental US average more snow than Flagstaff, the notion that all of Arizona is a hot desert remains. But Arizona is much more diverse than many may think.

*Continued on page 10*



The Chiricahua Mountains [Photo by participant Gregg Recer]

Also in this issue: 2/GuideLines • 2/Last Spaces • 3/Fresh From the Field • 5/2010 Schedule  
8/Upcoming Tours • 9/Goin' Finchin' • 11/Birding Plus Tours • 12/ABA's Roger Tory Peterson Award

# GuideLines

with Megan Crewe

## Trinidad & Tobago

I've never forgotten my first morning "on the veranda" at Trinidad's Asa Wright Nature Centre. The cacophony of sound and whirlwind of color—and the near-arm's-length proximity of many of the birds—create a spectacle matched by few other places in the world. It's a combination of sights and sounds and smells and shared experiences that embody the joy of birding travel for me, and participants who've been there with me seem to feel the same way.

Dawn comes relatively late to this part of the tropics. At 6:00 a.m., when hot, fresh coffee and tea (the former grown right on the property) is first served, twilight still rules. A Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl often toots enthusiastically from one of the thickets near the main building. The last of the night's fruit bats zip in for quick mouthfuls of the mango and papaya laid out on the bird-feeding tables (often fluttering around the lodge guide even as the fruit is being placed), while their nectar-drinking cousins hover ghostlike around the hummingbird feeders. Blue-crowned Motmots call softly and make occasional quick raids on the fruit, their iridescent plumage glowing even in the gloom. Downslope, the eerie, wavering song of Little Tinamous rises from the dark forest.

As the light grows stronger, the bats vanish. A handful of Red-rumped Agoutis—shy, tailless forest rodents—pick their way up the path, emboldened by the chunks of bread spread under the feeders. The first of the day's feathered visitors appear: subtly-colored Palm Tanagers slip from their night-time perches on the veranda's rafters and gather on the fruit trays, quickly joined by Blue-gray and Silver-beaked tanagers, a handful of Cocoa Thrushes, and a scattering of Green Honeycreepers. Copper-rumped Hummingbirds, squeaking challenges at each other, joust among the flowers. Great Kiskadees, flaring their yellow crown patches and shouting the call that gives them their common name, gobble mouthfuls of bread from the feeders. Gray-fronted Doves and Ruddy Ground-Doves patrol the bare earth, searching for morsels left by the agoutis. Jet-black male White-lined Tanagers flash semaphores at each other, their white underwings luminous against the greenery, while their rusty-plumaged females skirmish with each other over bits of bread.



The number of species grows by the minute. Purple Honeycreepers, with the occasional Red-legged Honeycreeper in tow, cluster on spindly twigs near the hummingbird feeders like funky Christmas ornaments. Violaceous Euphonias—males a handsome mix of bright yellow underparts and gleaming purplish-black upperparts, females a duller blend of greenish-yellow—rummage through flowered bushes. Tiny Tufted Coquettes buzz among the verbena flowers, not much larger than some of the nearby hornets. Barred Antshrikes chortle from thick underbrush,

popping briefly into view and disappearing again, while White-necked Jacobins and White-chested Emeralds vie for position at hummingbird feeders hanging mere inches from observers' heads. Noisy pairs of Orange-crowned Parrots wing in to munch the orange blossoms from towering Immortelle trees around the lodge. Crested Oropendolas row up the valley and drop into nearby trees, where the males perform their somersaulting displays for any female in view.

Slightly further downslope, Channel-billed Toucans catch the morning's first rays of sun, while Lineated Woodpeckers tap on bare emergent tree stumps and Bearded Bellbirds sound their hammer-on-anvil challenges from hidden perches among the brightening trees. Sometimes a soaring pair of White Hawks or a circling Common Black-Hawk or a perched Ornate Hawk-Eagle causes a stir. Now and again, a flock of Blue-headed Parrots or a Violaceous Trogon attacks the fruit of a middle-distance tree.

With such a whirlwind of activity to enjoy, it can be hard to tear oneself away for breakfast—though the mouthwatering smells wafting out of the nearby kitchens can be pretty persuasive. And the knowledge that after breakfast we'll be heading off to another part of the property, or another part of the island, with more new birds in store, certainly makes things easier!

If a morning experience like this—or sipping rum punch while watching raucous flocks of Red-bellied Macaws or hundreds of brilliantly-hued Scarlet Ibis heading to roost, or standing mere yards from soaring Red-billed Tropicbirds, or witnessing the frenetic snap, crackle, pop of a White-bearded Manakin lek in full swing—sounds fun to you, join me for our delightful 10-day exploration of the tropical islands of Trinidad and Tobago. It's definitely an adventure not to be missed!

*We have two upcoming tours with Megan: the first from December 27, 2009-January 5, 2010, and the second February 27-March 8, 2010. Tour itineraries are available on our website or you may call our office for details.*



Some of the birds from the Asa Wright veranda, gorgeous gems that you can enjoy with hot, locally-grown coffee in hand! The male Purple Honeycreeper has the yellow legs, unlike its red-legged relative. The Blue-crowned Motmot is a widespread species, but the one on Trinidad appears to warrant species status based on its double-noted call. Green Honeycreeper is more blue-green than green, but either way it's a pretty sight. [Photos by participant Dave Kutilek, guide Alvaro Jaramillo, and participant Daphne Gemmill]

## Last Spaces

Alaska II: June 4-13 (Part 1) and June 12-22 (Part 2) with Dave Stejskal & Megan Crewe

Montane Ecuador: June 12-21 with Mitch Lysinger

Alaska I: June 12-22 (Part 2) with Chris Benesh & George Armistead

Machu Picchu & Abra Malaga: June 25-July 4 with John Rowlett & Jesse Fagan

Newfoundland & Nova Scotia: June 30-July 10 with Chris Benesh & Wayne Petersen

**"Among my top memorable birding experiences is sitting on the Asa Wright veranda first with tea and then a rum punch while watching brightly colored honeycreepers and tanagers and hummingbird dogfights. This experience sets the bar for birding with style."**

**Daphne Gemmill, Trinidad & Tobago 2008**



# FRESH FROM THE FIELD

## *Reports from Recent Tours*

*compiled by Alvaro Jaramillo and Abbie Rowlett*

If you had to pick a single trip to Southeast Asia, it would probably be **THAILAND**. It's a terrific introduction to the birds of the region. And, because it's chock full of those birds, it appeals to the first time visitor as well as to the frequent traveler. Think of it as the Southeast Asian equivalent of Ecuador for tropical South America or of Southeast Arizona for the US. Like those two, Thailand is in a biogeographic crossroads, with birds of Himalayan affinities in the north and those of tropical Southeast Asian affinities in the south. Combine that with the friendly Thai people and the fantastic food, and you have a most enjoyable trip. At left below, the fancy Nicobar Pigeon is one of the quests of our extension. The Buddhist shrines, at right, are a fascinating cultural aspect of this wonderful country. And of course there's our local expert Uthai Treesucon, who helped design the tour and co-leads it with Dave Stejskal or Rose Ann Rowlett. [Photos by guide Dave Stejskal]



**NORTHEAST BRAZIL** still holds some ornithological secrets, and we continue to uncover them. But lest you think it's a primitive and difficult place to visit, let us reassure you that ours is an incredibly comfortable tour with—from all accounts—some of the best food anywhere. Below are the spectacular mountains in the Chapada da Diamantina known as the Three Brothers—great scenery and topnotch birding. At right, a colorful scene from Salvador, part of the joy that is Brazilian culture. Oh yes, and then there are the birds, such as this fantastic Collared Crescent-chest, a fancy tapaculo (although this group may deserve family status!). Finally, a Least Nighthawk doing its best at blending in with the rust-colored earth. [Photos by participant Bruce Sorrie]





# FRESH FROM THE FIELD

Our inaugural **OMAN & THE UAE** tour was a resounding success.

Although it took some effort, we did find the rare, single-family specialty, the Hypocolius. But we also had some wonderful birding in a safe and tourist-friendly part of the Middle East—guide George Armistead commented that he felt safer there than in his hometown of Philadelphia! Above, the striking African Paradise-Flycatcher, one of a number of African species that ranges up into southern Arabia.

Participant Ruth Brooks befriends a Dromedary, the one-humped camel; but take care, they can spit. The dump in Muscat is a good place for raptors, including these Egyptian Vultures. [Photos by guide George Armistead]



This was our second go of the **CHILE HEART & SOLE** trip...yep it's Sole, not Soul. You see the heart is the Andes, the Sole is the sea, and we visit both on this shorter Chile trip that focuses on the central zone and the Lake District. This year we also offered an extension to one of the most remote sites anywhere—Easter Island—and it was absolutely fantastic. At top right the seabird breeding islands off Easter Island, known as the Motus, as seen from the ceremonial grounds of Orongo. It was here that the cult of the bird people was practiced; young men competed by swimming to the motus to bring back the first egg of the Manutara (Sooty Tern). At right below, a widespread little predator of mainland Chile, the Austral Pygmy-Owl. To the right of the owl, the Red-legged Cormorant, voted one of the favorite birds of the trip! Up close, with that bill color and those green eyes surrounded by little jewels, you can see why he made such an impression. [Photos by guide Alvaro Jaramillo]



The alert went out last fall that the owl invasion in **ONTARIO** was heating up! We weren't going to let this one slip by, so we quickly organized a short trip to see these owls and the many winter finches, from redpolls to White-winged Crossbills, that were coming down with them. Word went out via emailings, smoke signals, and any other quick way of letting people know. It was great to have two Canadian guides, Jay VanderGaast and Peter Burke, eh, who not only found the owls, but also ferreted out good coffee and doughnuts, Canadian style. Participant Spike Baker sent us these lovely photos of some of the owls seen. From left to right: Great Gray, Boreal, Northern Hawk, and Snowy. At left, happy owls! [Photo by guide Peter Burke] (Tours are sometimes added after the catalog has gone out, so do keep visiting our website for news, and make sure to add your name to the list for our periodic e-mailings or subscribe to our news blog's RSS feed.)



"I chose this tour because I love to bird with Field Guides. This was a great overall experience! Rose Ann and Richard were terrific to bird with... they were enthusiastic and helpful. It was a good group. Office service was excellent."

Suellen Balestra, Northern Peru:  
Endemics Galore 2008

"I cannot stress how much I appreciate the hard work, dedication, and kindness of Jay VanderGaast and Peter Burke—I will be forever grateful for the experiences of this tour."

Pieter Poll, Ontario Winter Birds 2009

"I had birded with Jesse Fagan before and wanted to bird with him again. This was an excellent experience, the best tour I have ever been on. The two leaders, Jesse and Dave Mackay, were great."

Dominic Sherony, Western Mexico 2009

## fieldguides.com

Birding travel is full of great adventures, and sometimes even a little more than we all bargained for! At our annual business meeting we all share tour stories. Check our News Page for a classic from the archives titled "Last-chance Pickup" by Bret. It features rocks, rubber, macaws, and reality in Northeast Brazil — a little fun reading to share with you!

All Field Guides itineraries are now available on our website.

To download an itinerary, go to the tour page and click on ITINERARIES in the right-hand column.



### January-February

Oman & the UAE	Jan 7-23	George Armistead & local guide
Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge I	Jan 14-23	Dan Lane
Thailand	Jan 16-Feb 6	Dave Stejskal & Uthai Treesucon
Yellowstone in Winter	Jan 16-24	Terry McEneaney & second guide
Panama's Canopy Tower I	Jan 16-23	Jay VanderGaast & local guide
Venezuela	Jan 16-30	John Coons
Colima & Jalisco	Jan 16-24	Chris Benesh & Megan Crewe
Northeast Brazil: Long Live the Lear's!	Jan 17-Feb 7	Bret Whitney & second guide
Jewels of Ecuador: Hummers, Tanagers & Antpittas I	Jan 23-Feb 9	Mitch Lysinger
Northern India	Jan 23-Feb 14	Terry Stevenson
Oaxaca	Jan 24-31	Megan Crewe & second guide
Venezuela: Tepuis Endemics	Jan 29-Feb 7	Jay VanderGaast
The Heart & Sole of Chile	Jan 30-Feb 13	Peter Burke & Ricardo Matus
Panama's Canopy Lodge at El Valle I	Jan 31-Feb 7	John Rowlett
Winter Japan: Cranes & Sea Eagles	Feb 6-19	Phil Gregory
Panama's Wild Darien: Cana & Cerro Pirre	Feb 6-15	John Rowlett
Western Mexico: San Blas & the Sinaloa Highlands	Feb 10-20	Jesse Fagan & Dave Mackay
Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge II	Feb 12-21	Dan Lane
<b>NEW</b> Cambodia	Feb 18-26	Phil Gregory
BIRDING PLUS - Venezuela's Llanos & Photography	Feb 19-Mar 1	George Armistead
Jewels of Ecuador II	Feb 20-Mar 9	Rose Ann Rowlett
Panama's Canopy Tower II	Feb 20-27	John Coons & local guide
Southwestern Ecuador Specialties: Jocotoco Foundation Reserves	Feb 21-Mar 7	Mitch Lysinger
Guatemala: Shade-grown Birding	Feb 24-Mar 6	Jesse Fagan
Trinidad & Tobago	Feb 27-Mar 8	Megan Crewe
Panama's Canopy Tower III	Feb 27-Mar 6	Chris Benesh & local guide



## March-April

Honduras: Land of the Emeralds  
 Western Panama  
 Costa Rica  
 Ecuador: Rainforest & Andes I  
 Yucatan & Cozumel  
 Panama's Canopy Tower IV  
 Hawaii  
 Suriname  
 Spring in South Texas  
 Bahamas: Birds & Butterflies  
 Puerto Rico  
 Namibia & Botswana  
 Bhutan  
 Colorado Grouse I  
 Lesser Antilles  
 Colorado Grouse II  
 Texas Coast Migration Spectacle I  
 Texas Hill Country

### **NEW** BIRDING PLUS - Ireland in Spring:

Birds, Traditional Music & Pubs  
 Texas's Big Bend & Hill Country  
 Texas Coast Migration Spectacle II  
 Dominican Republic

Mar 6-14 Jesse Fagan & John Coons  
 Mar 6-15 Chris Benesh & second guide  
 Mar 13-28 Jay VanderGaast & local guide  
 Mar 14-28 Mitch Lysinger  
 Mar 19-28 Megan Crewe & local guide  
 Mar 19-26 John Coons & local guide  
 Mar 20-30 George Armistead & second guide  
 Mar 26-Apr 10 Dave Stejskal & Dan Lane  
 Mar 27-Apr 4 Chris Benesh  
 Mar 30-Apr 4 Jesse Fagan  
 Apr 4-10 George Armistead & second guide  
 Apr 6-25 Terry Stevenson  
 Apr 9-29 Richard Webster  
 Apr 9-18 Terry McEaney & second guide  
 Apr 10-24 Jesse Fagan & second guide  
 Apr 16-25 Dan Lane & second guide  
 Apr 17-23 John Coons  
 Apr 21-26 John Rowlett

Apr 22-May 2 Terry McEaney & local guide  
 Apr 24-May 3 Chris Benesh & second guide  
 Apr 24-30 John Coons  
 Apr 24-May 1 Jesse Fagan & local guide

## May-June

Classical Greece  
 Arizona Nightbirds & More  
 Spain: La Mancha, Coto Donana & Extremadura  
 Point Pelee & Algonquin Provincial Park  
 Arizona: Birding the Border I  
 Arizona: Birding the Border II  
 BIRDING PLUS - North Carolina: Petrels & the Deep Blue Sea  
 Central Peruvian Endemics: The High Andes  
 Uganda: Shoebill, Rift Endemics & Gorillas  
 Virginias' Warblers  
 Churchill & Southern Manitoba  
 Alaska I - Part One  
 Yukon to the Arctic Ocean  
 Montana: Yellowstone to Glacier  
 Alaska II - Part One  
 Montane Ecuador I  
 Alaska I - Part Two  
 Baffin Island: Pond Inlet  
 Alaska II - Part Two  
 Alta Floresta & the Pantanal, Brazil  
 Borneo  
 Galapagos I  
 Machu Picchu & Abra Malaga, Peru I  
 Kenya I  
 Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge III  
 Newfoundland & Nova Scotia

May 2-16 Megan Crewe & local guide  
 May 6-10 Dave Stejskal & second guide  
 May 7-19 Chris Benesh & local guide  
 May 8-17 Jay VanderGaast  
 May 14-23 Dave Stejskal  
 May 15-24 John Coons  
 May 15-24 George Armistead & Jesse Fagan  
 May 15-Jun 3 Rose Ann Rowlett & Dan Lane  
 May 20-Jun 10 Terry Stevenson & Phil Gregory  
 May 28-Jun 1 John Rowlett & second guide  
 Jun 3-15 John Coons & local guide  
 Jun 3-12 Chris Benesh & Megan Crewe  
 Jun 5-14 Jay VanderGaast & second guide  
 Jun 10-20 Terry McEaney & Jesse Fagan  
 Jun 10-19 Dave Stejskal & George Armistead  
 Jun 11-20 Mitch Lysinger  
 Jun 11-21 Chris Benesh & Megan Crewe  
 Jun 15-25 John Coons  
 Jun 18-28 Dave Stejskal & George Armistead  
 Jun 18-Jul 3 Bret Whitney  
 Jun 18-Jul 4 Rose Ann Rowlett  
 Jun 19-29 Mitch Lysinger  
 Jun 24-Jul 3 Dan Lane & Jesse Fagan  
 Jun 26-Jul 24 Terry Stevenson  
 Jun 29-Jul 8 Jay VanderGaast  
 Jun 29-Jul 9 Chris Benesh

## July-August

Manu Wildlife Center, Peru  
 Papua New Guinea  
 Peru's Marvelous Abra Patricia & the Spatuletail  
 Galapagos II

Jul 2-15 Dan Lane  
 Jul 3-25 Phil Gregory & Dave Stejskal  
 Jul 14-25 John Rowlett  
 Jul 17-27 Megan Crewe



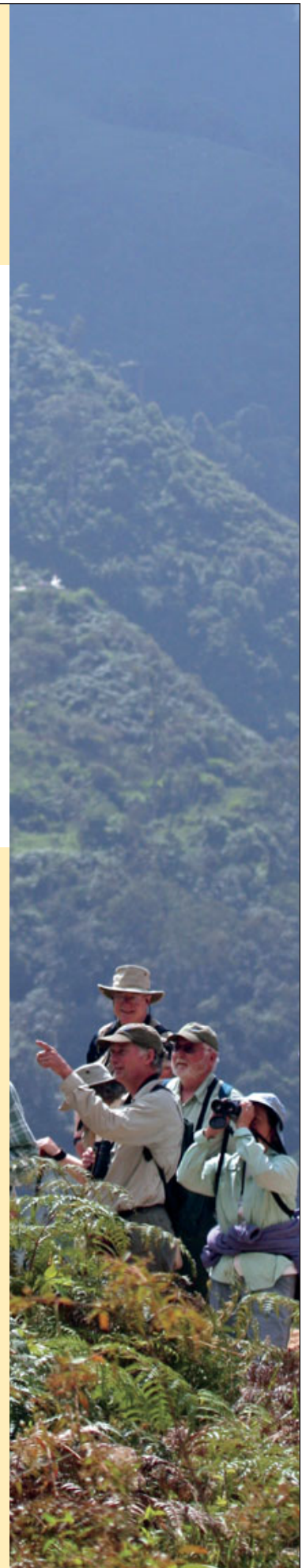
Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge IV	Jul 22-31	Mitch Lysinger
New Caledonia	Jul 23-Aug 1	Phil Gregory
Mountains of Manu, Peru I	Jul 24-Aug 8	Rose Ann Rowlett
Pousada Rio Roosevelt	Jul 28-Aug 11	John Rowlett
Montane Ecuador II	Jul 30-Aug 8	Mitch Lysinger
Arizona's Second Spring	Jul 31-Aug 9	John Coons
Summer Costa Rica	Jul 31-Aug 15	Jay VanderGaast
<b>NEW</b> Bolivia's Wild, Wild East	Jul 31-Aug 14	Dan Lane
Galapagos III	Aug 7-17	George Armistead

## September-October

France: Camargue & Pyrenees	Sep 4-14	Megan Crewe & Jesse Fagan
Slice of California: Seabirds to Sierras	Sep 4-13	Chris Benesh
East Africa Sampler: Kenya & Tanzania	Sep 5-25	Terry Stevenson
Bolivia's Andean Riches	Sep 11-25	Dan Lane & George Armistead
Rio Negro Paradise: Manaus	Sep 11-24	Bret Whitney
Outback Australia	Sep 11-Oct 2	Phil Gregory
Ecuador: Rainforest & Andes II	Sep 12-26	Mitch Lysinger
Australia - Part One	Sep 24-Oct 14	Chris Benesh & Jay VanderGaast
Serra dos Tucanos, Brazil	Sep 25-Oct 5	John Rowlett
Peruvian Rainforests of the Tambopata	Sep 26-Oct 9	Rose Ann Rowlett
Kenya II	Oct 2-30	Terry Stevenson
BIRDING PLUS - Cape May Migration: Orient Yourself!	Oct 2-8	George Armistead
Alta Floresta, Brazil	Oct 4-15	John Rowlett
New Guinea & Australia	Oct 7-25	Phil Gregory
South Africa	Oct 8-30	Megan Crewe & Rod Cassidy
Australia - Part Two	Oct 12-27	John Coons & Jesse Fagan
Safari Brazil: The Pantanal & More	Oct 16-Nov 1	Mitch Lysinger
Northwestern Argentina	Oct 19-Nov 7	Dave Stejskal & second guide
Spectacular Southeast Brazil - Part I: North of the Tropic	Oct 29-Nov 17	Bret Whitney & second guide
Chile	Oct 31-Nov 20	Alvaro Jaramillo & Ricardo Matus
<b>NEW</b> Sri Lanka	Oct 31-Nov 16	Megan Crewe

## November-December

BIRDING PLUS - Ireland in Fall:		
Birds, Traditional Music & Pubs	Nov 4-14	Terry McEneaney & local guide
Louisiana: Red Beans & Yellow Rails	Nov 4-8	Dan Lane & second guide
BIRDING PLUS - El Salvador & Banding	Nov 6-13	Jesse Fagan
Madagascar, Mauritius & Reunion	Nov 6-Dec 3	Jay VanderGaast & Phil Gregory
Southern Argentina	Nov 6-23	George Armistead & second guide
Northern Peru: Endemics Galore	Nov 7-26	Rose Ann Rowlett & Richard Webster
New Zealand	Nov 11-29	Chris Benesh
Southern India	Nov 14-Dec 5	Terry Stevenson & local guide
Spectacular Southeast Brazil - Part II: South of the Capricorn	Nov 15-29	Bret Whitney & Jesse Fagan
Vietnam	Nov 20-Dec 11	Dave Stejskal & Uthai Treesucon
Uruguay: Birding the Land of the Gauchos	Dec 4-18	Alvaro Jaramillo & second guide
Trinidad & Tobago	Dec 18-27	Wayne Petersen
Holiday Costa Rica: Rancho Naturalista	Dec 18-26	Jesse Fagan & local guide
Christmas at Pousada Rio Roosevelt	Dec 19-30	Bret Whitney
Holiday at San Isidro	Dec 26-Jan 4	Mitch Lysinger
New Year in Mexico: Oaxaca & the Pacific Coast	Dec 27-Jan 7	Chris Benesh & second guide
Oman & the UAE	Dec 30-Jan 15	Phil Gregory & local guide
Panama's Wild Darien: Cana & Cerro Pirre II	Dec 30-Jan 8	John Coons



# UPCOMING TOURS

Below is a partial listing of upcoming tours.

*If you would like details on any trip or trips, please call our office or check our website, where you may download a tour itinerary.*

## July-August 2009

**MANU WILDLIFE CENTER, PERU**—July 3-16, 2009 with John Rowlett. One-site tour to the most species-rich rainforest on Earth. Macaw lick, canopy tower, tapir wallow, and wonderful trails through Amazonian lowlands of Manu Biosphere Reserve. May be combined with **MACHU PICCHU & ABRA MALAGA, PERU** or **PERU'S MARVELOUS ABRA PATRICIA & THE SPATULETAIL**.

**AUSTRALIA: KAKADU, KUNUNURRA & CAPE YORK**—July 3-19, 2009 with John Coons. Off the beaten track for little-known birds and starkly beautiful landscapes in Australia's legendary hinterland, plus a visit to Cape York for all its specialty birds.

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**—July 11-August 2, 2009 with Phil Gregory & Jay VanderGaast. Birds-of-paradise and bowerbirds are the crowning jewels of one of the world's most remarkable bird faunas, set against a fascinating cultural backdrop far removed from our own. **May be combined NEW CALEDONIA.**

**PERU'S MARVELOUS ABRA PATRICIA & THE SPATULETAIL**—July 15-26, 2009 with John Rowlett & Mitch Lysinger. A 12-day taste of northern Peru's east-slope Andes, designed for birders with little vacation time and hence unable to take our longer, more diverse **NORTHERN PERU** tour—or for those who, having delighted in that tour, long for a San Martin reprise!

**GALAPAGOS**—July 18-28, 2009 with George Armistead. A must for any interested naturalist and birder in search of a fascinating set of endemics; small group, broad coverage of the islands with plenty of time for the birds, exploring, and photography. May be combined with **MACHU PICCHU & ABRA MALAGA, PERU.**

**AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE III**—July 22-31, 2009 with Dave Stejskal. One-site tour to one of the most comfortable lodges in western Amazonia with three of the birdiest and sturdiest canopy platforms anywhere. **May be combined with MONTANE ECUADOR.**

**MOUNTAINS OF MANU**—July 25-August 9, 2009 (Machu Picchu Extension) with Rose Ann Rowlett. An in-depth transect of the higher-elevation half of the Manu Biosphere Reserve and buffer zone, from treeline through temperate and subtropical forests down to rich upper-tropical zone. Spectacular scenery along one of the "birdiest" roads in the world. **May be combined with PERU'S MARVELOUS ABRA PATRICIA & THE SPATULETAIL** or **QUITOS, PERU.**

**MACHU PICCHU & ABRA MALAGA, PERU**—July 28-August 6, 2009 with Dan Lane & Jesse Fagan. Southern Peru's east-slope, temperate birding at its best, featuring lots of endemics and scenic Andean puna; also Machu Picchu and great subtropical birding on and near lovely hotel grounds. May be combined with **PERU'S MARVELOUS ABRA PATRICIA & THE SPATULETAIL.**

**POUSADA RIO ROOSEVELT: BIRDING THE RIVER OF DOUBT**—July 29-August 12, 2009 with Bret Whitney. A birding adventure on the remote Rio Roosevelt in the spirit of Teddy himself, as we search for bushbirds, antwrens, and, of course, the unknown.

**MONTANE ECUADOR II**—July 30-August 8, 2009 with Mitch Lysinger. Small-group tour for superb subtropical birding while based at lovely San Isidro Lodge, located among the birds of the east slope, plus two days in west slope subtropics at the comfortable and birdy Tandayapa Birding Lodge. **May be combined with AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE** or **GALAPAGOS.**

**NEW CALEDONIA**—July 31-August 9, 2009 with Phil Gregory. Specialty tour to seek the fascinating, bizarre relict Kagu and other endemics. **May be combined with PAPUA NEW GUINEA.**

**GALAPAGOS**—August 1-11, 2009 with Megan Crewe. A must for any interested naturalist and birder in search of a fascinating set of endemics; small group, broad coverage of the islands with plenty of time for the birds, exploring, and photography. **May be combined with AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE.**

**ARIZONA'S SECOND SPRING**—August 7-16 with John Coons. An ideal time for visiting one of the best birding regions in North America; great for local specialties and Mexican vagrants.

**GALAPAGOS**—August 8-18, 2009 with Alvaro Jaramillo. A must for any interested naturalist and birder in search of a fascinating set of endemics; small group, broad coverage of the islands with plenty of time for the birds, exploring, and photography. **May be combined with MONTANE ECUADOR.**

**QUITOS, PERU: CANOPY WALKWAYS & ANCIENT FORESTS**—August 11-22, 2009 (Machu Picchu Extension) with Dave Stejskal. Nearly two-week immersion in the most species-rich region of Amazonia, including the white-sand forests near Iquitos. River travel on the Amazon and Napo rivers, canopy access via the famed walkway at ACTS. **May be combined with MOUNTAINS OF MANU, PERU.**

**KENYA**—August 29-September 26, 2009 with Terry Stevenson. Unsurpassed in its combined wealth of bird life and mammal spectacle; includes the coast. Time-saving internal flights to and from the Masai Mara and from Malindi back to Nairobi.

## September-October 2009

**MOROCCO**—September 4-21, 2009 with George Armistead. Endemic, rare, and specialty birds from coastal wetlands and towering cliffs to the Atlas Mountains and the northwest corner of the Sahara.

**SLICE OF CALIFORNIA: Seabirds to Sierras**—September 4-13 with Chris Benesh. A wonderfully diverse mix of West Coast specialties, montane species, and pelagics in rugged and scenic sites.

**FRANCE: CAMARGUE & PYRENEES**—September 5-15, 2009 with Megan Crewe & Jesse Fagan. Two of Europe's finest birding destinations combined in this wonderful nine-day tour with varied highlights and some great French food.

**ECUADOR: RAINFOREST & ANDES**—September 5-19, 2009 with Mitch Lysinger. Highlights of the best of Ecuador's rainforest birding at Sacha Lodge (think cotingas, parrots, antbirds, and canopy towers) combined with two exciting destinations in the Andes, the Mindo/Tandayapa area and San Isidro (think myriad hummingbirds and tanagers, quetzals, and cocks-of-the-rock).

**BOLIVIA'S AVIAN RICHES**—September 12-27, 2009 with Dan Lane & second guide. Survey tour of the special bird life of the Bolivian Andes; wonderful mountain scenery and easier than you may think.

**CHINA: BEIDAHE & THE TIBETAN PLATEAU**—September 12-29, 2009 with Jay VanderGaast & Jesper Hornskov. A truly fabulous birding adventure, beginning with a tide of stunning autumn migrants at Beidahe and Happy Island and concluding high in the mountains of the remote Tibetan Plateau.

**RIO NEGRO PARADISE: MANAUS, BRAZIL**—September 21-October 4, 2009 with Bret Whitney. Bird the rainforests and rivers of the mighty Amazon and Negro in an unforgettable mix of forest hikes and live-aboard luxury. **May be combined with CARAJAS: LOWER AMAZONIAN BRAZIL.**

**AUSTRALIA (Part I)**—September 25-October 15, 2009 with Chris Benesh & Megan Crewe. Begins our two-part tour with Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, southwest Australia, and Alice Springs.

**SERRA DOS TUCANOS, BRAZIL**—September 26-October 6, 2009 with John Rowlett. A short but rich immersion in the avifauna of the Atlantic Forest, based at one lovely site near Rio. **May be combined with ALTA FLORESTA, BRAZIL.**

**PERUVIAN RAINFORESTS OF THE TAMBOPATA**—September 28-October 11, 2009 with Rose Ann Rowlett. Combines the classic Rio Tambopata reserves with a visit to the Reserva Amazonica on the Rio Madre de Dios: parrot/macaw lick, Harpy Eagles, and a superb canopy walkway from which the rare Black-faced Cotinga can be seen. **May be combined with MOUNTAINS OF MANU, PERU.**

**Birding Plus—CAPE MAY: ORIENT YOURSELF!**—October 3-9, 2009 with George Armistead. See bird migration in action and learn about regional movements, local influences, and orientation, and pick up important identification tips for raptors and other groups in our field-and-presentation format itinerary to one of the best migration hotspots in North America.

**CARAJAS: LOWER AMAZONIAN BRAZIL**—October 4-13, 2009 with Bret Whitney. Huge, remote forest reserve with excellent Amazonian forest access, lots of specialty birds, and a fine hotel to use as our base. **May be combined with RIO NEGRO PARADISE: MANAUS, BRAZIL.**

**ALTA FLORESTA, BRAZIL**—October 5-16, 2009 with John Rowlett. A week in pristine rainforest on the beautiful Rio Cristalino. **May be combined with SERRA DOS TUCANOS, BRAZIL.**

**NEW GUINEA & AUSTRALIA**—October 8-26, 2009 with Phil Gregory. A rich and diverse sampler of the best birding of New Guinea and Australia.

**SOUTH AFRICA**—October 8-31, 2009 with Terry Stevenson & Rod Cassidy. Endemic-rich birding, spectacular landscapes, and a unique flora are the highlights of our survey of this beautiful country, from Karoo to Cape Town, and the Drakensberg to the Eastern Transvaal.

**MOUNTAINS OF MANU**—October 10-25, 2009 (Machu Picchu Extension) with Dan Lane. An in-depth transect of the higher-elevation half of the Manu Biosphere Reserve and buffer zone, from treeline through temperate and subtropical forests down to rich upper-tropical zone. Spectacular scenery along one of the "birdiest" roads in the world. **May be combined with PERUVIAN RAINFORESTS OF THE TAMBOPATA.**

**SAFARI BRAZIL: THE PANTANAL & MORE**—October 10-26, 2009 with Mitch Lysinger. The spectacular wetlands of the Pantanal, with Hyacinth Macaws and Jabirus, combined with the many specialties of Brazil's Planalto Central (including Emas National Park, Cipo, and Caraca), make the perfect first birding trip to Brazil.

**AUSTRALIA (Part II)**—October 13-28 (Tasmania extension) with John Coons & Jay VanderGaast. Completes the continent with Darwin, Cairns, Atherton Tableland, and O'Reilly's.

**NORTHWESTERN ARGENTINA**—October 20-November 8, 2009 with Dave Stejskal & George Armistead. Comprehensive survey tour of the diverse bird habitats of the northwest, with numerous specialties.

**SPECTACULAR SOUTHEAST BRAZIL: NORTH OF THE TROPIC**—October 30-November 15, 2009 with Bret Whitney & second guide. Prepare to be blown away, two times over, in the center of avian endemism in eastern Brazil; particularly well-endowed with hummers, cotingas, antbirds, and beautiful scenery. **May be combined with Part II: South of the Capricorn.**

**Birding Plus—EL SALVADOR & BANDING**—October 31-November 7, 2009 with Jesse Fagan. A unique opportunity to work in a banding operation, learn basic techniques, terminology, and instruction on aging and sexing birds in the hand. Also expect an equal amount of time in "normal" tour birding.



# Goin' Finchin'

Jay VanderGaast

As I write this, I've got my eyes on the siskins, redpolls, and goldfinches outside my window—those “winter finches” I've come grudgingly to love are raiding my feeders. But my mind has drifted off to China. You see, I'm indiscriminating about finches—I now love them all. And in China there are simply some fabulous ones to see...



As if this abundance of finches wasn't enough for a finchophile like myself, there's an even bigger finch to fry, this one currently called Przevalski's Rosefinch, though it was also once known as Pink-tailed Bunting, and in the past its taxonomy has been muddled. This bird may be called a rose-finch and looks an awful lot like one, but it is different enough from all other passerines that it merits its own family, and it's now the lone member of the family Urocynchramidae. This is big news.

There is much more to see in China than just finches, of course. From the excitement of fall migration fallouts along the coast with a great variety of warblers, buntings, and thrushes, to searching the marshes of Koko Nor Lake on the Tibetan plateau for the rare Black-necked Crane, to sorting through a mixed flock in the hills above Xining in hopes of seeing either of

the lovely tit-warblers, this tour is sure to be memorable. Even if finching isn't your thing, you'll be delighted, so why not join Jesper and me this September for some of the best fall birding on the planet? Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got to go feed my goldfinches.

*Dates for Jay's China: Beidabe & The Tibetan Plateau tour this fall are September 12-29. Tour itineraries are available on our website or you may call our office for details.*



**F**inches (in name at least) occur in 8 different families of birds—9 if you use the name widowfinch in place of indigobird. On our China tour's checklist, there are at least 17 birds in 3 families with “finch” in their names, plus a few others that qualify as true finches as well (grosbeaks, siskin, Brambling). First, of course, there are the Fringillidae—we could see as many as 17 species in this finch family on our tour. These include such great birds as Mongolian Finch, Japanese and White-winged grosbeaks, and Gray-headed Bullfinch. They also include Plain Mountain-Finch, in the same genus as our rosy-finches, and 5 rose-finches, in the same genus with our House, Purple, and Cassin's finches. These in particular are interesting not only in that they are stunning birds: at least a couple of species have been recently split, and the forms found here have rather restricted ranges. Chinese White-browed and Chinese Beautiful rose-finches in particular fall into this category, and we have a chance of seeing both on this trip.

Lovely as the rose-finches are, though, my favorites are the snowfinches. These occur mainly in the high mountain regions, as their name suggests, and there are 6 species possible on our trip. Watching a flock of ghostly pale White-rumped Snowfinches feeding amidst a colony of cute Black-lipped Pikas in the montane grasslands above Lake Koko Nor is a simply wonderful experience. And then there's a trio of very local species that can't be seen on any of our other tours: Henri's, Pere David's, and Blanford's. If you've never seen a snowfinch, there's no better tour on our calendar than this one.

Top left, our group at Rubber Mountain. [Photo by guide Dave Stejskal]

Top center, a striking Chinese White-browed Rosefinch. [Photo by guide Dave Stejskal]

Top right, a Rufous-necked Snowfinch. [Photo by participant Jeff Robinson]

Bottom right, a local man in front of a shrine at Koko Nor on the Tibetan Plateau. [Photo by guide Dave Stejskal]

# Uncorking Morocco

*Continued from cover*

As more and more wine-makers shift from the traditional cork to plastic stoppers or screw tops, the cork oak (*Quercus suber*) forests become more vulnerable to development. (Something worth considering next time you're in search of a good bottle or two.) The production of cork throughout the Mediterranean is a practice that goes back hundreds of years, and the oaks from which it is harvested provide nesting areas for birds like the Levaillant's Woodpecker, African Blue Tit, and others. Perhaps more importantly, these stands of ancient trees (with an average lifespan of over 200 years) provide shelter for the huge numbers of migrants that pass through the region and require rest on their journey between the sea of sand that is the Sahara and the sea that is the Mediterranean. Most tourists zip past the trees while on their way to the beaches or Atlas Studios (one of the largest movie studios in the world) in Ouarzazate or the Sahara. As birders, however, we see trees and think there must surely be birds as well, warblers, for instance, in September when we're there and when migration is fully underway. And Eurasian Hobbies and Eleonora's Falcons are even more curious than we are.

Morocco has proven rich indeed for birds; virtually all of the endemic taxa of the Maghreb region (including Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya) are found here. In addition to the many migrant shorebirds, hawks, and warblers that either pass through or winter, there are the regional specialties that include the subtle and beautiful Desert Sparrows, skulkers in the tamarisks of dusty desert outposts. Nearby, African Desert Warblers chatter from the sparse desert vegetation while Greater Hoopoe-Larks flash their striking wings and cryptic Cream-colored Coursers scurry about. In the middle Atlas Mountains we find the handsome Tristram's Warbler, and along the coastal lagoons, lucky observers may come upon a Marsh Owl or two.

Between Tangier and Rabat we were lucky last year to see groups totaling about 400 of the threatened White Stork, a legendary bird of multifarious roles that, like the oak forests, many people take for granted! But surely the signature bird of Morocco is the Northern Bald Ibis, now one of the rarest

birds in the world with a total population of only about 400 individuals remaining in the wild, almost all in Morocco. The ibis was once more widespread than it is today, with fossil remains from southern Spain and the south of France and a common name, Waldrapp, that was bestowed by Germans. (Waldrapp is translated as "forest crow," an odd name for a species that inhabits arid areas with cliffs where it breeds on ledges.) The "old man" (the genus *Geronticus* comes from the Greek 'gerontos' for old man, surely a reference to the bird's bald head) is a sight we hope for on every excursion to Morocco.

From the coastal lagoons that brim with ducks and shorebirds, to the high Atlas mountains offering a couple coudougs and some spirited Moussier's Redstarts, to the riches of the Sahara, join us as we uncork a little of Morocco, and a whole lot of birds.

*George's tour is scheduled for September 4-21 in 2009. It will not be offered again until 2011. Tour itineraries are available on our website or you may call our office for details.*



At top, certainly one of the prettiest of falcons, the Eurasian Hobby. Above left, the Critically Endangered Waldrapp, found almost exclusively in Morocco. Above right, the fancy looking Moussier's Redstart. [Photos by guide George Armistead]

# Arizona's Second Spring

*Continued from cover*

Most birders are well aware of the cool springtime birding in the Chiricahua or Huachuca mountains of Southeast Arizona but still think of the summer months as being bone-searingly hot. While this can be true in June and early July, by mid-July weather patterns shift and most of the state experiences what we call the Monsoons. Moisture from the ocean off western Mexico is brought north by winds, and clouds build during the morning until they produce afternoon showers that not only cool the temperatures but enliven the desert and mountains, energizing not only the birds but birders. These rains may last only ten minutes to a half-hour but are enough to green the grasslands and wildflower the mountains.

With a new-found abundance of food, a handful of species begin their breeding with the Monsoons, and many more nest for a second time. The songs of Cassin's Sparrows, rarely heard in Arizona in May, and the calls of Montezuma Quail emanate from grassy hillsides. Nearly all of Southeast Arizona's specialties are just as findable in early August, while rarities from Mexico are more likely in late-summer than in the spring. Those Gray Hawks, Elegant Trogons, most of the hummingbirds in the field guide, Buff-breasted Flycatchers, Thick-billed Kingbirds, Mexican Chickadees, Olive, Grace's, and Red-faced warblers, Painted Redstarts, Western Tanagers,



Arizona is great not only for specialties, but also for a diversity of widespread western species such as this male Black-headed Grosbeak at right. [Photo by participant Nellie Hintz] And speaking of specialties, the "Harlequin," or now more properly Montezuma Quail. [Photo by participant Ginger Goolsby]

Rufous-winged and Five-striped sparrows, Pyrrhuloxias, and Hooded, Bullock's, and Scott's orioles are all there for the viewing, and the list of recent vagrants is impressive. Only the owls are less likely to be calling and more difficult to find. Come experience Arizona for the first time or for a return visit during its *Second Spring* and see it differently.

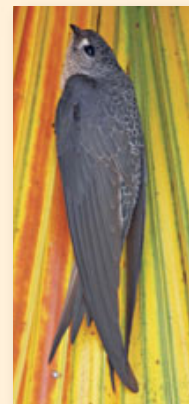
*John's Arizona's Second Spring tour is scheduled for August 7-16. Tour itineraries are available on our website or you may call our office for details.*



# BIRDING PLUS TOURS

## *Ireland, Venezuela, and looking ahead to more*

Last April we announced our new series of Birding Plus itineraries, a concept to combine the birding we all enjoy so much with other opportunities. Over the past few months we've run our first two in the series, to great reviews. Here are some excerpts from guides Terry McEneaney's (Ireland) and George Armistead's (Venezuela) trip reports to give you a bit of the flavor. We think the series holds a lot of appeal, as we know many of you have strong interests in addition to birding. We have 10 more departures of 6 Birding Plus itineraries on the schedule between May 2009 and November 2010 (see list below). Consider joining us for these great trips!



### **Back from our November 2008 inaugural Birding Plus— Ireland: Birds, Traditional Music & Pubs tour, Terry McEneaney wrote:**

**“T**he Irish have a saying: ‘In Ireland it only rains twice a week—the first time for three days and the second for four.’ Well, that didn’t happen on our inaugural Ireland: Birds, Traditional Music & Pubs tour—we had unusually warm and sunny weather, with eight-and-a-half out of the ten days of the tour greeting and warming us with sunshine. The Irish also hate to count, but for those of us keeping track, we tallied 85 species of birds, 5 species of mammals, more than 40 shades of green, over 15 traditional Irish music venues, a minimum of 21 pubs, more than 800 miles of travel, a few dozen shots of Irish whiskey and local spirits, and our fair share of pints of Guinness.

“We saw many birds, often tens of thousands of individuals, but the tour also provided us with an opportunity to relish traditional Irish music. Our music venues were extraordinary: a private session with relatives and friends in a remote farmhouse in County Armagh (known by the locals as ‘Tossie’s cottage’), a country pub session outside of Dungarvan, and a concert by friend and distant relative (of Terry) Tom Sweeney were especially popular. We were treated to instrumental renditions (guitar, fiddle, banjo, accordion, mandolin, flute, tin whistle, bodran, uilleann pipes) as well as pub-style solo and group singing. The music just kept coming.

“A trip to Ireland that doesn’t include a visit to an Irish pub is not a trip to Ireland at all, and we introduced ourselves to pubs of all persuasions—Gaelic, Victorian, country, city, and traditional. We were even entertained in a wildlife museum by a retired warden who served Irish whiskey while discussing the birds and mammals of Ireland. In the pubs and session houses—and even while traveling on the bus—we experienced Irish storytelling, poetry, and history, and, most importantly, Irish hospitality at its best. We hated each day to end, such fun we were having as we encountered so many friendly Irish faces, sensational music, unique characters, and interesting conversation in addition to the birds and wildlife.”

*Terry’s next Irish adventure is scheduled for this fall, November 5-15, 2009. In 2010 we’ll offer two tours, one in spring (May 6-16, 2010), the other in fall (November 4-14, 2010). Tour itineraries are available on our website or you may call our office for details.*

### **George Armistead followed on with our inaugural Birding Plus— Venezuela’s Llanos: Birding & Photography itinerary in February:**

**“I**’m freshly back from our first *Birding Plus* photo tour and I’m happy to say it was a thrilling experience. We planted ourselves in Venezuela’s llanos (pronounced “ya-nos”) for just over a week, strategically choosing this time of year. It’s the end of the dry season and the water levels of the various lakes and pools are reduced to the point that we can witness great wildlife concentrations.

“The sheer biomass at Hato El Cedral is something to behold—we saw hundreds to thousands of whistling-ducks feeding and exploding into the air, herons all over the place, Large-billed Terns displaying like tropicbirds, and ‘Amazonian’ Skimmers gliding around above hundreds of loafing or soaking Cabybaras. I’d birded the llanos for several years now and had thought it would be the perfect spot for a trip for folks looking to capture lovely and exciting wildlife images. It surely was that and a real spectacle as well.

“As for particular highlights, photographing a Giant Anteater carrying its young across the savanna at dusk was probably the most electrifying moment of our trip, and I loved seeing my first Brazilian Tapir at Hato Piñero. Another special moment was when, one evening while out photographing a snipe, we heard some howling. We pointed a light in the direction of the sound and soon discovered that it was coming from an Ocelot! We watched it for a short while before it disappeared into a stand of trees, but then got to see it again as it re-emerged and trotted off into the night. This sighting came on the same day we had seen three Giant Anteaters, three tamanduas, two anacondas, several Crab-eating Foxes, hundreds of Capybaras, a couple of nesting—and territorial—Orinoco Crocodiles, untold Spectacled Caiman, a Crab-eating Raccoon, fifteen species of heron, seven of ibis, five kingfishers, and much, much more. It was a downright dizzying day!”

*Next year’s tour with George is scheduled for February 19–March 1, 2010. Tour itineraries are available on our website or you may call our office for details.*

### **On the docket ahead for 2009-2010, we have these Birding Plus departures (see more about each on our website):**

NORTH CAROLINA: Petrels & the Deep Blue Sea May 16-25, 2009 or May 15-24, 2010

CAPE MAY: ORIENT YOURSELF! Oct 3-9, 2009 or Oct 2-8, 2010

EL SALVADOR & BANDING Oct 31-Nov 7, 2009 or Nov 6-13, 2010

IRELAND IN FALL: Birds, Traditional Music & Pubs Nov 5-15, 2009 or Nov 4-14, 2010

VENEZUELA’S LLANOS: Birding & Photography Feb 19-Mar 1, 2010

IRELAND IN SPRING: Birds, Traditional Music & Pubs May 6-16, 2010



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4/09



Our Pepper (John Rowlett) at right with guide Chris Benesh.

## ABA's Roger Tory Peterson Award

We're delighted to announce that our very own John Rowlett is to be honored at this year's American Birding Association's convention (Apr 27-May 3) in Corpus Christi on the Texas coast with the Roger Tory Peterson Award!

The award is given for a lifetime of achievement in promoting the cause of birding—a perfect tribute to John since he has been getting folks excited about birds for many years from his native Texas and from his current home in Virginia to numerous other destinations around the world. Congratulations, Peppershrike!

If you'd like to join John in the field, check out his upcoming schedule on our website. And if you plan to be at the ABA convention, we hope to cross paths with you in Corpus. To help John celebrate, a group of our Field Guides will be there for the Thursday field trip and evening presentation, including Chris Benesh, John Coons, Bret Whitney, Peggy Watson, and Jan Pierson. See you there!

