

fieldguides®

JUNE 2009

B I R D I N G T O U R S W O R L D W I D E

Ecuador Field Guides Tours

Rose Ann Rowlett

Tiny Ecuador, covering only 1.5 percent of South America's landmass, supports more than half its avifauna—about a sixth of the Earth's bird species! Its incredible avian diversity, totaling nearly 1600 species, is a direct reflection of its habitat diversity.

Cactus-clad desert on the southwest coast gives way to some of the wettest of the world's rainforests just 200 miles to the north. Vast Amazonian rainforests east of the Andes lie but a few tens of miles from paramo grassland and glaciers at 20,000 feet!

Our Field Guides have birded most every corner of the country, one of them (Mitch Lysinger) has lived there since 1991. Together they've been guiding a diverse array of tours, some of them for a very

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South Africa

Terry Stevenson

With more endemic birds than any other country in Africa, South Africa is a must for every traveling birder.

Imagine standing on a beach near Cape Town; Southern Right Whales surface in a sparkling sea while Jackass Penguins bray and display—some from only five feet away. Or, walking at 10,000 feet on top of the Drakensberg escarpment, where Orange-breasted Rockjumpers call from the boulders, Bald Ibis feed in the tussock grass, and little flocks of Drakensberg Siskins drink from a mountain stream. Only two days before you were on a pelagic off the Cape of Good Hope watching hundreds of White-chinned and Cape petrels, both Antarctic and Hall's giant-petrels, Black-bellied Storm-Petrel, and Shy, Black-browed, and Yellow-nosed albatrosses. It's hard to remember that hardly a week before you

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25 YEARS, 135 TOURS

Big news! This newsletter's arrival in your mailbox marks the beginning of our 25th year of birding tours around the globe. It's been a great journey since our first trip, a full group to Churchill, Manitoba, in June 1985. We've had our focus forward ever since—even this anniversary has us looking at 2010 and beyond, toward our largest-ever schedule of 135 tours on which we expect, thanks to your lively participation and our stellar guides and office staff, a wealth of discoveries and great times. Among itineraries early in the coming year are three of special note. New on our schedule: a duo of distinct Colombia tours developed by guide Richard Webster, with *Colombia: Bogota, the Magdalena Valley & Santa Marta* in January and *Colombia: Santa Marta Escape* in March; and, also in January, *Cambodia* with guide Phil Gregory, hitting all the important birding spots as well as famed Angkor Wat. Of course, there'll be 36 other choices from January to March, with faves from canopy birding at Ecuador's Sacha Lodge and amazing Yellowstone in Winter to various Panama itineraries, Thailand, Guatemala, Suriname, Chile, Hawaii, and much more.

See page 11 for descriptions of the new Colombia trips and page 7 for a listing of our January-February 2010 departures (or our website for a complete listing). And, of course, to all who've traveled with us since day one, a huge THANKS! It's been great, and we look forward to being out in the field again generating a lot of great birds and smiles with you very soon.

—Jan Pierson

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GuideLines *with Bret Whitney*

1985 was an especially exciting year for me as it marked a number of great embarkations. Together with Rose Ann and John Rowlett and Jan Pierson, I was consumed with fledgling Field Guides Incorporated, then but a theory, now a model for egalitarian, small-business venture and career-path field ornithologists. A wonderful aspect of our first year was that, after nearly six years of intensive tour-leading travel for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, I suddenly had a whole lot of time on my hands! At that point I had birded fairly extensively in Central and northern South America, as had my colleagues—but we knew relatively little about the south. Thus, I planned and scouted a groundbreaking, comprehensive tour to Chile in 1985 that for years served our clients and us very well and continues under the superb leadership of Alvaro Jaramillo, Peter Burke, and Ricardo Matus. And I did something else that year, really different and more instrumental in developing the future Field Guides: I took an intensive course in Portuguese at UT Austin. I was already fluent in Spanish, so Portuguese came easily to me. With the spoken word, I opened the massive, emerald door to Brazil, and my life was changed forever.

I first set foot on *terra brasiliis* in December, 1986, traveling as I did so many times with my great friend Bob Barth, professor of Ornithology at the University of Texas. I had just survived a nasty bike crash that introduced me



immediately to a boulder and shortly thereafter to the word *avulsion*, an “opening” that required 62 stitches up and down my forehead to close. My face was bruised and swollen and my cranium wrapped in white bandages as I staggered off the plane in Rio and gazed deliriously out to the blue wall of the *Serra do Mar* (“Sierra of the Sea”) on the horizon. To this day, I never cease to marvel at that (now much clearer!) panorama, I’m sure in just the same way as did the earliest European naturalists to disembark at the fabled port of Rio de Janeiro.

We were to be met, the next morning, by a similarly young birder named José Fernando Pacheco, a disciple of the “Father of Brazilian Ornithology,” Helmut Sick, with whom I had coordinated some of our itinerary. Fernando and I became friends immediately and, with a mixed-flock of birders, had fantastic times birding some favorite places around Rio; these are friendships that have continued to grow over the now 20-plus years. After annual visits to various parts of Brazil, many together with Fernando, I moved to Rio in 1994 and lived there for two years at the invitation of the Biology Department of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, splitting a very nice apartment with Fernando and his wife, Claudia Bauer. It was all Portuguese all the time! Those two years, with the help of my friends and a *carioca* (“native of Rio”) girlfriend or two, really immersed me in Brazilian birding and culture.

At right, Bret and Fernando just before they got their lifer Stresemann’s Bristlefront (an ultra-rare, endemic tapaculo-thing) in Minas Gerais, Oct. 2005 (you should have been there just *after!*). Peter Burke, surrounded at far right by some of his fabulous work for the project, is, in addition to everything else in his life, one of the main artists for the Brazil field guides. He’s currently hard at work finishing the 12 raptor plates for Volume 1, all to be auctioned off to help with funding for subsequent volumes (stay tuned!). Facing page, Bret preparing a Brazilian *moqueca*, a traditional seafood stew, for friends and Field Guides Dan Lane, Karen Turner, and Teresa Paschall.



“I chose this tour because I love to bird with Field Guides. This was a great overall experience! Rose Ann and Richard were terrific...they were enthusiastic and helpful. It was a good group. Office service was excellent.” Suellen Balestra, Northern Peru: Endemics Galore 2008

“A superb overall experience. Best features were Bret Whitney’s knowledge of the areas and of the species’ vocalizations and habits...he was absolutely top-notch. Very good group experience—everyone pitched in to spot birds and to point out other natural history features.” Bruce Sorrie, Northeast Brazil: Long Live the Lear’s 2009

Last Spaces

Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge, July 22-31 with Dave Stejskal
Arizona’s Second Spring II, August 7-16 with John Coons
Galapagos, August 8-18 with Alvaro Jaramillo
Iquitos, Peru: Canopy Walkways & Ancient Forests, August 11-22 with Dave Stejskal
Kenya, August 29-September 26 with Terry Stevenson
Morocco, September 4-21 with George Armistead
Slice of California: Seabirds to Sierras, September 4-13 with Alvaro Jaramillo
Rio Negro Paradise: Manaus, September 21-October 4 with Bret Whitney
Australia (Part I), September 25-October 15 with Chris Benesh & Megan Crewe
Serra dos Tucanos, Brazil, September 26-October 6 with John Rowlett
Peruvian Rainforests of the Tambopata, September 28-October 11 with Rose Ann Rowlett

BRET'S BRAZIL BOOK

I have now birded or relaxed in, and have led Field Guides tours through, most of the enormous Republic of Brazil, and there remains just a handful of Brazil's nearly 1900 species of birds I haven't yet met in the field (aarrgh, I missed the only Kinglet *Calyptura* in a hundred years by just a couple of days in October, 1996—Fernando was the second of five amigos to see it!). In the process of getting around to find and learn about all of those species, even describing some new to science, Fernando and I decided that what Brazil needed was a good guide to field identification of its birds. And as I have continued to spend half of every year in Brazil over the past decade, it has become increasingly apparent that the very best thing that I personally could give back to Brazil, with all its wealth of ecosystems and challenges to protect them, would be to produce an authoritative, beautifully illustrated, yet very inexpensive bilingual series of regional field guides to the country's birds. Our project, to be published by Lynx Edicions (publishers of the *Handbook of the Birds of the World* series), and those of colleagues working with Princeton University Press, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and others producing field guides for Brazil are together soon going to result in a huge surge forward in the interest and fervor that an already growing number of Brazilians feel for enjoying and protecting their birds and other wildlife. Our first volume will focus on the Atlantic Forest biome of south-east and southern Brazil, where the majority of Brazilians live, where an unequalled number of endemic species have evolved, and where conservation problems are severe. I am 100% confident and optimistic that the conservation tide can and will be turned to an increasingly positive direction largely through the accessibility of birds to the Brazilian people.

My co-authors are my excellent friends Luis Fábio Silveira of the University of São Paulo and, of course, Fernando, both of them incredibly knowledgeable Brazilian ornithologists and committed conservationists. As we head into the final two years of work to publish this first volume (three others will follow at *much* shorter intervals!), we invite all of you to contribute to our IRS-accredited, tax-deductible account at The Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Through low-key, unpracticed fund-raising and online investing of personal resources, I've gathered enough to pay artists, mapmakers, and sound-digitizers for these 10-plus years. I am deeply appreciative of all of you out there who have already contributed (and to timely picks with APPL, JBLU, and especially EWZ)! Lynx has generously provided to me as much of their excellent *HBW* art as I can use, and they're tremendously supportive of helping to produce an inexpensive Brazilian edition of the books for which none of us will receive royalties, commissions, reimbursements, or other monies—it's truly a labor of love, and truly a conservation-enabling gift to Brazil. Please help us make great things happen with your kind contribution to an everlasting celebration of Brazilian birds!

Contributions may be sent to:

Lori McCole
Science Administrative Director
Academy of Natural Sciences
1900 Ben Franklin Parkway
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1195

Checks should be made payable to The Academy of Natural Sciences, with "*Whitney Birds of Brazil Book Project*" on the memo line or in an attached note.



FIELD GUIDES UPCOMING BRAZIL TOUR SCHEDULE

Rio Negro Paradise: Manaus, Brazil—Sep. 21-Oct. 4, 2009 with Bret Whitney

Serra dos Tucanos: Brazil—Sep. 26-Oct. 6, 2009 with John Rowlett

Carajas: Lower Amazonian Brazil—Oct. 4-13, 2009 with Bret Whitney

Alta Floresta, Brazil—Oct 5-16, 2009 with John Rowlett

Safari Brazil: The Pantanal & More—Oct. 10-26, 2009 with Mitch Lysinger

Mamiraua: Rio Amazon, Brazil—Oct. 13-18, 2009 with Bret Whitney

Spectacular Southeast Brazil: North of the Tropic—Oct. 30-Nov. 15, 2009 with Bret Whitney

Spectacular Southeast Brazil: South of the Capricorn—Nov. 13-27, 2009 with Bret Whitney & Jay VanderGaast

Northeast Brazil: Long Live the Lear's!—Jan. 17-Feb. 7, 2010 with Bret Whitney

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In addition to the Ecuador tour summary appearing here, Rose Ann has written a summary for our Peru tours, Bret for our Brazil tours, and Richard for our new Colombia tours. These are linked from individual web pages for each country's tours and from the right sidebar on the News Page. And check our News Page for news about tours we've already run for the year and those still upcoming.

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.

FRESH FROM THE FIELD

Reports from Recent Tours
compiled by Alvaro Jaramillo and Abbie Rowlett

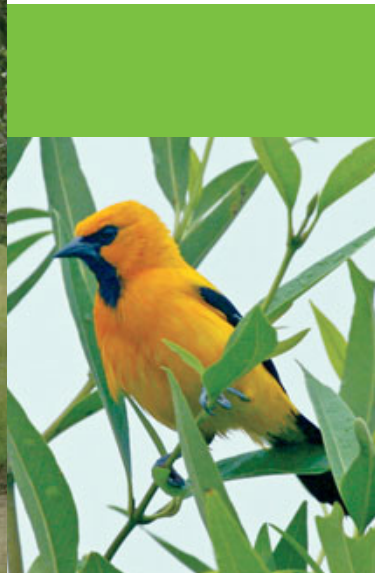


Although the Amazon itself does not flow through Ecuador, the mighty Napo, a major tributary, does and we ply its waters on our AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE tour; it's a fantastic place to visit. Hey, even if you aren't a birder, you'll think this is the trip of a lifetime! At left, the "port" where the boats land at the lodge—all transportation here is by water on river and oxbow lagoon. Fantastic, isn't it? Above, a salt lick, or *collpa*, draws various parrots for a mineral and vitamin "booster"; here Mealy, Yellow-crowned, and Blue-headed parrots visit. At right, a Common Potoo female on a nest is trying her best to look like a piece of wood—but a panting piece of wood? [Photos by guides Rose Ann Rowlett and Dan Lane]



While the overall economy might have been shrinking in 2009, our tour offerings were not. In fact we added new destinations, like our inaugural COLORADO GROUSE tour. The "chickens" tour, as we fondly labeled it during the planning stages, was a resounding success, with a superb seven species of grouse including both prairie-chickens and both sage-grouse! And in addition, our group enjoyed a great part of the state of Colorado, from the mountains to the canyons and lowlands. Some of the spectacular scenery included the Colorado National Monument at right. Our birding in the highlands at Loveland Pass, the continental divide, was rewarded with a gorgeous and snowy White-tailed Ptarmigan (lower right). No "chicken" booms like the Greater Sage-Grouse; as good as he looks, the sound of him is even more amazing. You must go and hear it for yourself! [Photos by guide Dan Lane]





The three "Guianas" are often the forgotten corner of South America. They are rarely visited, people there do not speak Spanish or Portuguese, and, in truth, they are as much a mystery to North Americans as they are to the rest of South America. If you remember when Myrtle and Audubon's warblers were separate species, then you may recall that Suriname was Dutch Guiana. But what you may not know is that since there are so few people there, the forest in this little country is still very much alive and well. We have resumed offering tours to Suriname for the past few years, and we've had some superb sightings. One of the comfortable lodges we stay at is Palumeu Lodge, above, and one of the common and colorful birds we see is the Yellow Oriole. [Photos by guide Dave Stejskal]



You may have noticed that last year we offered a new line of tours—we call them BIRDING PLUS. While these are birding tours, there's a secondary focus that may be cultural or scientific or, like our VENEZUELA'S LLANOS: BIRDING & PHOTOGRAPHY, photographing birds and wildlife in a spot that has a lot to photograph and at a pace that allows folks to get great pictures. Our first shot (pun intended, I'm afraid) at this tour was superb. The photos that came in from participants and from guide George Armistead were absolutely stunning. Here is but a sampling of some of the imagery from participant Spike Baker: Giant Anteater with young (at top); White-tailed Nightjar (middle), and a fat-billed Ringed Kingfisher (bottom).



With the returning DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, our new BAHAMAS: BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES, our old standards the LESSER ANTILLES and PUERTO RICO, we have a well-rounded sampling of the Caribbean Basin. Puerto Rico is the smallest of the Greater Antilles and hosts a nice diversity of specialties, including the Caribbean endemic family of the todies. Here, guide George Armistead captures some of the birds of this little big island. Above, a graceful and gorgeous White-tailed Tropicbird. At top right, the Loggerhead Kingbird of Puerto Rico does not look or sound like others on the islands and probably deserves species status. At right, the Puerto Rican Screech-Owl is rather unorthodox-looking, and possibly in the future we'll find out that these Greater Antillean small owls are an ancient group only distantly related to continental screech-owls. Many of the other wonderful birds and mammals from the islands also seem only distantly related to mainland counterparts.





CALIFORNIA BIRDIN'

Alvaro Jaramillo

Just as we call India a subcontinent, we could call California a subnation, not only in its population, size, and economy, but in its birds and wildlife. Why, California even has endemic birds!

Part of what makes it special is that, lying as it does on the far west of the continent, it is in an ecological panorama all its own. It has birds like the Wrentit and Yellow-billed Magpie, which are as foreign to most western birders as they are to those in the East—they are what we might call “far western” birds. It is the mountains that make the difference, dividing far western species from those more classical western species that reach east to the Rockies.

In the San Francisco Bay area, where we'll begin our **SLICE OF CALIFORNIA** tour, oceanic humidity is trapped by various mountains, creating pockets akin to the Pacific Northwest with towering old growth Redwoods, while on the dry side there are desert-like conditions with chaparral, dry pine, and grassland. This mix of mountains and ocean, wet and dry, makes it an area that has more habitats per square mile than nearly anywhere on the continent. Of course, this means birds, birds, birds! We may see goodies like Mountain Quail, Tricolored Blackbird, Sage and California thrashers, Red-breasted Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, and more seabirds than you can imagine both on the coast and on our pelagic—from Rhinoceros Auklets to Marbled Murrelets to Buller's Shearwaters—there is a lot to see.

The beauty of our tour is that it takes us from the ocean to the desert, from sea to sage, from surfer to rancher. Our route also means that we keep the timing and drives to reasonable levels; California is a huge state, after all. In addition, we'll begin the tour on my stomping grounds, a place I love, the Bay Area, particularly the coastal area south of San Francisco where I live. We'll go to some of my favorite local birding spots—and some of the great local dining spots. On this tour we'll enjoy not just the birds but the food, the weather, the scenery—all from a local's perspective. You can't go wrong birding California, so I invite you to join me this fall, September 4-13.



At top a scene from the Sierra, the mountain range that divides the West from the far West. The birds and creatures on the east and west slopes are rather different! We see this difference on our **SLICE OF CALIFORNIA** tour. Above, a very clean Caspian Tern and a fresh-looking Sage Thrasher—a desert and a coastal bird represent the varied goals of this great California sampler. [Photos by guide Alvaro Jaramillo]

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.

October 2009

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.

MAMIRAUÁ: RIO AMAZON, BRAZIL—October 13-18, 2009 with Bret Whitney. Birding at a premier reserve of undisturbed rainforest on the wild north bank of the Amazon River. **May be combined with CARAJAS: LOWER AMAZONIAN 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 in this center of avian endemism; the first of our two-part tour takes you through the tiny but mighty (birdy, that is!) states of Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro, plus far northern São Paulo.

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.

November-December 2009

CHILE—November 1-21, 2009 with Alvaro Jaramillo. Comprehensive tip-to-tip survey tour of this visually spectacular and tourist-friendly country.

ANTARCTICA: ANTARCTIC PENINSULA, SOUTH GEORGIA & THE FALKLANDS—November 1-24, 2009 with George Armistead. Ultimate seabird and wildlife cruise, including fabulous South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. Variable fee depending on cabin choice.

LOUISIANA: RED BEANS & YELLOW RAILS I—November 5-9, 2009 with Dan Lane. Late autumn birding on the Gulf Coast targeting Yellow Rails and other migrants and wintering species of the region.

BIRDING PLUS—IRELAND IN FALL: BIRDS, TRADITIONAL MUSIC & PUBS—November 5-15, 2009 with Terry McEneaney. The birds, culture, music, and pubs of this beautiful country in fall.

NORTHERN PERU: ENDEMICS GALORE—November 8-27, 2009 with Rose Ann Rowlett & Richard Webster. A tour to one of the least-known and most endemic-rich areas of South America, with many recently-described species from the Andes and the Marañon basin.

MADAGASCAR, MAURITIUS & REUNION—November 9–December 8, 2009 (Seychelles extension)

sion) with Megan Crewe & Phil Gregory. More than 130 endemics and a dozen lemurs are the focus on these other-worldly islands; optional extension to the beautiful Seychelles.

LOUISIANA: RED BEANS & YELLOW RAILS II—November 12-16, 2009 with Dan Lane. Late autumn birding on the Gulf Coast targeting Yellow Rails and other migrants and wintering species of the region.

SPECTACULAR SOUTHEAST BRAZIL: SOUTH OF THE CAPRICORN—November 13-27, 2009 with Bret Whitney & Jay VanderGaast. Prepare to be blown away in this center of avian endemism; the second part of our two-part tour picks up from Sao Paulo and runs south through the gaucho country of Rio Grande do Sul, a region settled by Italian and German immigrants so culturally different from the north that you may wonder if we are truly still in Brazil!

SOUTHERN INDIA—November 15-December 6, 2009 with Terry Stevenson. From the mammal-rich lowlands of Nagarhole to the mountains of the Western Ghats rich in endemic birds and the tranquil beauty of the south Indian backwaters.

NEW ZEALAND—November 19-December 7, 2009 with Chris Benesh. Beautiful landscapes as a backdrop for nearly 50 endemic birds plus a great selection of seabirds.

URUGUAY: BIRDING THE LAND OF THE GAUCHOS—December 4-18, 2009 with Alvaro Jaramillo. The birds of the Pampas and then some.

January-February 2010

OMAN & THE UAE: BIRDING ARABIA—January 7-23, 2010 with George Armistead & local guide. Some of the best Arabian Peninsula birding in two very friendly and scenic countries with many regional endemics and specialty birds, including a good chance for the unique Hypocolius. An array of desert, wetland, and coastal habitats.

AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE—January 14-23, 2010 with Dan Lane. One-site tour to one of the most comfortable lodges in western Amazonia with some of the birdiest canopy platforms anywhere. **May be combined with JEWELS of Ecuador: Hummers, Tanagers & Antpittas.**

PANAMA'S CANOPY TOWER I—January 16-23, 2010 with Jay VanderGaast & local guide. A towering introduction to Neotropical birds based entirely in one unique lodge; great birding from the Tower with quick access to famous Pipeline Road and other locations; includes train ride back from Colon after Achiote Road.

COLIMA & JALISCO—January 16-24, 2010 with Chris Benesh & Megan Crewe. A popular and comfortable introduction to Neotropical birds; many West Mexican endemics and rarities; lovely coastal and montane scenery.

YELLOWSTONE IN WINTER—January 16-24, 2010 with Terry McEneaney. A winter birding, wildlife, and landscape adventure to one of the world's legendary destinations.

VENEZUELA—January 16-30, 2010 with John Coons. The best of this modern, bird-rich country in the beautiful Andes, lush Rancho Grande/Henri Pittier National Park, and the teeming waterbirds and wildlife of the vast

llanos. Limited to 9 participants. May be combined with **VENEZUELA: TEPUIS ENDEMICS.**

THAILAND—January 16-February 6, 2010 (Gurney's Pitta & Nicobar Pigeon Extension) with Dave Stejskal & Uthai Treesucon. A wide variety of forest birds—both of Himalayan and tropical affinities—in the friendly heart of Southeast Asia.

COLOMBIA: BOGOTA, THE MAGDALENA VALLEY & SANTA MARTA—January 16-February 2, 2010 with Richard Webster. Energetic, endemic-oriented tour connecting reserves up the Magdalena Valley from Bogota to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

NORTHEAST BRAZIL: LONG LIVE THE LEAR'S!—January 17-February 7, 2010 (Carajas Extension) with Bret Whitney. From beautiful beaches to barren badlands, we traverse Northeast Brazil in a quest for specialties of the endangered caatinga, chapada, and Atlantic Forest habitats, plus endemics of the middle Rio Sao Francisco.

JEWELS OF ECUADOR: HUMMERS, TANAGERS & ANTPITTAS I—January 23-February 9, 2010 with Mitch Lysinger. Survey tour of Andean Ecuador; transects the north from Pacific lowlands to east-slope foothills and includes stunning Podocarpus and Cajas national parks in the south; diverse avifauna dominated by colorful hummers and tanagers and more subtle and haunting antpittas. **May be combined with SACHA LODGE.**

NORTHERN INDIA: BHARATPUR, CORBETT & THE HIMALAYAN FOOTHILLS—January 23-February 14, 2010 with Terry Stevenson. Fantastic adventure from the Ganges plains to the Himalayan foothills, with the Bharatpur wetlands, a good chance of Tiger, and the wondrous Taj Mahal.

OAXACA—January 24-31, 2010 with Megan Crewe & second guide. Superb birding with two-dozen Mexican endemics and fascinating ruins while based in lovely Oaxaca City. **May be combined with COLIMA & JALISCO.**

VENEZUELA: TEPUIS ENDEMICS—January 29-February 7, 2010 with Jay VanderGaast. Short, one-site tour focusing on the many endemics and other specialties of eastern Venezuela. **May be combined with VENEZUELA.**

THE HEART & SOLE OF CHILE—January 30-February 13, 2010 (Easter Island Extension) with Peter Burke & Ricardo Matus. A sampling of Chile's "heart" between Santiago and the Chiloe Island, and a pelagic, the "sole." This tour does not replace our longer, comprehensive tour, but allows a shorter and more relaxed visit to this increasingly popular and incredibly scenic country.

PANAMA'S CANOPY LODGE: EL VALLE DE ANTON—January 31-February 7, 2010 with John Rowlett. A superb tour as an introduction to Neotropical birds or to complement your broader Middle American birding, all based at a charming lodge.

WINTER JAPAN: DANCING CRANES & SPECTACULAR SEA-EAGLES—February 6-19, 2010 with Phil Gregory & local guide. A tour for Japan's winter birding spectacles, including the fabulous cranes and Steller's Sea-Eagle.

WESTERN MEXICO: SAN BLAS & THE SINALOA HIGHLANDS—February 10-20, 2010 with Jesse Fagan & David Mackay. Superb and varied birding in one of Mexico's richest areas with a number of northwestern Mexican endemics and plenty of scenery.

PANAMA'S WILD DARIEN: CANA & CERRO PIRRE—February 11-20, 2010 with John Rowlett. A true wilderness area accessed by charter aircraft; rich Neotropical avifauna with many endemics and species of restricted range, including Beautiful Treerunner, Pirre Warbler, Dusky-backed Jacamar, and the monotypic Sapayoa. **May be combined with PANAMA'S CANOPY TOWER.**

AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE II—February 12-21, 2010 with Dan Lane. One-site tour to one of the most comfortable lodges in western Amazonia with one of the birdiest and sturdiest canopy platforms anywhere. Well-appointed lodgings with electricity, hot water, and delicious food; extensive trail system and boat trips on the Rio Napo. **May be combined with JEWELS OF ECUADOR II.**

CAMBODIA—February 18-26, 2010 with Phil Gregory. A new offering in our 2010 schedule.

BIRDING PLUS—VENEZUELA'S LLANOS & PHOTOGRAPHY—February 19-March 1, 2010 with George Armistead. More photo opps in the context of slower-paced birding than on our regular tours. We'll take advantage of good opportunities for photographing birds as we find them, and we'll mix these with spotting and identifying a good many of the myriad species possible at our two main sites. If you enjoy both birding and photography, you'll enjoy this tour!

PANAMA'S CANOPY TOWER II—February 20-27, 2010 with John Coons & local guide. A towering introduction to Neotropical birds based entirely in one unique lodge; great birding from the Tower with quick access to famous Pipeline Road and other locations; includes train ride back from Colon after Achiote Road. **May be combined with PANAMA'S WILD DARIEN.**

JEWELS OF ECUADOR: HUMMERS, TANAGERS & ANTPITTAS II—February 20-March 9, 2010 with Rose Ann Rowlett. Survey tour of Andean Ecuador; transects the north from Pacific lowlands to east-slope foothills and includes stunning Podocarpus and Cajas national parks in the south; diverse avifauna dominated by colorful hummers and tanagers and more subtle and haunting antpittas. Limited to 8 participants. **May be combined with SACHA LODGE.**

SOUTHWESTERN ECUADOR SPECIALTIES: JOCOTOCO FOUNDATION RESERVES—February 21-March 7, 2010 with Mitch Lysinger. Focuses on the many specialties of the southwest, from Tumbesian endemics to very local Ecuadorian endemics of the humid foothills and mountains.

GUATEMALA: SHADE-GROWN BIRDING—February 24-March 6, 2010 with Jesse Fagan. Numerous Middle American specialties, among them Resplendent Quetzal, a host of hummingbirds, and Azure-rumped Tanager, set against a dramatic volcanic landscape and colorful Mayan culture. **May be combined with HONDURAS: LAND OF THE EMERALDS.**

PANAMA'S CANOPY TOWER III—February 27-March 6, 2010 with Chris Benesh & local guide. A towering introduction to Neotropical birds based entirely in one unique lodge; great birding from the Tower with quick access to famous Pipeline Road and other locations; includes train ride back from Colon after Achiote Road. **May be combined with WESTERN PANAMA.**

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO—February 27-March 8, 2010 with Megan Crewe. Wonderful introduction to South America's bird riches, including bellbirds, toucans, manakins, and motmots with birding right outside our doors.

Holiday Tours

If holiday birding with Field Guides is in your plans for later this year, it's good to get flights booked early for this busy travel time to allow yourself the best options and fare. Call our office and our travel agents can help you sort out the possibilities. Our holiday destinations include:

GUATEMALA THANKSGIVING & TEMPLES OF TIKAL—November 21-30, 2009 with Jesse Fagan. A new holiday tour combining rich birding at lovely fincas in the highlands as well as the Mayan ruins of Tikal in the Peten lowlands.

ARIZONA WINTER SPECIALTIES—November 27-December 5, 2009 or December 26, 2009-January 3, 2010. Short tour with exceptional winter birding in sunny southern Arizona with numerous local specialties and a high potential for Mexican rarities. Limited to 8 participants with long-time Arizona expert Dave Stejskal.

PANAMA'S CANOPY LODGE: EL VALLE DE ANTON—December 27, 2009-January 3, 2010 with John Coons. A superb tour as an introduction to Neotropical birds or to complement your broader Middle American birding, all based at a charming lodge.

HOLIDAY AT SAN ISIDRO, ECUADOR—December 27, 2009-January 5, 2010 with Mitch Lysinger. Based at comfortable cabanas with dramatic cloud forest vistas and fabulous food, our small group will bird rich east-slope Andean forest from the foothills to treeline and paramo

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO—December 27, 2009-January 5, 2010 with Megan Crewe. Wonderful introduction to South America's bird riches.

OAXACA & THE PACIFIC COAST—December 27, 2009-January 7, 2010 with Chris Benesh & Wayne Petersen. In addition to our regular Oaxacan haunts and the incredible spectacle of Oaxaca in its Christmas finery, the tour will spend a few days on the Pacific coast for a different avifauna with additional Mexican specialties.

HOLIDAY COSTA RICA: RANCHO NATURALISTA—December 19-27, 2009 or December 30, 2009-January 7, 2010 with Jesse Fagan. A one-site tour based at one of Costa Rica's premier birding lodges, with day visits to Tapanti National Park, Irazu Volcano, and the Caribbean lowlands.

Ecuador

Field Guides Tours

Continued from cover

long time (Rose Ann Rowlett since 1979). The cumulative experience of our guides, together with Ecuador's incredible diversity, its small size, its friendly people, and its burgeoning ecotourism development, all contribute to maximizing our tour options for birding Ecuador, resulting in our greatest number of tour departures to any one country. With ever-improving access and increased availability of comfortable lodgings right in the midst of the birds, our many Ecuador tours offer something for every birder. Like our guides, you may find yourself going back for more and more!

Below you'll find a brief summary of our current offerings:

To start with, the **GALAPAGOS** are a world apart—evolution's showcase and a must for any interested naturalist/birder. We offer 11-day tours (during June, July, and August) designed to make it possible to see all the endemic birds (and, naturally, the fascinating mammals, reptiles, and flora) in the intimacy of a small group. To focus all of our time on the islands themselves and their fascinating natural history, we fly both to and from the Galapagos, basing our visit aboard a comfortable vessel with great food, naturalists, and crew, which can travel by night to maximize our enjoyment of these ruggedly beautiful islands. Folks with enough time often combine our Galapagos tour with a 10-day summer mainland tour, either *Montane Ecuador* or *Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge*, or both, for a wonderful introduction to the birds of Ecuador.

Our mainland tours can be roughly divided into two groups based on focus, those which are relatively short samplers, and those which are focused on a more thorough coverage of the birdlife of a transect of reasonable length. In the *first group* are **MONTANE ECUADOR**, a 10-day sampler of montane habitats on both sides of the Andean cordilleras in northern Ecuador, and **ECUADOR: RAINFOREST & ANDES**, a 15-day sampler that includes some of the highlights of a transect of the north, from western foothills and humid Andean slopes to east-slope montane forests and foothills combined with four days in Amazonian rainforest at Sacha. The former tour makes a good introduction to Andean birding, with wonderful hummers and tanagers amid some lovely Andean scenery. The latter serves well folks who may have but one opportunity to experience the riches of Ecuador and would like a taste of as much as possible; it offers a long list of birds, many of them spectacular, but don't be surprised if you're a little overwhelmed—in a wonderful way, of course.

The second group is comprised of tours that focus on more thorough coverage. Two are 10-day, one-site tours: **AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE**, which is a 6-full-day immersion in lowland rainforest birding while based at one of the most comfortable and best-run lodges in western Amazonia, with some of the birdiest canopy platforms anywhere; and **HOLIDAY AT SAN ISIDRO, ECUADOR**, a bird-rich holiday escape that focuses on the avifauna of the humid montane forests cloaking the east slope, from high elevations down into the Andean foothills, based primarily at the very comfortable San Isidro Lodge (at 7000 feet).



The other two are longer survey tours, which attempt reasonably thorough samplings of complementary routes through western and Andean Ecuador. Our **JEWELS OF ECUADOR: HUMMERS, TANAGERS & ANTPITTAS** tour (Jan/Feb or Feb/Mar) is an 18-day tour that combines a transect of the north with a sampling of specialties from stunning Podocarpus and Cajas national parks in the south. Centered around the lush, forest-cloaked slopes of the equatorial Andes, the world's stronghold for tanagers, hummingbirds, and antpittas, this tour visits both outer slopes of Ecuador's cordilleras, from paramo and treeline down to the rich upper tropical zone along the eastern base of the Andes and the tropical Choco lowlands in the northwest. It represents our most thorough coverage of Andean Ecuador in a single tour,

and some departures can be combined with *Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge* for an astounding sampling of Ecuador's birds.

Complementing the *Jewels* trip is **SOUTHWESTERN ECUADOR SPECIALTIES: JOCOTOCO FOUNDATION RESERVES**, a 15-day tour (Feb/Mar) that focuses on the many specialties of the southwest, especially the very local Ecuadorian endemics of the humid foothills and mountains and on Tumbesian specialties not normally seen on our *Jewels* or *Northern Peru* tours. This is the tour on which to see the Jocotoco Antpitta. We'll be based primarily in the lovely Jocotoco Foundation lodges, right in the heart of good birding, and by going during the local rainy season, we'll enjoy the arid Tumbesian habitats at their greenest and their avifauna in full song and breeding activity.

All of our Ecuador offerings are for small groups, usually with a maximum of 8 participants, and all require participants to be in fairly good condition for full participation. We offer various departure dates for tours that can be done successfully at various times of the year; and given that Ecuador is right on the equator, there's always good birding somewhere. In some cases, several different tours can be taken back to back (look for the Combo Tours section, where applicable, at the bottom of each tour's page on our website), and any of them can be extended by a day or two.

You may visit our website where you may browse through the descriptions of each tour to refine your choices, and then check out the detailed itinerary

by clicking on ITINERARIES to the right of the description. You can even check out what was seen on one or more past tours to that area by clicking on PAST TRIPLISTS in the right sidebar. If you have further questions, our office staff and/or guides will be happy to answer them. Just remember: Once you've birded anywhere in Ecuador, you're likely to want to come again! Our Ecuador tour schedule for the next year includes:

AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE

June 30-July 9, 2009 with Dan Lane
July 22-31, 2009 with Dave Stejskal
January 14-23, 2010 with Dan Lane
February 12-21, 2010 with Dan Lane

ECUADOR: RAINFOREST & ANDES

September 5-19, 2009 with Mitch Lysinger
March 14-28, 2010 with Mitch Lysinger

GALAPAGOS

August 8-18, 2009 with Alvaro Jaramillo
June 19-29, 2010 with Mitch Lysinger
July 17-27, 2010 with Megan Crewe
August 7-17, 2010 with George Armistead



JEWELS OF ECUADOR: HUMMERS, TANAGERS & ANTPITTAS

January 23-February 9, 2010 with
Mitch Lysinger
February 20-March 9, 2010 with
Rose Ann Rowlett

MONTANE ECUADOR

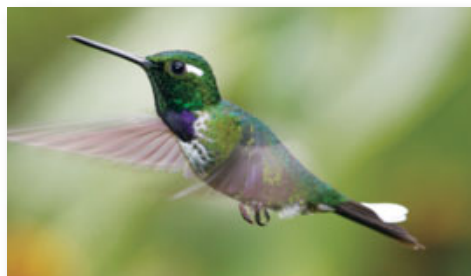
June 12-21, 2009 with Mitch Lysinger
June 11-20, 2010 with Mitch Lysinger
July 30-August 8, 2010 with Mitch Lysinger

SOUTHWESTERN ECUADOR SPECIALTIES: JOCOTOCO FOUNDATION RESERVES

February 21-March 7, 2010 with
Mitch Lysinger

HOLIDAY AT SAN ISIDRO

December 27, 2009-January 5, 2010 with Mitch Lysinger
December 26, 2010-January 4, 2011 with Mitch Lysinger



Images from Ecuador: facing page, approaching the exit boardwalk at Sacha Lodge; the formerly mysterious Giant Antpitta, now much easier to see; and this page, three of the many fantastic hummingbirds of Ecuador: Velvet-purple Coronet (top), Empress Brilliant (middle), and Purple-bibbed Whitetip (bottom). [Photos by guides Rose Ann Rowlett & Richard Webster]

South Africa

Continued from cover

were driving across the Karoo, searching for Namaqua Sandgrouse, Ludwig's Bustard, and White-backed Mousebird. The ten species (or so) of similar-looking larks may now be pushed to the back of your memory as we bird our way through the spectacular cliffs and forest patches at Oribi Gorge where Knysna Woodpecker is our main target, while African Emerald Cuckoo, Trumpeter Hornbill, and a variety of flashy sunbirds keep us happily side-tracked.

South Africa's sheer diversity of habitats—and the totally unique flora—support such a huge variety of both birds and mammals that it's really only comparable to the famous parks of Kenya or Tanzania. But only in South Africa can you watch flocks of Sociable Weavers (at their haystack-sized nests) with Springbok and Gemsbok in the background. Or fifteen thousand pairs of Cape Gannets living with Cape Fur Seals at Lambert's Bay, Crested Guinea fowl scratching around with White Rhinos in Mkuzi, and Blue Cranes and Blesbok walking the same fields in the eastern Transvaal.

Indeed the highlights of a South Africa tour are many, whether you're watching the three species of endemic cormorant in the Cape region or striking Black Harriers in the West Coast National Park. And who could ever forget a streamer-tailed male Cape Sugarbird feeding on a King Protea, the dashing flight of the rare Taita Falcon, or the thoughtful dark eyes of a Pel's Fishing-Owl staring back at you from deep within a giant riverine fig?

There are just a few spaces open on our upcoming tour, **October 8-31**. Why not join Rod Cassidy and me for a great tour you'll never forget?



Howick Falls and Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill
[Photos by participants Dean Schuler and Bob Smidt]

Northern Peru Endemics Galore

November 8-27, 2009

Richard Webster

As for why this is our (our = the guides, Rose Ann Rowlett and Richard Webster) favorite tour, to boil down to one sentence why we have been returning for twelve years to explore the Andes of Northern Peru, East and West, high and low, dry and wet, and also Central, medium, and moist, birding sand dunes, mesquite forests, rocky canyons, semi-deciduous woodland, elfin and cloud forests, and puna in pursuit of threatened species like Peruvian Plantcutter in the Sechura Desert, White-winged Guan in Quebrada Limon, the Marvelous Spatuletail at Florida de Pomacochas, and Yellow-faced Parrotlet above the Rio Marañon, is to expand at length in a manner that will have my editor screaming at me "It's the variety, stupid!" but boiling it down to that simple sentence might make you falter as you think of its model, "It's the economy, stupid!" and we should admit that our efforts to entice you to sign up for our tour may face that extra hurdle, one that surely can be overcome by lengthening this sentence a tiny bit with a mention of the Andean Cocks-of-the-Rock above Afluente, the Rainbow Starfrontlets at Leimebamba, and Rose Ann's favorite antpitta, whichever one of the ten possibilities that might be.

If you are not one of the hundred plus people who have joined us on this tour over the years, but are interested in adding Variety to your life 8-27 November 2009, the tour has changed little in route and birds but has evolved in some other ways, particularly in the availability of new lodging, which has reduced the camping from a maximum of nine nights to **just two**



Our 2008 Northern Peru group at the Leimebamba Museum and a Black-necked Flicker of the northern form [Photos by guides Rose Ann Rowlett & Richard Webster]



(at separate, warm-weather sites), and otherwise improved the birding opportunities. New for this year is Chaparri Lodge, which expands our opportunities for White-winged Guan, as well as Tumbesian species such as White-tailed Jay (from the breakfast table) and Sulphur-throated Finch. New last year was Owllet Lodge, which reduces the driving and puts us for four nights in cloud forest within a hoot of a territory of Long-whiskered Owllets (which requires a big aster-

isk, because we haven't done better than hear them yet). Best of all, the recently established reserve at Abra Patricia, on which Owllet Lodge sits, has several trails that take us off the road and into the forest.

The hotel in nearby Pomacochas, which gave us the first big reduction in camping, continues to shelter us for a couple of nights, providing easy access to the improving sites for the Marvelous Spatuletail, which brings me to hummingbird feeders, which are now present at three spots, enticing not only the spatuletail but many other showy species, from Emerald-bellied Puffleg to Sword-billed Hummingbird. The birding in Northern Peru is getting easier, but we have to admit no one is feeding any antpittas. Yet! (If the camping—handled by our experienced outfitters—or the three-week length are too much, or a summer departure works better, the PERU'S MAGNETIC NORTH tour is available July 15-26, 2009 with John Rowlett and Mitch Lysinger.)

Guatemala Thanksgiving & Temples of Tikal

Jesse Fagan

Guatemala holds a magical grip on those who visit—the land of the *quetzales*, where active volcanoes still shape the terrain and descendants of proud Mayans sell wares in bustling colorful markets. Our Thanksgiving tour will combine the best of birding and cultural outings in the country. We'll begin in the Mayan heart, Tikal, where, while listening to our local guide's descriptions and marveling at the temples, it will be hard to ignore the croaking Keel-billed Toucan, the calling Tody Motmot, or the crashing sounds of Central American Spider Monkeys! Only here can one quietly stalk an Ocellated Turkey (not on our Thanksgiving menu!) or a party of Crested Guans among magnificent temples and palaces still mostly enveloped by forest, or sit at the top of a Mayan pyramid, above the forest canopy and watch White Hawks and King Vultures circling above and see unbroken forest in all directions to the limit of vision.

We'll also visit the Pacific Slope and the highlands famous for a unique group of endemic birds, including such special and often difficult-to-find species as Highland Guan, Black-capped Swallow, Bushy-crested Jay, Rufous-browed Wren, Black and Rufous-collared robins, Pink-headed Warbler, and Black-capped Siskin (rare). In the drier pine-oak forests we'll seek Pacific Parakeet, Blue-throated Motmot, Band-backed Wren, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, and Bar-winged Oriole among others. In addition to these specialties, there are many more widespread but superb Central American species from Mountain Trogons and Emerald Toucanets to Black Hawk-Eagles and Spot-breasted Orioles.

Among our stops will be Finca Las Nubes, where we stand an excellent chance of seeing the spectacular Resplendent Quetzal (Guatemala's national bird) and a host of other species of very limited range including Fulvous Owl, Green-throated Mountaingem, White-faced Quail-Dove, and other difficult-to-see species like Spotted Nightingale-Thrush and Ruddy Foliage-gleaner. Tikal, Antigua, and Finca Las Nubes: three destinations that will make your Thanksgiving holiday a week to remember.

Dates are November 21-30, 2009 with Jesse Fagan.

COLOMBIA

Richard Webster

Colombia is well known to Field Guides clients for many things, particularly the length of its checklist (the world's longest) and the magnitude of its internal troubles over the 20 years since our last tour offerings to this beautiful land. But Colombia has been mending, and we are ready to return to this diverse and rich country, with three tours that seek many of its range-restricted and threatened species. And while political and military changes have been occurring, there has also been a steady growth in Colombian ornithology and the establishment of many private nature reserves to complement the public ones, all making locating many of the special birds more practical. Colombia has not had time to catch up to the ecotourism standards of its neighbors, and so be forewarned that while birding in Colombia is both fun and feasible, there are a few more rough edges (discussed in the itineraries) than on comparable tours. All of our trips will have local support from our in-country operators both before and during the tour.



COLOMBIA: BOGOTA, THE MAGDALENA VALLEY & SANTA MARTA

This first tour is a specialty-oriented trip concentrating on a network of small reserves from Bogota in the eastern Andes to Santa Marta on the Caribbean coast. Along the way, we'll be seeking threatened species from Blue-billed Curassow to Recurve-billed Bushbird, ending in endemic-rich Santa Marta. In the process, we'll aim to build a lengthy triplist from the diverse habitats of this transect of the Magdalena River watershed.

Dates are January 16-February 2, 2010 with Richard Webster and just 6 participants.

SANTA MARTA ESCAPE

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is an isolated mountain range topped by permanent snowfields that are within sight of the sea; it is also one of the most endemic-rich areas in the world. The centerpiece of this new trip is a comfortable lodge on a private reserve at 6000 feet on an outlying ridge of the mountains where we'll hope to see a large share of those endemics, as well as many wonderful birds that are not endemic, from Band-tailed and Sickle-winged guans to White-tipped Quetzal. In addition to wet-forest birding, we'll spend an equal amount of time in coastal marshes, mangroves, deciduous forest, and cactus desert—a massive number of bird species for the conveniences of only a week away from the office and a direct flight from Miami.

Dates are March 20-28, 2010 with Richard Webster and just 8 participants.

COLOMBIA: THE CAUCA VALLEY, WESTERN & CENTRAL ANDES

In 2011, we'll add a trip that will concentrate on the bird-rich sections of the western and central Andes above the Cauca Valley, where we'll be in pursuit of Chestnut-capped Piha, Red-bellied Grackle, Black-and-gold Tanager, and oh so much more. Scheduled for February 19-March 6, 2011, it will also be guided by Richard.

Guide Richard Webster recently scouted Colombia and we are now set to go! While there, he photographed, at top, the ProAves Cerulean Warbler reserve that protects the montane forest habitat of the migrant warblers as well as an abundance of local specialties. The White-tipped Quetzal has the smallest range of any quetzal, being restricted to the northernmost Andes of Colombia and Venezuela. At bottom, the seldom photographed endemic Santa Marta Brush-Finch, found only in the Santa Marta range.





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CONSERVATION Field Guides contributes to the following conservation organizations: The Nature Conservancy, Birdlife International, Conservation International

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Antarctica, South Georgia & the Falkland Islands

Antarctica remains the ultimate frontier for exploration and discovery on our planet. Almost alien in immensity, it is a continent of volcanoes, glaciers, islands, and oceans. It is the most elemental wilderness, where the naked might of Nature assaults the senses as in no other place on Earth.

We've added a tour to the ice continent this fall; we'll embark by air from Buenos Aires and by ship from Puerto Madryn, Argentina on a 20-day navigation. Our itinerary is ideal for birding, with planned landings at several islands of the South Shetlands, Antarctic research stations on islands on or along the Antarctic Peninsula, and fabulous South Georgia, perhaps the greatest seabird island on the globe. And we'll have a couple of days on the Falkland Islands to observe and learn about the unique community of plants and animals (including some endemic birds) adapted to life on these windswept isles of the South Atlantic.

Our tour is a voyage in the spirit of exploration and adventure. As Roald Amundsen reflected, "Is it not [the reason we go to Antarctica] to explore the unknown regions? That can't be done by lying still outside the ice." **Join George Armistead, November 1-24, 2009.**



Field Guides is returning to the continent of ice! Gentoo Penguins are among the most adaptable of Antarctic penguins, and, unlike other penguins, their populations are expanding. Southern Elephant Seals are just amazing creatures—a sight and a sound to behold! [Photos by participant Dave Semler and guide Chris Benesh]