

# fieldguides

JUNE 2011

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



## Avian Adventures in the Land of Oz

By Megan Crewe

*If you're looking for new and novel experiences, there's nothing like a trip "Down Under" to deliver them.*

**T**here you are, cruising through the lush dairy region of Australia's southeast, thinking, "Why, this looks just like Wisconsin," when suddenly a mob of bright pink parrots rises screeching from the roadside. Or you're ambling through a park full of scrubby brush, thinking, "This could almost be South Texas," when a pack of kangaroos suddenly bounds across your path. Or you follow the noise of electronic static and birdsong snippets—the sort of sounds that might come from a fellow birder's malfunctioning recording equipment—and discover a male Superb Lyrebird dancing on his stage, his impressive tail plumes curled up over his head. And you begin to realize just how unique a place Australia really is!

*Continued on page 10*



At top, Simpson's Gap near Alice Springs; above, a Powerful Owl, true to its name, gives quite the intimidating stare! [Photos by guide Chris Benesh]

## Delightful Distractions (from Birding in Borneo)

Rose Ann Rowlett

**W**e're watching a big mixed flock in the most extensive tract of primary tropical rainforest left in Borneo, the world's third-largest island. "Watch for movement; check every bird." One sails across, lands on an exposed trunk, and disappears. Where did it go? Binocular examination of the spot reveals, instead of a bird, a small broadbill-green lizard! It's *Draco cornutus*, one of 10 Bornean members of the genus of "flying lizards." Of course, they don't actually fly, but glide from one trunk to

*Continued on page 11*

This Wallace's Flying Frog, *Rhacophorus nigropalmatus*, has come down from the canopy to just above a small forest pool, where his calling attracts females that will descend to mate and lay their eggs before returning to the rainforest canopy, where they spend most of their time hunting insects. [Photo by guide Richard Webster]



## WHAT WE VALUE

Jan Pierson

**O**n the next page, Mitch Lysinger introduces new Field Guide Willy Pérez in an entertaining and informative piece about a leader who's a great fit for our company. We hope to make a few more additions to our guide staff in the next year or two (read more about that at the end of my column on p. 3 for more info), and that has got me thinking about what we value at Field Guides.

*Continued on page 3*



# FIELD GUIDES MOST WANTED LIST

*Reported by "Special Agent" Mitch Lysinger*



**O**ur agents have been in hot pursuit of several top guides, including Willy P. (see photo above), the coolest customer of all. Need more details? Read carefully...

**Name:** Willy Pérez

**Nationality:** Ecuadorian. But don't be fooled. Willy is married to a wonderful British woman (and they have two beautiful little daughters), so he speaks English fluently.

**Date of Birth:** Sometime in the late 60's, but he may have had surgery to make himself look 10 years younger.

**Physical features:** about 5' 6" (but this all depends on whether he is up on his toes to see a new bird or not), easy smile, sometimes crooked hat (but who cares?), glasses (but these could be a prop... you never know with him), and keeps himself in good shape; rumor has it that he plays a mean game of soccer.

**Occupation:** Guide (and don't call him "Guido," if you know what's good for you!)... though some would say he finds birds and sells smiles for a living.

#### **GENERAL RUN-DOWN:**

Willy has been armed and dangerously competent in Ecuador—not to mention numerous sightings in other South American countries—for over a decade now with binoculars, scope, and recording equipment in hand at all times. Beware: his wit, charm, and birding prowess have the ability to win over groups anywhere from 1-14, and it is strongly suspected that he

might even be skilled in the art of gathering larger crowds for discussions on conservation and guide training in both English and Spanish. For your own safety and enjoyment, our only suggestion is this: if you do think that you have spotted Willy in the field, please stay as close to him as possible for a great time...and lots of birds!

#### **RECENT BREAKING UPDATE:**

We are proud to announce that Willy was recently apprehended and brought in as the newest Field Guides leader on (but not limited to) multiple charges of eagle eyesight, natural humor, and group entertainment. So all can rest easy.

#### **Joking aside:**

Willy is a talent that I have had my eye on ever since I led my first trip to the very remote Kapawi Lodge—in Ecuador's Amazon—many years ago, where he trained as a naturalist-birding guide for a couple of years. His easy-going demeanor had me

hooked from the beginning, and then I had the privilege to spend some quality time with him in the woods...wow! Not only was he sharp with one of the world's toughest avifaunas, but he was a master at dealing with adverse situations. You name it: from uncertain flight schedules on muddy landing strips to dealing with indigenous Amazonian customs that take the patience of a saint. He was rock solid.

As I flew back to Quito from Kapawi, I knew that I had to get together with Willy again, and I invited him to accompany me on some future Field Guides tours in the highlands; needless to say, Willy was a hit with the folks all the way around.

Having grown up on the West Slope of Ecuador not far from a birding spot some of you may be familiar with, Tinalandia, Willy has always been a man of the outdoors; he remembers the days long gone when monkeys and toucans were practically right at his childhood doorstep. These thrilling experiences would later







Above: Rufous Wren, a denizen of the temperate zone. Left: Willy searching for birds in the high paramo at Papallacta Pass—there's a Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe to be found out there! [Photos by participants Kevin Heffernan & Cheri Jetmore]

inform his respect for nature and help develop his keen talent of observation. What can you say? It was baked into his blood. As for his people skills...well, this can't be taught. Just happened to be a part of his genetic mold!

But don't take my word for it: have a look at Willy's tour dates and

exciting destinations below and team up with him to see for yourself what a find he is. Pretty soon it will be time to honor Willy with an official Field Guides trademark bird name...and who knows? Maybe after getting to know him, you'll come up with the perfect choice!

### Willy's 2012 Schedule

**Jewels of Ecuador: Hummers, Tanagers & Antpittas**, January 21-February 7 with Rose Ann Rowlett & Willy Pérez or February 11-28 with Mitch Lysinger & Willy Pérez

**Ecuador's Wildsumaco Lodge**, March 16-26 with John Rowlett & Willy Pérez

**Central Peruvian Endemics: The High Andes**, June 1-18 with Dan Lane & Willy Pérez

**Montane Ecuador**, July 19-28 with Willy Pérez

**Bolivia's Avian Riches**, September 8-23 with Dan Lane & Willy Pérez

**Northwestern Argentina: The Chaco, Cordoba & Northern Andes**, October 17-November 4 with Dave Stejskal & Willy Pérez

**Ecuador's Wildsumaco Lodge**, December 28-January 7, 2013 with Willy Pérez

## WHAT WE VALUE

*Continued from page 1*

Come the first of July we will have operated 75 tours in 2011 to date. We love to peruse the trip reports from our guides (wading through tales of grouse and prairie-chickens from our recent *Colorado Grouse* tours, Dune Larks and Pel's Fishing-Owls from *Namibia & Botswana*, and spring migrants from an array of North American trips recently was great!). And who wouldn't—after all, there's hardly anything more exciting than seeing new birds and new places. These reports reflect that.

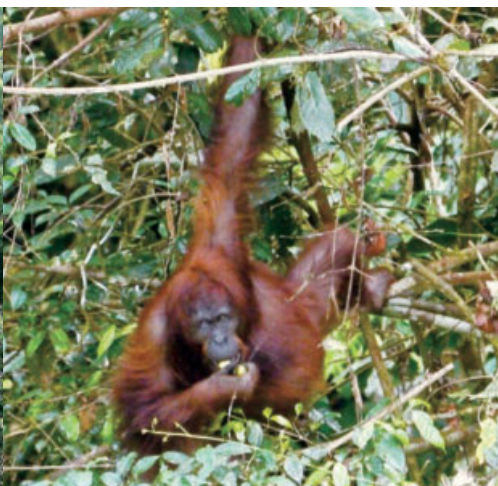
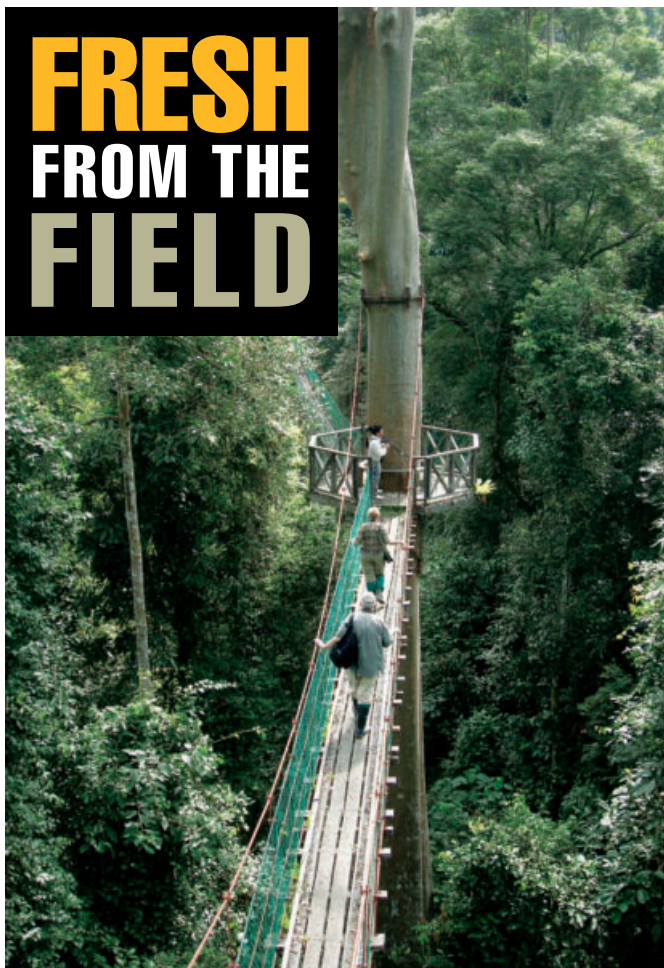
But it's also very important to us to read about the full context of those tours...your thoughts on your experience with Field Guides, as reflected in the post-tour evaluations you send us. These arrive in a steady stream at our Austin office. When they hit my desk here in Maine, the first thing I glance through is your assessment of that overall experience, beyond just what you saw—it's a quick finger on the pulse of how we're doing. As I write this, there's a small, fresh stack waiting, and a quick flip through that in-a-nutshell line on the evaluations reveals "excellent," "excellent fun," "very good experience," "very good," "exceptional," "excellent," "very enjoyable," "awesome," "excellent," "very positive," "excellent," "super," "excellent," "great," and "excellent." That's wonderful to read, and all of us from our great guides in the field to our terrific office staff in Austin will keep working to generate more of the same. As a team, we really like consistency!

So, do you know someone who might make a great Field Guide? We are currently looking for a couple of outstanding guide prospects to join the Field Guides community, and we've added a new page to our website ([www.fieldguides.com/guidesearch.html](http://www.fieldguides.com/guidesearch.html)) with information about the attributes we seek in prospective guides. Check it out, and if you know of someone you think might fit the bill, let us know by using the **new guides contact** link toward the bottom of that new page. In the meantime, read about Willy and start planning!

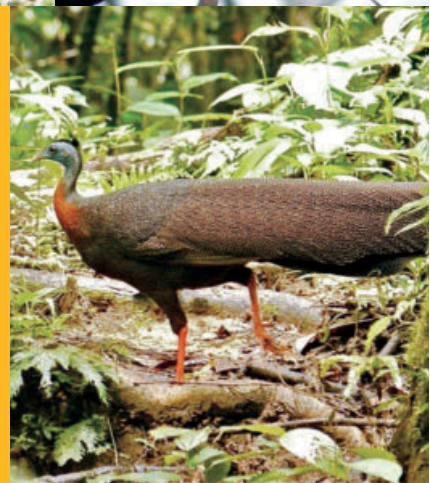




# FRESH FROM THE FIELD



Rose Ann Rowlett's tour to **Borneo** in March was marked by many thrills: Seeing the canopy birds of the towering dipterocarp forest from eye level from the walkway at Danum Valley Rainforest Lodge; staring into the eyes of an Orangutan that frankly does not give a damn, my dear; wanting to reach out and pet a Red-bearded Bee-eater; and as for that pheasant, the Great Argus, sometimes we can see one on a display ground, sometimes we stumble into one on a forest trail, and sometimes we simply have to take pleasure in knowing we are sharing the forest with them. [Photos by guide Rose Ann Rowlett & participants Ron & Nancy Dengler]



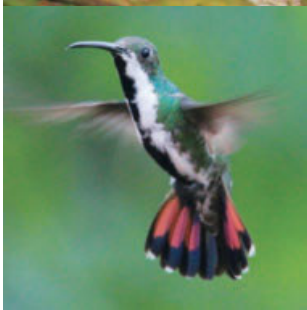
A journey to the **Bahamas** is not just distinctive birds, but a survey of a flora and fauna, like this gorgeous White Peacock butterfly; the Red-legged Thrush, above, is a striking bird that glows in the field; a Kirtland's Warbler in the Bahamas, below, may not seem remarkable, but this species, like many of "our" North American breeders, changes "character" on the wintering ground, going from singing atop a Jack Pine in Michigan to being a mega-skulker in the dense scrub of sand-and-coral dots in the sea. [Photos by guide Jesse Fagan]



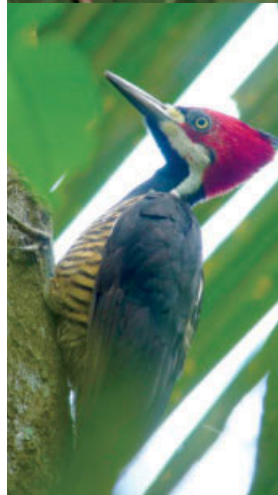
As for the lodge on **Brazil's Rio Roosevelt: Birding the River of Doubt** in remote Amazonia—Teddy never had it like this. But you can. As for what they are drinking—see those happy smiles, it's not just the undescribed birds they've seen—the limes make the difference. And that is a Cryptic Forest-Falcon, at right, which would be a lifer for most of us at Field Guides. It appears they had a good look! [Photos by guide Bret Whitney]







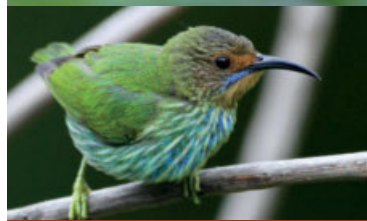
**Santa Marta Escape** does not make it to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, above, but we do visit an outlying ridge where we can see it on a clear day! Fortunately that ridge has almost all the endemics, such as this Santa Marta Antpitta, as well as more widespread beauties like this female Black-throated Mango. [Photos by guide Richard Webster]



Does blood rushing to the head of a Moustached Antwren help it puzzle out birders, or did we blow the alignment of the photograph? If you want to puzzle out Moustached Antwrens, admire Crimson-crested Woodpeckers, or soak up the cryptic plumage of a Common Potoo on a day roost, these are the types of experiences recently enjoyed on **Panama's Canopy Tower**. [Photos by guide Chris Benesh]



Great diversity in a compact country and excellent ecotourism facilities distinguish **Costa Rica**. As will sightings like the male Great Curassow at top, considered "Vulnerable" by BirdLife International and always a sign of protected forest; the lovely and confiding Collared Redstart (a.k.a. Collared Whitestart); and that perpetual favorite, the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. [Photos by guide Megan Crewe]



**Trinidad & Tobago** is a fun introductory tour to the tropics, but it's also a great place to reconnect with classical tropical behavior such as displaying manakins (here, two male Golden-headed) and to ogle many great birds from the tiny female Purple Honeycreeper to the big Trinidad Motmot. Trinidad Motmot? Did you just get an armchair lifebird? Blue-crowned's been split into five species, so whoop it up tonight over Whooping Motmot (Panama to Venezuela and Ecuador)! [Photos by participant Brian Schoeffler]



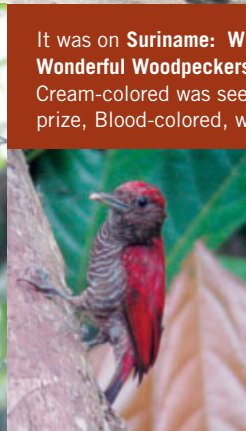
# FRESH FROM THE FIELD



Matching blankets! Very cute and very necessary. The darn chickens on our **Colorado Grouse** tour insist on doing their thing at dawn in April (or earlier), and we have to be in position before they start. It's a vacation that could involve long underwear—and the extraordinary experience of seeing the display of up to five species, such as Sharp-tailed Grouse (above, and they are not strutting through confetti) and Greater Prairie-Chicken (at right). [Photos by guide Dan Lane]



Of all these alluring photos from our recent **Ecuador: Rainforest & Andes** tour, which one makes you wish you were there? Maybe it's the two Crested Owls on a day roost at Sacha Lodge, or the point-blank looks at the rarely seen Tanager Finch on the West Slope, or a surprise encounter with a Black-mantle Tamarin of the Amazonian forest. This two-week sampler of Ecuador's diversity can't help but have some glorious bonuses. [Photos by participant Kevin Heffernan]



It was on **Suriname: Wild & Wonderful** (or is it **Wild & Wonderful Woodpeckers?**) that the widespread, lovely Cream-colored was seen and the range-restricted prize, Blood-colored, was celebrated. There is much

to celebrate in Suriname, not least the adventure of getting into Suriname's wilds, whether by boat (Bret Whitney and Dan Lane's group is about to depart Foengoe Island) or by small plane, or on foot. [Photos by guide Dan Lane & participant Steve Matherly]





Phil Gregory has launched **Ghana**, and one of the prizes of our inaugural tour was this Egyptian Plover (below). The Patas Monkey may puzzle you until you realize that baby hands are showing on the parent's back. And perhaps if we mention White-necked Rockfowl and fancy hornbills, we can get you to drop by the website and check Ghana out. [Photos by guide Phil Gregory]



A boardwalk and a canopy tower make birding for Yellow-naped Parrot and Violet Sabrewing all the easier on **Guatemala: Shade-Grown Birding**. Jesse Fagan's itinerary provides opportunities to stay in the habitat where such specialties as Resplendent Quetzal, Pink-headed Warbler, and Azure-rumped Tanager were seen in March, often below a skyline of Guatemala's many active volcanoes. [Photos by participant Amy McDonald]



Sunset over Lake Yojoa and a Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, one of the avian prizes from **Honduras: Land of the Emeralds**. Jesse Fagan's itineraries offer excellent birding in a country known primarily for its fruit exports—but you won't see Bananaquits. How about Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridges and Scaled Antpittas instead? [Photos by participant Yvonne Homeyer]





# UPCOMING TOURS

For details on any trip or trips, please call our office or check our web site, where you may download tour itineraries.

## September-October

**Carajas: Lower Amazonian Brazil**—September 1-10, 2011 with Marcelo Padua. A birding tour to a huge, remote forest reserve with excellent Amazonian forest access, lots of specialty birds, some unbelievably big dump trucks, and a fine hotel.

**France: Camargue & Pyrenees**—September 2-12, 2011 with Megan Crewe & Jesse Fagan. Two of Europe's finest birding destinations combined in this wonderful nine-day birding tour, with varied highlights and some great French food.

**Kenya Safari Spectacular II**—September 2-30, 2011 with Terry Stevenson. Unsurpassed in its combined wealth of bird life and mammal spectacle; includes the coast. Time-saving internal flights.

**Slice of California: Seabirds to Sierra**—September 3-12, 2011 with Chris Benesh. A wonderfully diverse birding tour with a mix of West Coast specialties, montane species, and pelagics in rugged and scenic sites.

**New Caledonia, Fiji & Vanuatu**—September 5-23, 2011 with Phil Gregory. Island endemics and tropical Pacific specialties abound on this tour to three highlight destinations.

**Rio Negro Paradise: Manaus, Brazil**—September 10-23, 2011 with Bret Whitney & Marcelo Padua. Birding tour to the rainforests and rivers of the mighty Amazon and Rio Negro in an unforgettable mix of forest hikes and live-aboard luxury.

**Bolivia's Avian Riches**—September 10-25, 2011 (Blue-throated Macaw & More Extension) with Dan Lane & Jay VanderGaast. Comprehensive survey birding tour of the special bird life of the Bolivian Andes; wonderful mountain scenery.

**Ecuador: Rainforest & Andes III**—September 11-25, 2011 with Mitch Lysinger. Highlight birding tour of the best of Ecuador's rainforest birding at Sacha Lodge combined with two exciting destinations in the Andes, the Mindo/Tandayapa area and San Isidro.

**Australia**—September 23-October 13, 2011 (Pelagics Pre-trip & Tasmania Extension) (Part I) with John Coons & October 11-26 (Part II) with Chris Benesh & Jay VanderGaast. Our Australia birding tour is split into two parts for those with limited time. Part I will cover the environs of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, southwest Australia, and Alice Springs. Part II will begin in Darwin and continue to

Queensland (Cairns, Atherton Tableland, Outback Queensland, and O'Reilly's Guest House). Both parts combine for a complete birding tour of Australia.

**Serra dos Tucanos, Brazil**—September 24-October 4, 2011 with John Rowlett. A short but rich birding tour immersion in the avifauna of the Atlantic Forest, based at one lovely site near Rio.

**Cape May Megan's Way**—October 1-7, 2011 with Megan Crewe. See bird migration in action and learn about regional movements and local influences, and pick up important identification tips for raptors and other groups—all while birding one of the best migration hotspots in North America.

**Brazil's Cristalino Jungle Lodge**—October 3-14, 2011 with John Rowlett. A week in climax rainforest on our tour to Brazil's beautiful Rio Cristalino.

**New Guinea & Australia**—October 6-24, 2011 with Phil Gregory. A rich and diverse sampler of the best birding of New Guinea and Australia.

**South Africa**—October 6-29, 2011 with Terry Stevenson & local guide. Endemic-rich birding, spectacular landscapes, and a unique flora are the highlights of our energetic survey tour of this beautiful country.

**Safari Brazil: The Pantanal & More**—October 8-24, 2011 with Mitch Lysinger & Marcelo Padua. The spectacular wetlands of the Pantanal, with Hyacinth Macaws and Jabirus, combined with the many specialties of Brazil's Planalto Central, makes for the perfect first birding trip to Brazil.

**New Zealand**—October 27-November 14, 2011 with George Armistead & local guide. Beautiful landscapes as a backdrop for nearly 50 endemic birds plus a great selection of seabirds.

**Spectacular Southeast Brazil**—October 28-November 13, 2011 (Part I: *North of the Tropic*) & November 11-28 (Part II: *South of the Capricorn*) with Bret Whitney & Marcelo Padua. Prepare to be blown away, two times over, on this tour through the center of avian endemism in eastern Brazil; particularly well endowed with hummingbirds, cotingas, antbirds, and beautiful scenery.

**Sri Lanka**—October 28-November 14, 2011 with Megan Crewe. A two-week introduction to Asia's birds, including more than two-dozen species endemic to the island, with one of the country's foremost birders as a co-leader.

**Chile**—October 30-November 19, 2011 with Alvaro Jaramillo & Ricardo Matus. Comprehensive survey of this visually spectacular and tourist-friendly country.

## November-December

**Louisiana: Of Yellow Rails & Crawfish Tails**—November 3-7, 2011 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 3-13,

2011 with Terry McEneaney. The birds, culture, music, and pubs of this beautiful country in fall.

**Northern Peru: Endemics Galore**—November 6-26, 2011 with Rose Ann Rowlett & Richard Webster. Dry-season 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. Targets geographic specialties as it surveys the rich and diverse habitats of northern Peru, including some remote and beautiful wild areas.

**Madagascar, Mauritius & Reunion**—November 8-December 4, 2011 (Seychelles Extension) with Phil Gregory. In-depth coverage of the accessible parts of Madagascar: many endemic birds, striking lemurs, bizarre flora and chameleons, fascinating culture.

**Spectacular Southeast Brazil**—November 11-28 (Part II: *South of the Capricorn*) with Bret Whitney & Marcelo Padua. (see above for description)

**Southern India: Western Ghats Endemics**—November 13-December 4, 2011 with Terry Stevenson & local guide. Journey from the mammal-rich lowlands of Nagarhole to the endemic-rich mountains of the Western Ghats.

**Western Mexico: San Blas & the Sinaloa Highlands**—November 16-26, 2011 with Chris Benesh & David Mackay. Superb and varied birding in one of Mexico's richest areas with a number of northwestern Mexican endemics and plenty of scenery.

**Oman & the UAE: Birding Arabia**—December 1-17, 2011 with George Armistead. Some of the best Arabian Peninsula birding in two friendly and scenic countries; many regional endemics and specialty birds, including a good chance for the Hypocolius.

**Uruguay: Birding the Land of the Gauchos**—December 3-17, 2011 with Alvaro Jaramillo. Birds of the Pampas and then some; great birding and wonderful destinations.

## January-February 2012

**Mexico: Colima & Jalisco**—January 13-21, 2012 with Megan Crewe. A popular and comfortable introduction to Neotropical birds; many West Mexican endemics and rarities; lovely coastal and montane scenery.

**Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge I**—January 13-22, 2012 with Jay VanderGaast. One-site tour to one of the most comfortable lodges in western Amazonia with some of the birdiest canopy platforms anywhere.

**Nowhere but Northeast Brazil!**—January 13-30, 2012 (Part I) and January 28-February 13, 2012 (Part II) with Bret Whitney & Marcelo Padua. From beautiful beaches to barren badlands, Part I of our tour is a quest for specialties of the endangered caatinga, chapada, and Atlantic Forest habitats. Part II takes us from the forests of southern Bahia through northern Minas Gerais and west to the Araguaia.

**Yellowstone in Winter**—January 14-22, 2012 with Terry & Karen McEneaney. A winter birding, wildlife, and landscape adventure to one of the world's legendary destinations.

**Colombia: Bogota, the Magdalena Valley & Santa Marta**—January 14-30, 2012 with Jesse Fagan. Energetic, endemic-oriented tour connecting reserves up the Magdalena Valley from Bogota to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

**Thailand**—January 14-February 4, 2012 (Gurney's Pitta & Nicobar Pigeon Extension) with Dave Stejskal & Uthai Treesucon. A wide variety of forest birds in the friendly heart of Southeast Asia (and fabulous Thai food).

**Panama's Fabulous Fortnight**—January 20-26, 2012 (Part I) and January 26-February 2, 2012 (Part II) with Chris Benesh. An exploration of the best of Panama in two parts: Part I—rich rainforest birding in Panama's central lowlands from our base at the Canopy Tower, giving us quick access to famous Pipeline Road and its raiding army ants; Part II—cloud forest birding in unsurpassed surroundings featuring many biogeographic endemics.

**Colombia: The Cauca Valley, Western & Central Andes**—January 21-February 6, 2012 with Richard Webster. Energetic, endemic-oriented tour connecting reserves up the Cauca Valley from Medellín to Cali.

**Jewels of Ecuador: Hummers, Tanagers & Antpittas I**—January 21-February 7, 2012 with Rose Ann Rowlett & Willy Pérez. Survey of Andean Ecuador; diverse avifauna dominated by colorful hummers and tanagers and more subtle and haunting antpittas.

**Northern India: Tiger, Birds & the Taj Mahal**—January 21-February 12, 2012 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.

**Mexico: Oaxaca**—January 22-29, 2012 with Megan Crewe. Superb birding with two dozen Mexican endemics and fascinating ruins while based in lovely Oaxaca City.

**Panama's Fabulous Fortnight**—January 26-February 2, 2012 (Part II) with Chris Benesh. (see above for description)

**The Heart of Chile**—January 28-February 11, 2012 (Easter Island Extension) with Peter Burke & Ricardo Matus. A sampling of Chile's "heart" between Santiago and Chiloé Island, including coastal birding and a pelagic. A shorter, more relaxed visit to this popular and incredibly scenic country.

**Nowhere but Northeast Brazil!**—January 28-February 13, 2012 (Part II) with Bret Whitney & Marcelo Padua. (see above for description)

**Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge II**—February 3-12, 2012 with Dan Lane. One-site tour to one of the most comfortable lodges in western Amazonia with some of the birdiest canopy platforms anywhere.

**Best of the Pacific Northwest: Skagit Valley & Puget Sound, Washington**—February 4-8, 2012 with Terry McEneaney. A winter birding and wildlife tour to a surprisingly mild maritime climate with breathtaking mountain backdrops and beautiful seascapes peppered with islands.

**Winter Japan: Dancing Cranes & Spectacular Sea-Eagles**—February 4-19, 2012 with Phil



Gregory. Japan's winter spectacles, including the fabulous cranes and Steller's Sea-Eagle.

**Panama's Canopy Tower I**—February 10-17, 2012 with John Coons & local guide. A towering introduction to Neotropical birds based entirely in a unique lodge; quick access to famous Pipeline Road; includes train ride back from Colon after Achiotte Road.

**Jewels of Ecuador: Hummers, Tanagers & Antpittas II**—February 11-28, 2012 with Mitch Lysinger & Willy Pérez. Survey of Andean Ecuador; diverse avifauna dominated by colorful hummers and tanagers and more subtle and haunting antpittas.

**Panama's Wild Darien: Cana & Cerro Pirre**—February 17-26, 2012 with John Coons. A true wilderness area accessed by charter aircraft; many endemics and species of restricted range.

**Cambodia**—February 18-March 1, 2012 with Phil Gregory. A "last chance" destination for some of the large, rare Asian waterbirds now

extinct in neighboring countries, plus additional regional specialties and world-famous Angkor Wat.

**Guatemala: Shade-grown Birding**—February 22-March 3, 2012 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.

**Panama's Canopy Tower II**—February 25-March 3, 2012 (Canopy Lodge Extension) with Chris Benesh & local guide. A towering introduction to Neotropical birds based entirely in a unique lodge; quick access to famous Pipeline Road; includes train ride back from Colon after Achiotte Road.

**Trinidad & Tobago**—February 25-March 5, 2012 with Megan Crewe & local guide. Wonderful introduction to South America's bird riches including bellbirds, toucans, manakins, and motmots.



Above, Madagascar endemics all around: top left, Cuckoo-Roller, with the fantastically colorful Pitta-like Ground-Roller to its right; below them, a White-breasted Mesite and the wattle-faced Schlegel's Asity. [Photos by guides Dave Stejskal & Dan Lane]

## 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, Antigua & Finca Las Nubes**—November 19-28, 2011 with Jesse Fagan. A holiday tour combining rich birding at lovely fincas in the highlands as well as the Mayan ruins of Tikal in the Peten lowlands.

**Holiday at San Isidro, Ecuador**—November 19-28, 2011 with Mitch Lysinger. A bird-rich holiday escape based primarily at the very comfortable San Isidro Lodge.

**Brazil's Rio Roosevelt: Birding the River of Doubt**—December 15-28, 2011 with Bret Whitney. A birding tour adventure on the remote Rio Roosevelt in the spirit of Teddy himself, as we search for bushbirds, ant swarms, and, of course, the unknown.

**Trinidad & Tobago**—December 17-26, 2011 with Wayne Petersen. Wonderful introduction to South America's bird riches including bellbirds, toucans, manakins, and motmots.

**Holiday Costa Rica: Rancho Naturalista I**—December 18-26, 2011 with Jesse Fagan & local guide. One-site holiday birding tour based at the comfortable Rancho Naturalista Lodge, with excursions to other habitats on Costa Rica's bird-rich Caribbean slope.

**Panama's Canopy Lodge: El Valle de Anton**—December 27, 2011-January 3, 2012 with Chris Benesh. A superb birding tour as an introduction to Neotropical birds or to complement your broader Middle American birding, all based at a charming lodge.

**Mexico: Oaxaca & the Pacific Coast**—December 28, 2011-January 8, 2012 with Megan Crewe & Mike Crewe. Superb birding with numerous Mexican endemics and fascinating ruins in lovely Oaxaca City, plus a visit to the Pacific Coast for additional specialties.

**Panama's Wild Darien: Cana & Cerro Pirre**—December 29, 2011-January 7, 2012 with John Coons. Birding tour to a true wilderness area accessed by charter aircraft; many endemics and species of restricted range.

**Arizona Winter Specialties**—December 30, 2011-January 4, 2012 with Dave Stejskal. Exceptional winter birding on a short tour with numerous specialties and potential rarities.

**Holiday Costa Rica: Rancho Naturalista II**—December 30, 2011-January 7, 2012 with Jay VanderGaast & local guide. One-site holiday birding tour based at the comfortable Rancho Naturalista Lodge, with excursions to other habitats on Costa Rica's bird-rich Caribbean slope.

# MADAGASCAR 2011

## Endemics (and endemic families) await!

As guide Jay VanderGaast noted in his report from our fall 2010 tour he co-led with Phil Gregory, "The far-carrying call of the Cuckoo-Roller ranks right up there with the song of the Indri as one of the most evocative and memorable sounds of Madagascar." The distinctive Cuckoo-Roller comprises an endemic family all its own, just one of several bird families restricted only to Madagascar that always are among the most coveted birds on our tour—typically (and justifiably) they provide many of our Madagascar tour's greatest highlights. One of our biggest thrills last fall was to have excellent views of all five of the ground-rollers. As Jay noted, "Ranomafana gave us good views of Pitta-like and Rufous-headed, Long-tailed was amazingly confiding at a nest burrow in the Ifaty spiny forest, and an adult Scaly with a recently fledged juvenile practically fell into our laps, leaving the ever elusive Short-legged to give us the runaround. But even that bird was easier than we expected, and we had long, satisfying views of a pair. Always nice to get all five!"

Add to Cuckoo-Roller and the ground-rollers some other exotic names—the mesites (three species), the asities (four species), the newly expanded vangas (21 species), and the Malagasy warblers (11 species)—and we've just scratched the surface of the 100-plus endemics possible on just the Madagascar portion of our tour (and yet more novelty awaits on Mauritius and Reunion and, as an optional extension, the Masoala Peninsula in northeastern Madagascar). Another fascinating bonus along the way? The lemurs of Madagascar are pretty eye-grabbing, too! We can't play the calls of a Cuckoo-Roller or the song of an Indri from this page, so we've just had to make do with a little visual imagery above...enjoy!

*Dates for our 2011 tour are November 8-December 4, again with Phil Gregory. For complete details, call our office or check our web site, where you may download a tour itinerary (more details about the Masoala extension there!).*





Participant Ann Urlanda sent in the images above from our 2011 Brazil Nutshell tour guided by Marcelo and Dan: sunset in the Pantanal, the thundering waters of the Devil's Throat at Iguazu Falls, and an Atlantic forest classic, Large-tailed Antshrike. Thanks, Ann!

# Brazil Nutshell Report

*Marcelo Padua*

**B**razil Nutshell's debut was everything we had hoped it would be—a fun, easy going, and very birdy introduction to the birds of Brazil. We got off to a great start at Intervalles State Park where we spent four days enjoying one of my favorite spots for birding in Brazil. Who could forget that one morning when we hopped off the bus and immediately had a Mantled Hawk in the scope, followed by a family of five Spot-billed Toucanets and a Spot-backed Antshrike, all as the Cinnamon-vented Pihas serenaded us with their funny song? And then, that White-bearded Antshrike sneaked in to take a peek, allowing us great looks, and the Mouse-colored and White-Breasted tapaculos (after much work!) performed beautifully for us. And that's not even to mention the Large-tailed Antshrike almost sitting on the speaker as we played a tapaculo song, or the Giant Antshrike that made us work really hard for a look at it, or the colors of the Swallow-tailed Manakin. Intervalles is certainly a magical place and one of the best remaining areas of the Atlantic rainforest.

At Iguassu the falls were in full splendor as the water levels were higher than usual, allowing the roaring of the falls to be heard from miles away. I felt privileged to witness the falls like this, but while the view was unforgettable, the birding was top notch as well. A few of the highlights included a perched Solitary Tinamou before dawn, Band-tailed Manakins, four Creamy-bellied Gnatcatchers on the same branch, wonderful looks at Southern Bristle-Tyrant, Rusty-breasted Nunlet, Buff-bellied Puffbird, and a big black blob on a tree that turned out to be a Black-fronted Piping-Guan.

The Pantanal was a major change in habitat, birds, and even pace, and as we slowly made our way along the Transpantaneira Road, stopping for Jabirus, Black-collared Hawks, a cattle drive, and even a Great Potoo before reaching the first of our two lodges in the Pantanal; everyone began to understand why the place is so famous. Once there, we didn't have to go far before the birding got really good, with Chestnut-eared Aracari, Bare-faced Curassow, Nanday Parakeets, and Chestnut-bellied Guans right outside our rooms. We continued to explore this beautiful place by boat, on foot, and aboard our comfortable bus, allowing us to visit all kinds of habitats and see a wide range of bird families—from Greater Rheas to Saffron Finches—and to pick up some very special birds such as Zigzag Heron, Azure Gallinule, Great Rufous Woodcreeper, Cinereous-breasted and White-lored spinetails, and many more. This tour had everything I love about my job—great people, delicious food, wonderful places, and most of all, top quality birding.

*Marcelo will be back next year, March 17-31.*

## Avian Adventures in the Land of Oz

*Continued from page 1*

For long eons, Australia has drifted alone across the face of the planet, separated from other land masses by vast stretches of the Pacific and Indian oceans. That lengthy separation has led to the rise of an extraordinary number of endemic species—both avian and otherwise. Even a cursory glance at an Australian field guide shows just how different its bird life is from the rest of the world. Of the 76 native families of Australian birds, eight occur only there, and seven more are shared only with neighboring New Guinea. Some 300 of the country's 780-odd species are endemic—and our Australia tours offer splendid opportunities to get up close and personal with many of them.

In October, John Coons will head to southern Australia for Part 1 of our Grand Australia tour. This three-week adventure tracks across a sizeable swath of the continent's southern half, from the wetlands and eucalypt forests of the southeast to the dryandra forests and heathlands of Perth's peninsula—with a stopover in the wild outback heart of the country. The tour regularly records nearly 300 species of birds, as well as some of the country's signature mammals.

Among those birds are scores with exotic, evocative names. Dollarbirds, bowerbirds, and wattlebills. Butcherbirds and currawongs. Babblers and whistlers and trillers. Willie Wagtails and Jacky Winters. Boobooks and thornbills and gerygones and HEAPS of honeyeaters. Southern Australia is home to six species of fairy-wrens—tiny, long-tailed sprites clothed in fabulous combinations of iridescent blues and reds, with first names like "Splendid" and "Superb" and "Variegated." We might see upwards of 35 species of parrots, ranging from the small and familiar (Budgerigar) to the large and exotic (Major Mitchell's and Gang-Gang cockatoos), from the common and widespread (Galah and Rainbow Lorikeet) to the rare and local (Bourke's Parrot and Bluebonnet).

Here, you can stand among the world's smallest penguins—without the





Top: The large and highly patterned Wonga Pigeon is a familiar sight and sound in eastern Australia—this one was photographed by guide Chris Benesh in Royal NP. Middle: Participant Marshall Dahl's great image of the somewhat unusual (and not so yellow) Yellow Wattlebird. Above: Chris also photographed this day-roosting Tawny Frogmouth in a typical "I am invisible to you (I hope)" posture.



need for (ant)arctic weather gear, Scopalamine patches, or "wet landings"! You can watch waltzing "matildas" (kangaroos) while listening to kookaburras laugh from the old gum trees: scenes described in those childhood songs we all know so well.

Australia—that vast ancient landmass—is home to all of these and much, much more. Join Field Guides on a "walkabout" that will leave you with a lifetime's worth of memories!

*Our Australia tour is split into two parts for those with limited time. Part I, which Megan writes about here, will cover the environs of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, southwest Australia, and Alice Springs. Part II will begin in Darwin and continue to Queensland (Cairns, Atherton Tableland, Outback Queensland, and O'Reilly's Guest House). Both parts combine for a complete birding tour of Australia. Dates are September 23–October 13, 2011 (Part I) with John Coons and a second guide and October 11–26, 2011 (Part II) with Chris Benesh and Jay VanderGaast.*

## Delightful Distractions (from Birding in Borneo)

*Continued from page 1*

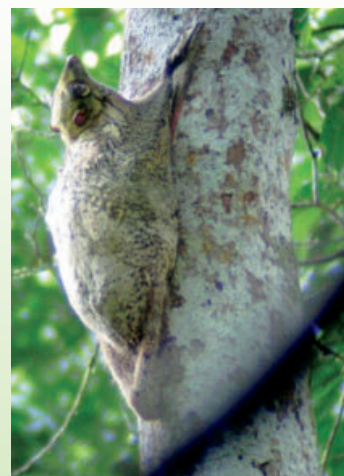
another on "wings" comprised of extended folds of skin attached to their moveable ribs. These arboreal insectivores can glide astonishing distances, sometimes even obtaining lift, and they invariably land on an appropriate trunk, presumably the target of their navigation. In no time, ours is displaying by erecting its colorful orange-tipped throat pouch.

By night, while we're owling at Borneo Rainforest Lodge, a large shape sails high overhead intercepting the beam of our spotlight. Will it be the Brown Wood-Owl or the Buffy Fish-Owl? Neither! It settles onto a vertical trunk of a tall canopy emergent and starts scooting up the trunk. It's a Malayan Colugo, or "Sunda flying lemur," a shy, nocturnal mammal that, like the lizards, glides from tree to tree amid the tallest rainforest in the world. But, unlike the "flying lizards," colugos glide on bat-like "wings" of webbed skin stretched among their limbs and even between their toes, thus maximizing the surface area of their gliding membrane. The most efficient of the gliders, they can launch and sail for more than 200 feet with minimal loss of height! They're not true lemurs, but members of the order Dermoptera, a small group of SE Asian herbivores from an ancient lineage that have recently been shown to be the closest living relatives to the primates. We watch one scoot up a trunk, the head of its baby poking out from beneath it, where the baby lives for its first six months or so clinging to its mother's belly. To protect the young during "flight," the mother curls her tail up to fold the gliding membrane into a warm, secure quasi-pouch. The young grow relatively slowly (on their vegetarian diet) and take two to three years to reach full size. We couldn't have been more excited had we seen an owl!

On our way back to the lodge, we stop beside a forest pool, where we see yet another species of aerial glider, a Wallace's Flying Frog. We're lucky to spot it, as it spends most of its life high in the trees, descending only to mate and lay its eggs. When threatened, it will leap from a branch, splaying its four webbed feet, and glide up to 50 feet to safety.

By the time we're back at the lodge, we will have seen two species of "flying squirrels" as well, all begging the question: Why so many gliding vertebrates in Borneo? Where the general forest canopy is around 200 feet, with two genera of emergent trees often reaching 250 feet and one species reaching 275 feet, "flight" from one tree to another would indeed be a real shortcut! It would seem to be a useful adaptation to life in the tallest tropical rainforest on Earth. Distracting as they are, these wonderfully diverse distractions are indeed delightful!

*Rose Ann will be returning to Borneo in 2012 and 2013. 2012 dates are March 15–April 1, when she'll be joined by Dave Stejskal, and June 7–24.*



At top, extensible skin folds show in bluish along the sides of this "flying lizard," *Draco cornutus*, which has just landed. We encountered this Malayan Colugo, *Galeopterus variegatus*, our closest living relative outside of primates, on its dayroost near Borneo Rainforest Lodge. [Photos by guides Richard Webster & Rose Ann Rowlett]

## LAST SPACES

**Machu Picchu & Abra Malaga, Peru**, June 24–July 3 with Dan Lane and July 15–24 with Jesse Fagan  
**Papua New Guinea**, June 26–July 18 with Phil Gregory and July 10–August 1 with Jay VanderGaast  
**Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge III**, July 1–10 with Mitch Lysinger  
**Newfoundland & Nova Scotia**, July 1–11 with Chris Benesh  
**Manu Wildlife Center, Peru**, July 2–14 with Dan Lane  
**Mountains of Manu, Peru**, July 23–August 7 with Dan Lane  
**Arizona's Second Spring**, July 30–August 8 with John Coons and August 6–15 with Chris Benesh  
**Summer Costa Rica**, July 30–August 14 with Megan Crewe  
**Galapagos: An Intimate Look at Darwin's Islands III**, August 6–16 with George Armistead



# fieldguides®

## BIRDING TOURS WORLDWIDE

### FIELD GUIDES INCORPORATED

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

**CONSERVATION** Field Guides contributes to the following conservation organizations: The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, BirdLife International, Population Biology Foundation/Yanacocha Biological Station

### CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Lewiston, ME  
Permit #82

# Australia

*There's so much to see. Join John Coons, September 23-October 13, 2011 (Part I)  
and Chris Benesh and Jay VanderGaast, October 11-26, 2011 (Part II)  
for an adventure Down Under.*



Photos: Some Australian beauties, from left—Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Macleay's Honeyeater, Australian King-Parrot, Regent Bowerbird, Rufous Whistler, Splendid Fairywren, and Wombat...oh, and of course guide Chris Benesh! [Photos by participants Marshall Dahl, Paul Thomas, Tom Delaney & Karen McBride, and guides Jay VanderGaast & Dave Stejskal]

# fieldguides®

## BIRDING TOURS WORLDWIDE