The Amazon region conjures many images, but it is, above all, a realm of superlatives. The centerpiece of this vast region is the Amazon River itself, the largest river in the world. In fact, many of its tributaries rival or exceed the size of other great rivers of the world. The Amazonian region also boasts the highest diversity of both birds and plants anywhere in the world. The very word “Amazon” brings to mind images of broad, sinuous rivers, tree-lined banks, strange animals, bright butterflies, torrential rains, and glorious sunsets. Along the rivers one may see macaws and parrots and oropendolas flying overhead, ponderous Horned Screamers rising from stream banks and exotic wildlife that includes hoatzins, umbrellabirds, sloths, fresh-water (river) dolphins, and primates coexisting in this untamed area.

We offer this relatively short excursion to the Amazon for those who want a full Amazonian rainforest and river experience without sacrificing comfort. We believe, in fact, that the classically-styled, triple-deck
riverboat we’re using offers visitors the utmost in comfort, security and safety while still permitting us to visit remote and relatively unspoiled regions in Amazonia. The ship’s spacious cabins are individually climate-controlled, air-conditioned, and include private bathrooms, hot-water showers, laundry service, and bottled water available at all times.

In addition to the wildlife experience, we will offer a morning visit to a local community, where participants will learn about the challenges and life-style of the people living in this riverine habitat. Visitors can also be assured of having waterproof ponchos, walking sticks, and extra thick boat cushions as needed for off-boat excursions. The ship features excellent food and an open-air upper deck for great wildlife viewing by day and stargazing by night. The list of amenities offered by the ship and its attendant crew is impressive. Additionally, stable, flat-bottomed boats powered by exceptionally quiet engines permit intimate exploration of small streams and lakes with ease and comfort, and a minimum of noise intrusion.

The mobility of our ship and its excursion boats will allow us to explore different habitats and streams each morning and afternoon and provide exceptional opportunities to see birds and wildlife. Some birds will be common, widespread Amazonian species such as Black-collared Hawk, Black-fronted Nunbird, Oriole Blackbird, Yellow-rumped Cacique, and Russet-backed Oropendola. Others will be more local species such as Hoatzin and Festive Parrot. We will surely explore some of the unique sedimentary river islands allowing views of river its specialists such as Red-and-white and Parker’s Spinetails and Black-and-white Antbird. During the course of the trip we’ll explore small wooded streams, oxbow lakes, seasonally flooded forest (várzea or igapó), and flooded river islands. Depending on the trail conditions, during the latter part of the trip we’ll spend some time walking in high ground forest. Here or nearby we may find a fruiting tree frequented by colorful araçáries, tanagers, and honeycreepers, or be surprised with the presence of an army ant swarm with its attendant antbirds and woodcreepers.

Some of the spectacular species and memorable moments may include a brilliant blue Plum-throated Cotinga perched in a treetop, a pair of Blue-and-yellow Macaws winging overhead, a swirling of thousands White-winged Parakeets landing on tall cane to roost, or a White-eared Jacamar in the morning sun—it is hard to predict which of these or many other experiences will delight you the most. We’ll also fill some spare shipboard time with discussions and explanations of Amazonian natural history, as well as recaps of daily excursions in the evenings. We are confident that at the end of this extraordinary cruise you will have a greater appreciation and understanding of the Amazon region and the myriad creatures that make it the most complex ecosystem anywhere on earth.
Finally, many people harbor misgivings about visiting the Amazon, fearing excessive heat and humidity, torrential rain, hordes of mosquitoes or other insects. While it is indeed possible to experience such things, most visitors are pleasantly surprised at how comfortable travel can be even in the heart of Amazonia. The airy, breezy ship and air-conditioned cabins mitigate the effects of even the hottest days, and visitors soon discover that insects and mosquitoes, far from being the torment they are imagined, are restricted or no problem at all.

This trip, which is based aboard a relatively small river boat offers perhaps the most comfortable and luxurious way possible to explore the Amazon while still retaining the ability to visit remote regions. Visitors can be assured of a shipboard staff and crew that will respond to your every need; exciting exploratory trips on mornings, afternoons, and evenings; and some of the best birding and wildlife viewing in the Amazon.

Those interested in maximizing their time in Peru are encouraged to join our optional pre- and post-cruise extensions. Our Cloud Forests of Northern Peru Pre-trip offers a rare opportunity to explore a cloud forest preserve in the northern Andes, seeking a range of rarely seen birds, especially the near-mythical Long-whiskered Owlet and Marvelous Spatuletail hummingbird. Our Machu Picchu Extension visits the incomparable ancient capital of the Inca in addition to seeking many of the special birds of the Peruvian Andes in the regions of Cuzco and the Urubamba River Valley.

**February 6, Day 1: Arrive Lima.** You should plan your flights to arrive Lima, Peru (Jorge Chávez Lima-Callao International Airport, airport code LIM) any time today. After clearing immigration and customs you will be transferred to your hotel. Most flights from the United States arrive sometime late evening. When making your airline reservations, bear in mind that you may want to arrive as early as possible in the evening as we are offering a trip on Day 2 to a wetland near Lima that is sure to have many birds, departing from the hotel fairly early.

If your time permits, we recommend arriving a day early in order to rest and to allow for flight delays that are sometimes associated with winter weather in your home areas. Please be aware that those participants who are delayed may risk missing the flight on Day 3 from Lima to Iquitos and would then be in jeopardy of arriving at the ship prior to its departure.

**NIGHT:** Swissotel, Lima
February 7, Day 2: Lima including Pantanos de Villa Marshes and Pucusana Fishing Village. We will meet as a group for the first time this morning at 6:50 a.m. for our trip southward toward the picturesque coast of Pucusana. We will have an opportunity to see some fine coastal marshes, a good cross-section of the stark Atacama Desert of western Peru, and many of the seabirds typical of the cold, rich waters of the Humboldt Current just offshore. Today we should see about 50 to 60 species of birds, most of which will not be seen elsewhere on this trip. These may include Humboldt Penguin; White-tufted and Great grebes; Peruvian Pelican; Peruvian Booby; Neotropic and Guanay cormorants; several egrets and herons; Least Bittern (hard to find); Puna Ibis (unpredictable); White-cheeked Pintail; Cinnamon Teal; Harris’s Hawk; Plumbeous Rail; Slate-colored Coot (with several different frontal shield colors); Common Moorhen; Peruvian Thick-knee (now scarce); Belcher’s (Band-tailed), Gray-hooded, Kelp, and Gray gulls as well as migrant Franklin’s Gull (Oct-March only); Inca Tern; West Peruvian Dove; Croaking Ground-Dove; Amazilia Hummingbird; Wren-like Rushbird; Surf Cinclodes; Many-colored Rush-Tyrant; Vermilion Flycatcher (black morph in Lima, normal red ones along the coast); Long-tailed Mockingbird; Peruvian Red-breasted Meadowlark; and Grassland Yellow-Finch. We should be back by late afternoon and will dine in the hotel this evening.

NIGHT: Swissotel, Lima

February 8, Day 3: Lima to Iquitos, Peru. Our flight to Iquitos is currently scheduled for a morning departure from Lima and our activities once we reach Iquitos will depend, in large part, upon the amount of time we have available. If our flight is early there may be some time available for birding along the promenade and/or a short drive through the food market area of Iquitos before lunch. Our afternoon activities will be determined by when the ship is outfitted and when we will be permitted to board, but we are sure to have some time to get settled in and have a little time for a short outing.
At the waterfront at Iquitos we should see many common and more widespread birds along the river. These species should include Cocoi and Striated herons, Great and Snowy egrets, Turkey and Black vultures, Plumbeous Kite, Roadside Hawk, Yellow-headed Caracara, Large-billed and Yellow-billed terns, and Oriole Blackbird. If time permits, our late afternoon exploration of the Amazon will begin with a short visit to a river island or young river edge vegetation. All of the river islands should be flooded, or mostly so, at this time of year, which makes access to island habitats by boat relatively easy. There are more than twenty species of river island bird specialists here, almost all of which occur in one of four or five island vegetation types: tall grass (*Gynerium* spp.); willow (*Salix*) and *Tessaria*; *Cecropia* and *Heliconia* spp.; and mixed *Ficus* trees.

Some river island habitat bird species we could see include Short-tailed Parrot; Tui Parakeet; Olive-spotted Hummingbird; Plain-breasted Piculet; Lesser Hornero (sand bars); White-bellied, Parker’s and Red-and-white spinetails; Castelnau’s Antshrike (mainly older islands); Leaden Antwren; Black-and-white Antbird; Brownish Elaenia; River Tyrannulet; Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant; Riverside Tyrant; and Pearly-breasted Conebill. Other species we could see on or in the vicinity of river islands include Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture; Wattled Jacana; Canary-winged Parakeet; Greater and Smooth-billed anis; Ringed and Amazon kingfishers; Spotted Tody-Flycatcher; Great Kiskadee; Brown-chested and Gray-breasted martins; White-winged and Southern Rough-winged swallows; Orangeheaded, Blue-gray, and Silver-beaked tanagers; Grayish Saltator; Red-capped Cardinal; Russet-backed Oropendola; Yellow-rumped Cacique; Yellow-hooded blackbird; Shiny Cowbird; Lesson’s, Chestnut-bellied, and Caquetá seedeaters.

NIGHT: *Zafiro*, Amazon River

**February 9, Day 4: Early morning birding Amazon tributaries near the junction of the Ríos Marañon and Ucayali.** We will be off the ship early for exploration of river island and *várzea* (floodplain) habitat, most likely in the vicinity of the Quebrada Yarapa, which is near the junction of the Ríos Ucayali and Marañon.
A sampling of birds this morning could include most of the species mentioned yesterday as well as Wood Stork; Gray-headed and Snail kites; Black-collared and Slate-colored hawks; Pale-vented Pigeon; Dusky-headed, White-eyed, and Cobalt-winged parakeets; Greater Ani; Black-tailed Trogon; Green Kingfisher; Black-fronted Nunbird; White-eared Jacamar; Chestnut-eared Araçari; Crimson-crested Woodpecker; Pale-legged Hornero; Straight-billed woodcreepers; Barred Antshrike; White-headed Marsh-Tyrant; Short-crested Flycatcher; Masked Tityra; Bare-necked Fruitcrow; Black-capped Donacobius; Buff-breasted Wren; Black-billed Thrush; Red-eyed Vireo; Hooded and Turquoise tanagers; Thick-billed and Purple-throated euphonias; Silver-beaked and Masked Crimson tanagers; Yellow-rumped Cacique; and Russet-backed Oropendola. There is also a good possibility of seeing Pink River Dolphins and perhaps even Gray River Dolphins.

We should be back aboard ship late this morning. By mid-day we hope to reach the bifurcation of the Amazon into the Ríos Ucayali and Río Marañon. Upriver on the Río Ucayali we will be traveling along the border of the vast Pacaya-Samiria Reserve. We will continue to watch sand bars and river banks for new species, including such characteristic species as Pied Plover and Drab Water Tyrant. We will make our way up the Ucayali this afternoon, stopping for a late-afternoon excursion. After dinner tonight or tomorrow night we may be off the ship for our first (optional) night excursion by small boat, perhaps on the Quebrada Supay, a tributary of the Río Ucayali, or another nearby tributary. It is difficult to predict what we might see on night excursions, but Boat-billed Herons, Common and Great potoos, and Ladder-tailed Nightjars are all possible, as well as opossums or other mammals and occasionally tree boas.

**NIGHT: Zafiro, Ucayali River**

**February 10-11, Days 5-6: Amazon River / Río Ucayali.** During these two days we will explore small streams, rivers, riverbanks and maybe even a river island or two as we gradually make our way up the Río Ucayali. Along relatively narrow and heavily forested streams, we should continue to see species typical of várzea forest, although the taller forest and narrower channels of some creeks here should give us opportunities to add many new species each day. A sampling could include almost any of the species mentioned previously, as well as Horned Screamer; Black Caracara; Hoatzin; Muscovy Duck; Ruddy Pigeon; Gray-fronted Dove; Mealy and Festive parrots; Sand-colored Nighthawk; Short-tailed Swift; Glittering-throated Emerald; Scarlet-crowned and Lemon-throated barbets; Spotted Puffbird; Cream-colored Woodpecker; Dark-breasted Spinetail; Long-billed Woodcreeper; Great and Black-crested antshrikes; Amazonian Streaked-Antwren; Plumbeous, Band-tailed and/or Black-chinned, and Silvered antbirds; Black-spotted Bare-eye; Plum-throated Cotinga; Greater Schillornis; Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet; Forest Elaenia; Social Flycatcher; and Velvet-fronted Grackle.

On our second day, as we continue exploring up the Río Ucayali, we will encounter an increasing number of black water rivers and lakes such as Dorado Creek. A small Amerindian village is located at the head of this Creek but it is otherwise an uninhabited region. On past trips we have recorded Wattled Curassow, Crested Eagle, Tiny Hawk, Collared Forest-Falcon and other large birds along this creek and their presence suggests that the wildlife here is not persecuted. Even if we do not find any of these species (all rare) we are sure to find many other interesting birds. During mid-day and early afternoon, we will reposition the ship again, moving further upriver, perhaps as far as the mouth of Zapote Creek. A small native community is located a short distance up the Zapote and the area beyond their village is designated as a reserve where they do not hunt. Consequently, this area also is particularly good for primates, raptors and other large birds. If we reach Zapote Creek, we’ll depart in our skiffs for a late afternoon excursion up this beautiful stream, with the possibility of remaining out until after dark, before returning for dinner. On these evening excursions we often see Common or Great potoos, and sometimes a Tropical Screech-Owl.
or Common Pauraque or Ladder-tailed Nightjar, but there also is the possibility of finding frogs, a small caiman, various kinds of insects, and occasionally even a snake with our spotlights. And, just being out enjoying the many exotic night sounds, and the star-filled sky is sure to be memorable.

NIGHTS: Zafiro, Ucayali River

February 12, Day 7: Dorado and/or Zapote Creek. If we were able to anchor near Zapote Creek overnight, we’ll likely be out along this stream early this morning, or on another similar tributary of the Ucayali where we will continue to explore the area from small boats. Because the upper part of this river is a particularly wild area, we’ll get an early start. This is a good region for waterbirds and waders, as well as parrots and parakeets, and we may see pairs or families of Blue-and-yellow Macaws, and even Scarlet Macaws along the river. In the upper portions of Zapote creek we have had good success with raptors, and have, on past tours, recorded both Harpy Eagle and Crested Eagle here, as well as Gray-headed Kite, Hook-billed Kite, Slender-billed Kite, Buckley’s Forest-Falcon and commoner species such as Black-collared Hawk and Slate-colored Hawk. A sample of other birds here might include almost any of the species mentioned on days 3 and 4, as well as Capped Heron, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Green Ibis, Great Black-Hawk, Speckled Chachalaca, Sungrebe, Sunbittern (scarce), Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Black-throated Mango, up to five species of kingfishers, Gilded Barbet, Forest and Yellow-crowned elaenias, Cinnamon and White-eyed atilas, Lesser Kiskadee, and Gray-capped Flycatcher. This also is an excellent area for primates and among the possibilities are Red Howler Monkey, Night Monkey, Squirrel Monkey, Saddle-backed Tamarin, Dusky Titi-Monkey, Brown capuchin, and perhaps even the unusual Monk Saki (scarce and retiring).

Late morning will find us back aboard our ship as we prepare to retrace our route back down the Río Ucayali. We will reposition ourselves downriver near the junction of the Marañon and weigh anchor for the evening. Time permitted we will make a short excursion by boat to a nearby river island or stream.

NIGHT: Zafiro, Marañon River

February 13, Day 8: Morning exploration of river islands and travel up the Río Marañon for late afternoon birding. We will be spending the morning exploring river islands or, depending upon where our boat is positioned at dawn, perhaps exploring slowly up one of the hundreds of small creeks and tributaries that feed the main Ucayali and Marañon rivers here. Continuing some of the activities that we began our first afternoon in the channel of the Amazon, we will be looking for a number of river island bird specialist species that live almost exclusively in the various early successional stage vegetation on islands. River islands vary enormously in size, in age, and in vegetation structure but all of them harbor interesting arrays of birds that are generally fairly easy to see. Many of the species possible this morning has already been mentioned previously under the list for day two. Because of the ever-changing nature of the islands from one flood season to another one never knows what combinations or birds to expect, or even if a particular island has survived the previous high-water seasons. Typically, on these islands we may expect, from youngest vegetation to oldest: 1) sand bars, often with low colonizing grass; 2) marshes and tall grass; 3) small shrubby trees known as Tessaria (Asteraceae family) which attract birds that forage for insects on its leaves; 4) willows (Salix); 5) Cecropia of various ages; 6) large Ficus (figs); 7) on the oldest islands a more advanced and diverse array of trees that resemble second growth habitats on the mainland. Each of the various habitats harbor an array of interesting bird species and a good many of these birds are found nowhere else. We will try to reach several of these habitats by small boat and, of course, there will always be many other more widespread species ranging from herons, egrets, vultures, hawks and caracaras to kingbirds, saltators, orioles and seedeaters on the islands.
On any morning visiting river islands, it is possible to see an astonishing variety of species (more actually than in the forest) because of the greater visibility of species in these semi-open habitats.

This afternoon we’ll begin moving up the Río Marañón River to position our ship close to our final destination where we plan to spend our last morning. Again, depending upon our schedule, we may be able to disembark en route for another late-afternoon river exploration by small boat.

NIGHT: *Zafiro*, Marañón River

**February 14, Day 9: Río Marañón above Nauta.** We should be anchored an hour or two above Nauta this morning, in preparation for our morning activities which will be our first Marañón river birding excursion. Because of the hilly terrain of this river, we are likely to see more terra firme forest birds than in previous locations. We will spend the morning birding and exploring the river edge in search for raptors and feeding flocks. We will almost certainly encounter a rather different, community of birds here that is sure to include more antbirds and furnariids and manakins than is possible during water-based exploration of small streams. However, forest birding activities are typically more difficult and greater patience will be required to see some of these forest dwelling birds.

Following our morning outing we will return to the ship for lunch while our ship continues toward Iquitos, stopping long enough for us to make one last small boat excursion on a stream before dusk. Later tonight we will tie up close to Iquitos or at Iquitos in preparation for our departure tomorrow morning.

NIGHT: *Zafiro*, Amazon River, near Iquitos

**February 15, Day 10: Morning departure from Zafiro; flight from Iquitos to Lima.** We will disembark *Zafiro* this morning and transfer to the airport in Iquitos in preparation for our flight to Lima. Because flights are sometimes delayed out of Iquitos, we have not scheduled any afternoon activities in Lima. Depending upon arrival time, part of the afternoon should be available for resting and repacking for international flights or for continuing on to the Machu Picchu post-trip. There will be a farewell dinner this evening after which those departing for home will be able to walk across the street to the airport prior to your international flight home.

DAY ROOM: Costa del Sol Airport Hotel, Lima

---

*Sungrebe, singing © David Ascanio*

**February 15-16, Days 10-11: Lima to home.** Generally speaking, flights depart for the USA after 10:30 p.m. on Day 10 arriving in the USA early the following morning. Those wishing to avoid the long overnight flight should consider spending a final night in Lima and taking an international flight the following morning (if available). Arrangements can be made through the VENT office for overnight accommodations in Lima at an additional charge.
Due to the nature of the expedition, weather conditions or government regulations may require changes to be made to the itinerary and/or the cancellation of certain shore excursions. Every attempt will be made to adhere to the itinerary described, within the limits of safety and time. In the event of changes, passengers have no right to any refund or other compensation. Expedition fees are based on group participation. Should you choose not to take part in any activity or make use of services provided, no refund will be made.

MACHU PICCHU
BIRDS, RUINS AND HISTORY
JANUARY 31 – FEBRUARY 5, 2020

On this optional cruise extension, we’ll visit the impressive Inca site of Machu Picchu for a chance to wander among some of world’s most remarkable stone ruins. We’ll also witness a broad swath of the Andes from the colonial city of Cuzco to the high mountain pass at Abra Malaga. Among the many highlights are opportunities to bird the high plateau marshes and hills outside Cuzco, transiting lengthy stretches of the Urubamba River Valley, experiencing a singular train ride to the famous archaeological site, and exploring the subtropical forests below the ruins. Beautiful Andean scenery, Inca history and culture, and marvelous birding are themes of this trip.

Outside Cuzco, we’ll visit Lago Huacarpay where we expect to see many Andean waterbirds, including Puna Ibis, Yellow-billed Pintail, Speckled Teal, and Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, while the surrounding arid hills contain specialty birds such as the spectacular Bearded Mountaineer, and Black-tailed and Green-tailed trainbearers. An early morning departure for a high mountain pass will take us past snow-capped mountains, enormous glacier-filled valleys, golden panoramas of puna grassland, and Inca ruins.

At high elevations we may be able to find three Peruvian endemics: White-tufted Sunbeam, Creamy-breasted Spinetail, and Chestnut-breasted Mountain-Finch. Early the following day we will board a train for our Machu Picchu destination, arriving there in time for mid-morning birding. Located on a high ridge, this most famous and spectacular archaeological site is surrounded on three sides by sheer cliffs that fall away to the river far below.

We will also bird the subtropical forests in the valley below the ruins, where we may see Torrent Duck, Andean Guan, Plum-crowned Parrot, and a wonderful array of hummingbirds, antshrikes,
tyrannulets, warblers, and numerous tanagers. These are but a few of the many experiences to be had on this special Machu Picchu Extension.

January 31, Day 1: Arrive Lima. For those participating on the Machu Picchu Extension only, you should plan your flights to arrive Lima, Peru (Jorge Chávez Lima-Callao International Airport, airport code LIM) between 9–11:00 P.M. today. Upon arrival and after clearing immigration, collect your bags from the carousel, pass customs, and then proceed outside the baggage claim area and walk directly across the street to the Costa del Sol Airport Hotel where a room has been reserved in your name. The hotel is located inside the Lima International Airport complex and within walking distance (200 yards) of international arrivals. If time permits, we recommend arriving a day early in order to rest and to allow for flight delays that are sometimes associated with winter weather in your home areas.

NIGHT: Costa del Sol Airport Hotel, Lima

February 1, Day 2: Lima to Cuzco and visit to Laguna Huacarpay; short afternoon drive to Yucay. Our day will start early with a morning commercial flight from Lima to Cuzco. Whether continuing from the cruise or taking the extension only, you will be responsible for getting yourself back inside the airport for check-in and to the flight departure gate. We suggest you use the hotel’s second floor overhead walkway, which leads directly into the airport. Once inside, turn right and, a short distance beyond, take the elevator down to the first floor to access the check-in counters.

Upon arrival in Cuzco please proceed to the luggage pick-up (bathrooms near luggage pick-up carousel). Once you have your luggage, proceed outside the airport where you will be met by our local travel representative and tour leader, Doris Valencia. You will transfer to a bus for the 30 to 40 minute drive to Laguna Huacarpay. Because you will have just come from sea level, and the Cuzco area is situated at about 11,200 feet, we will take a relaxed pace to our travel, taking our time moving between birding areas. After a couple pleasant hours at this beautiful lake we will make our way by bus down the Urubamba Valley to lower elevation where we’ll spend the night.

Birds are usually numerous and relatively easy to see at Laguna Huacarpay (elevation of about 10,500 feet) and in the surrounding arid hills. Among the possibilities are White-tufted and Silvery grebes, Puna Ibis, Speckled and Puna teals, Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Duck, Aplomado Falcon (scarce), Cinereous Harrier (scarce), Plumbeous Rail, Common Moorhen, Andean Coot, Andean Lapwing, Andean Gull, Spot-winged Pigeon (irregular), Bare-faced Ground-Dove, Andean Flicker, Wren-like Rushbird, Spot-billed and Rufous-naped ground-tyrants, Andean (White-winged) Negrito, White-browed Chat-Tyrant, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, Chiquanco Thrush, Yellow-winged Blackbird, Band-tailed Seedeater, and Greenish Yellow-Finch. This also is an excellent location in which to look for the spectacular Bearded Mountaineer, a hummingbird endemic to Peru. Black-tailed and Green-tailed trainbearers and Sparkling Violetear are seen here occasionally, as well. Later we will continue down the Urubamba Valley, watching for Puna Hawk, Andean Gull (along river), Andean Swift, and Giant Hummingbird and occasionally Brown-chested Swallows en route.

The drive will take us along the rushing Urubamba River. Our hotel is a charming country inn, and we should arrive in time to relax, rest, or do some birding around the hotel grounds at dusk.

NIGHT: Sonesta Posadas del Inca Sacred Valley, Yucay

February 2, Day 3: Early Morning Departure for the High Abra Malaga Pass in the Vilcanota Mountains. We will depart relatively early today for the approximately one hour drive up into a magnificent side canyon leading to the Abra Malaga Pass. Our route takes a winding but recently paved side road and, if we make it all the way to the top, eventually crosses the mountains at a 14,000-foot pass. The road is spectacular for its scenery alone, with snow-capped mountains, glacier-filled valleys, golden panoramas of puna grassland, and modern-day descendants of the Incas. We will spend most of the day here, perhaps reaching the pass before turning back. Above about 11,000 feet, we will leave the scrub zone and enter puna grassland. Along this route we should see llama and alpaca tended by Indians who still wear their colorful, traditional dress. Three Peruvian endemics may
be found here: White-tufted Sunbeam, Creamy-crested Spinetail, and Chestnut-breasted Mountain-Finch and with any luck we should find all three of them. Additionally, all of the following species have been seen on previous visits here and are possible: Puna Snipe; Andean Ibis; Andean Goose; Andean Condor; Puna (Variable) Hawk; Gray-breasted Seedsnipe; Shining Sunbeam, Great Sapphirewing, Scaled and Tyrian metaltailes; Giant Hummingbird; Olivaceous Thornbill; Puna Thistletail; Rufous-fronted, Streak-throated, and Streak-backed canasteros; Cuzco Tapaculo (local); Yellow-billed and Tufted tit-tyrants; Brown-backed, White-browed and Rufous-breasted chat-tyrants; Spot-billed, Rufous-naped, Ochre-naped, Cinereous, and perhaps Puna and White-fronted ground-tyrants; Brown-bellied Swallow; Black-throated Flowerpiercer; Greenish and Bright-rumped yellow-finches; White-winged Diuca-Finch; Peruvian Sierra-Finch; Golden-billed Saltator; Plumbeous Sierra-Finch; and Black-backed Grosbeak. Other less common possibilities include Tawny Tit-Spinetail, and Stripe-headed Antpitta. All birding today will be along the roadside and will not involve strenuous walking, although just moving even short distances at these elevations requires effort. As we walk this road, we should be afforded magnificent views of the mountains.

We usually begin our return to the hotel by about mid-afternoon or slightly later, allowing time to stop briefly in the Inca city of Ollantaytambo on our return. Widely regarded as the most typical Inca city in Peru, it is surrounded by ruins and walls that attest to a long occupation by earlier civilizations. The city itself appears as if lifted from an earlier time, being composed mostly of ancient stone walls, open aqueducts to transport water and a population that adheres to mostly traditional dress.

Later, returning to our hotel, some participants also may enjoy a final walk around our hotel this evening, enjoying the lovely setting, crisp evening air and birds on the grounds. White-bellied Hummingbird, Green-tailed Trainbearer, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, Rusty Flowerpiercer, Black-backed Grosbeak, Chiguango Thrush, and numerous Rufous-collared Sparrows can usually be seen in trees and shrubs around the hotel while Puna Ibis, Spot-winged Pigeon and American Kestrel may be seen flying up or down the valley.

NIGHT: Sonesta Posadas del Inca Sacred Valley, Yucay

February 3, Day 4: Yucay to Machu Picchu. Following an early breakfast (5:45 a.m.), we will depart for the Ollantaytambo train station, where we may have some time, again, to see this remarkable city, which is one of the most traditional Inca cities remaining in Peru. Once aboard the train, we have about two hours before we reach the Machu Picchu ruins, along a route that follows the bottom of the Urubamba River valley. Torrent Ducks, White-capped Dippers, and more tremendous views of Mt. Veronica are part of this fascinating trip. Upon arrival, we will check into our hotel, and then start up the famous Hiram Bingham road (by bus) to the ruins, some 1,500 feet higher. Usually we take our lunch at the cafeteria near the ruins. Little needs to be said of the incomparable beauty of this place, one of the most famous and most spectacular archaeological ruins in the world. Located on a high ridge, the old city is surrounded on three sides by sheer cliffs that fall away to the river far below. Across the river on all sides are huge mountains covered with cloud forests. In the distance, even higher snow-capped mountain ridges can be seen. We may never know the true origins of this remarkable site, but whether ancient fortress, secret city, or elaborate agricultural project, it humbles us as we stand before such a magnificent panorama.

After the train departs for the afternoon, we will have the site almost to ourselves and enjoy the opportunity of seeing Machu Picchu in that special late-evening light. Our local guide, Doris Valencia, a Cuzco resident, who is an excellent birder and marvelous student of Inca history, will take us on a guided walking tour of the ruins and previous groups have been unanimous in their praise for her ability to bring Inca history to life, to discuss the many mysteries surrounding the ruins, and to answer questions. During the tour we will also keep an eye skyward occasionally for a few birds around the ruins. However, it is the subtropical forests far below, which we will see tomorrow, rather than the scrub vegetation around the perimeter of the ruins that are most interesting for birds. In the vicinity of the ruins, it is possible to see White-collared and White-tipped swifts; Black-tailed Trainbearer; White-winged Black-Tyrant; White-crested, Sierran, and Highland elaenias; White-winged Black-Tyrant; Blue-and-white Swallow; Cinereous Conebill; Slaty and Black-throated flowerpiercers; Inca Wren (endemic); Blue-capped Tanager; Tricolored Brush-Finch and Black-and-white Seedeater. Andean Condors are occasionally seen above the ruins and, of course, Rufous-collared Sparrows are to be seen almost everywhere. Most groups remain at this magnificent site as long as possible,
enjoying the setting and history, and often catch the last bus back down the steep hill to the hotel. We will have dinner this evening at the luxurious Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel.

NIGHT: Hotel Machu Picchu Pueblo

February 4, Day 5: Full day in Machu Picchu area. This morning we may return to the ruins to enjoy the beauty and explore some of the area we may have missed the previous day, then return to the hotel for lunch. This afternoon, we will be birding around the hotel and along the railroad tracks.

Here we have the opportunity to see Torrent Duck; Fasciated Tiger-Heron (rare); Andean Guan; White-throated Quail-Dove; Plum-crowned and Red-billed parrots (irregular in occurrence); Mitred Parakeet (also irregular in occurrence); Green Violetear; Green-and-white and Speckled hummingbirds; Bronzy and Collared incas; Chestnut-breasted Coronet; Long-tailed Sylph; White-bellied Woodstar; Andean and White-tipped swifts; Highland Motmot; Crested and Golden-headed quetzals; Spot-crowned Woodcreeper; Variable Antshrike; Masked Fruit eater; White-winged Black-Tyrant; Dusky-capped Flycatcher; Smoke-colored Pewee; Mottlecheeked and Selater’s tyrannulets; Ochraceous-breasted, Streaked-necked, and Golden-crowned flycatchers; Torrent Tyrannulet; Glossy-black Thrush; Slate-throated and Spectacled redstarts; Dusky-green Oropendola; Capped Conebill; Rusty Flowerpiercer; Thick-billed and Orange-bellied euphonias; Golden-naped, Saffron-crowned, Beryl-spangled, Silver-backed, Bay-headed, and Black-capped tanagers; Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager; Oeaginous Hemispingus; Silver-beaked Tanager; Pale-legged and Russet-crowned warblers; and Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch. There is also a reasonably good chance that we will see an Andean Cock-of-the-rock perched or flying across the railroad tracks during our walk this morning.

NIGHT: Hotel Machu Picchu Pueblo

February 5, Day 6: Morning train back to Cuzco. This morning we will board the train for the approximately four-hour trip back to Cuzco. If attendance is high at the ruins, we may travel only part way by train and then be transferred to a bus for the remainder of the trip. This afternoon we will have some time to explore Cuzco on foot.

NIGHT: Palacio del Inka Hotel, Cuzco

February 6, Day 7: Cuzco to Lima. There will be some time this morning to shop or see the main plaza and other sites in Cuzco before departing for the airport and your afternoon flight to Lima.

Those continuing to the Amazon River Cruise, upon arrival in Lima you will be met at the airport and transferred to the Swissotel where a room will be reserved in your name. Dinner tonight is on your own.

February 6-7, Days 7-8: Lima to home. For those participants departing home, upon arrival in Lima you will proceed across the street to the Costa del Sol Airport Hotel where a day room will be reserved for you. The remainder of the day will be available for resting and repacking. Depending on your flight time, tonight you should return to the ticketing booth at the airport with check in at least three hours prior to the time of departure. Dinner tonight is on your own.

Generally, flights depart for the USA after 10:30 p.m. arriving in the USA early the following morning. Those wishing to avoid the long overnight flight should consider spending a final night in Lima and taking an international flight the following morning (if available). Arrangements can be made through the VENT office for overnight accommodations in Lima at an additional charge.
CLOUD FORESTS OF NORTHERN PERU EXTENSION: OWLETS, SPATULETAILS AND TANAGERS
FEBRUARY 15-23, 2020

For this pre-trip, we’ll fly from Lima to Tarapoto in northern Peru, gateway to the northern Andes, where we’ll spend part of a week exploring a mystical cloud forest reserve and nearby foothill areas. Simply put, many of the birds of this region are found nowhere else in the world and the birding here is as good as it gets anywhere in the Andes. This trip is designed to maximize our birding time based primarily at a single site, the wonderful forested Owlet Lodge at Abra Patricia pass, allowing us to not only experience the rich avifauna of the pristine cloud forest, but also to get to know and learn many of the more widespread Andean gems as well.

If you are still wondering, “Why northern Peru?” Part of the reason is because of the region’s relative isolation from the rest of the country. For it is here, where the low and arid Marañon River Valley bisects the Andes so deeply that it forms a major biogeographical barrier to cloud forest birds living both north and south of this valley, meaning that almost everything we see will be new here south of the divide!

On arrival in Tarapota, we’ll first enjoy a wonderful Peruvian dish before we drive through the rich lowlands gradually climbing into the lush foothill forests, visiting an easily assessable colony of the famous oilbirds en route to the small town of Mayabamba for our initial night. Our secluded forested lodge is brimming with hummingbird feeders and fabulous orchid gardens that offer non-stop action!

Then following a morning of birding around the lodge, we’ll gradually ascend before driving through mile after mile of lush cloud forest and white-water streams on to the ornithologically famous Abra Patricia Pass. Here our headquarters will be the Owlet Lodge, a comfortable ecotourism lodge run by ECOAN that offers a unique opportunity for fabulous birdding right from our doorsteps, offering magnificent views of cloud forest. Furthermore, the ECOAN profits from our groups visit helps protect this important area as well as preserving other important conservation funding for projects within the rich Peruvian Andes.
Foremost among our targets is the spectacular Marvelous Spatuletail, an endangered hummingbird so ornate that it has almost become the stuff of legends. Abra Patricia is also justly famous for several regional specialties including the Long-whiskered Owlet as well as such endemics as Royal Sunangel, Ochre-fronted, Rusty-tinged and Chestnut antpittas, Bar-winged Wood-Wren, Cinnamon-breasted Tody-Tyrant, Johnson’s (Lulu’s) Tody-Tyrant (described only in 2001) and magnificent Yellow-scarfed Tanager too. This itinerary gives us time to search for many of these specialties during our stay here. The lush cloud forests of Cordillera del Colan have many other special mountain birds that can be reached with short drives to lower elevations including two species of quetzals, Torrent Duck, White-faced Nunbird, Versicolored Barbet, Andean Cock-of-the-rock, one or more fruiteaters, and a wonderful selection of more than 45 species of colorful Andean tanagers possible as well as a staggering 40 plus species of dazzling hummingbirds too!

With the help of the excellent field guide, Birds of Peru, we’ll derive great pleasure from sorting through and identifying the tremendous diversity of birds that occur in these rich cloud forests.

**February 15, Day 1: Arrival in Lima.** You should plan your flights to arrive in Lima, Peru (Jorge Chávez Lima-Callao International Airport, airport code LIM) any time today. Upon arrival and after clearing immigration, collect your bags from the carousel, pass customs, and then proceed outside the baggage claim area and walk directly across the street to the **Costa del Sol Airport Hotel** where a room has been reserved in your name. The hotel is located inside the Lima International Airport complex and within walking distance (200 yards) of international arrivals. If time permits, we recommend arriving a day early in order to rest and to allow for flight delays that are sometimes associated with winter weather in your home areas.

NIGHT: Costa del Sol Airport Hotel, Lima
February 16, Day 2: Lima to Tarapoto (direct flight) followed by drive to Moyobamba. We will begin our adventure with a morning flight from Lima to the fast-growing city of Tarapoto. On arrival we’ll load into our air-conditioned van and transfer to a nearby restaurant famous for its great local dishes, specializing in the giant and delicious Amazon fish, the Arapima (one of the world’s largest fresh water species!). Driving through the fertile lowlands rich in rice paddies, we begin our drive westward to Moyobamba, which is about two and a half hours away via paved road. Here we will make a short stop at a deep ravine where a small colony of Oilbirds, the world’s only nocturnal frugivore that amazingly uses echo location (only 3 bird species in the World use this technique), that can usually be found in good numbers and observed well.

We’ll arrive at our forested lodge in time for a late afternoon observation of their abundant hummingbird feeders for a non-stop action all from a well-constructed platform observation tower. The platform is a short walk uphill from the parking area and features an observation tower surrounded by flowering bushes and shrubs, as well as multiple feeders. At about 1,000m elevation, this site attracts a mix of lowland and foothill hummingbird species, with over 25 species of hummingbirds recorded here. Some of the species recorded include many gems: dazzling Rufous-crested Coquette; Violet-headed Hummingbird; Gray-breasted Saberwing; White-necked Jacobin; Fork-tailed Woodnymph; Black-throated Mango; Long-billed Starthroat; Sapphire-spangled Emerald; Blue-tailed Emerald; Golden-tailed Sapphire; White-chinned Sapphire and both Black-chinned and Long-tailed hermit.

NIGHT: Waquanki Lodge, Moyobamba

February 17, Day 3: Lodge near Moyobamba in the early morning followed by an afternoon drive to Abra Patricia pass and the Owlet Lodge. After an early breakfast we may offer an early morning forest walk in the hotel grounds before we visit the wonderful hummingbird garden again at the lodge.

In addition to the spectacular list of hummingbirds, a long list of other birds has been observed in this reserve which includes foothill forest, shade coffee plantations, some open spaces and other woodlands in varying stages of regrowth. Some possibilities include Speckled Chachalaca, Swallow-tailed Kite, White-eyed Parakeet, Green-backed Trogon, Gilded Barbet, Channel-billed Toucan, Fiery-throated Fruiteater (a much-sought species), Mishuana Tyrannulet (recently described species), Painted Manakin (described as recently as 2017), Fiery-capped Manakin, Blue-necked Tanager, endemic Black-bellied Tanager, Paradise Tanager, Green Honeycreeper, Swallow Tanager, and Chestnut-bellied Seed-Finch. The recently described Várzea Thrush (a split from Hauxwell’s Thrush) has also been reported at this interesting reserve.

For the botanists and even non-botanists amongst, we will have a guided visit to the incredible orchid garden by our rooms. In fact, this is one of the best orchid sites in the Neotropics (with over 350 species) with every size, shape and color imaginable. You will leave here with an orchid overdose! The owners of the lodge are famous in the orchid world of having described several species new to science.

After lunch we will begin our drive to the Owlet Lodge. En route we will visit a pond with the hope of finding the localized and attractive Masked Duck. The wonderful Owlet Lodge is situated in a lush 32,000-acre cloud forest reserve managed and run by the conservation organization ECOAN (Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos) which is
adjacent to the 450,000-acre Alto Mayo Forest Reserve. The bird list for this region now totals more than 400 species and the Owlet Lodge makes an exciting base from which to explore this area. The lodge overlooks the mountains carpeted in pristine cloud forest. Hummingbird feeders around the lodge attract numerous species including the amazing Sword-billed Hummingbird, Chestnut-breasted Coronet (common), Collard Inca, Emerald-bellied Puffleg, White-bellied Woodstar, Amythest-throated Sunangel and Long-tailed Sylph.

At the edge of a small clearing and along forest trails immediately adjacent to the lodge, mixed-species flocks often include the spectacular Yellow-breasted Brush-Finch, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, as well as Emerald Toucanet, Olive-backed Woodcreeper, Variable Antshrike, Barred Becard Green-and-black Fruiteater, Mountain Wren, Russet-crowned Warbler, Spectacled Redstart, Blue-capped Tanager, Grass-green Tanager, Yellow-scarfed Tanager, Saffron-crowned Tanager, Flame-faced Tanager, Blue-and-black Tanager, Beryl-spangled Tanager, Flower piercers and the spectacular White-capped Tanager. The forest edge around the lodge is often full of many amazingly odd shaped and colorful orchids as well as bromeliads and passion flowers.

NIGHT: Owlet Lodge at Abra Patricia

February 18-21, Days 4-7: Abra Patricia Pass. For the next four days we will enjoy fabulous montane forests around Abra Patricia (ca. 7,500 ft. / 2,300 m). This area lies on the east slope of the Andes but on the south side of the Río Marañon watershed and is thus separated from the avifauna at similar elevation on the northern side of the valley. A single paved road now stretches from Tarapoto to the lodge and beyond, and this road has greatly improved the accessibility of the region to birders. However, accessibility also usually brings greater colonization, and in anticipation of this the ECOAN lodge, along with the American Bird Conservancy, has purchased and is protecting this pristine cloud forest reserve. At the lodge there is a good trail system and a canopy tower that offers good birding possibilities and spectacular view of a large portion of this region. At the present time there is extensive pristine forest extending from the pass down to about 3,300 feet, (1000 m) providing a superb transect of middle elevation and foothill humid forest birding. The birding here can be outstanding!

The Abra Patricia region is justly famous in ornithological circles for being the site of discovery of three species new to science in the 1970s and 1980s. Most famous of these is the Long-whiskered Owlet, first encountered in 1976, when a team of scientists from Louisiana State University mist-netted three individuals on a wind-swept ridge east of the pass. Until very recently the species had been seen by very few people. Recently it has been located in a few other nearby sites, including one that is within walking distance of our lodge, although it remains difficult to see. However just being in the vicinity of such a rare species is exciting. Similarly, the little Ochre-fronted Antpitta (a highly sought-after endemic) was discovered here in 1976, (with luck we have a chance of seeing it come into feed on worms) the Chestnut Antpitta in 1987, and the endemic Rusty-tinged Antpitta also occurs here! The same elfin forests where these birds were discovered are also home, along ridge tops, to the Royal Sunangel, (endemic) Cinnamon-breasted Tody-Tyrant, and Bar-winged Wood-Wren (endemic); three species with extremely limited ranges. Additionally, the area around the pass itself is an excellent spot for Johnson’s (Lulu’s) Tody-Tyrant (described in April 2001).
Our trips take place during what are normally relatively dry periods, although this is a very wet area and rain is possible at any time of the year. Temperatures are generally pleasant and cool throughout the year although can warm up considerably for short periods during the day. We plan to visit several elevations within this area including the lodge’s pristine cloud forest reserve trail system, the Spatuletail Reserve, and the beautiful montane forests along the roadside below the lodge.

At the lodge we will have a chance to explore the rich cloud forest interior which is festooned with exotic epiphytes, bromeliads, hordes of amazing colorful orchids, lichens and moss. Also, we will explore important bird-rich microhabitats such as bamboo, and the large, sturdy metal canopy tower provides a unique opportunity to experience canopy flocks and an array of colorful tanagers at eye level!

Exploring the moss-festooned cloud forest will be a daily thrill. Here we will search for some of the localized species such as the rare White-faced Nunbird and maybe a few of the numerous ground-dwelling antpittas and tapaculos. Two large raptors are possible, namely the Black-and-chestnut Eagle and Solitary Eagle although both are low-density species with large home ranges. Other species we may find in the vicinity of the lodge include the Wattled Guan (scarce), Andean Guan, Sickle-winged Guan, Scaly-naped Parrot, Golden-headed and Crested quetzal, Masked Trogon, Green (Inca) Jay, White-collared Jay, and stunning Crimson-bellied Woodpecker. There also are numerous forest interior birds that are more challenging to see such as Rufous Spinetail, Uniform Antshrike, Variable Antshrike, streak-headed Antbird, and Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant. Two wonderful songs we are likely to hear in these cloud forests are those of the Andean Solitaire and the Sharpe’s and Chestnut-breasted Wren although the wren, in particular, are often a challenge to see. Most exciting are likely to be the mixed-species flocks, which are usually dominated by tanagers, flower-piercers, flycatchers and a sprinkling of other species. Mixed species flocks around the lodge will contain a somewhat different assortment of species than those a bit further downslope. Examples of species near the lodge include Green-and-Black Fruiteater, Crested Quetzal, Red-headed Tanager Yellow-throated Tanager, Yellow-scarfed Tanager, Metallic-green Tanager, Saffron-crowned Tanager as well as Pearled Treerunner, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Montane-foliage-gleaner.

Excursions just a short distance below the lodge will include a visit to a unique stunted ridge top elfin forest where several poorly-known endemics occur. Among them the Royal Sunangel, and recently described Bar-winged Wood-Wren and Cinnamon-breasted Tody-Tyrant. Other species here and at lower elevations may include
Crested and Golden-headed Quetzal, Chestnut-crested Cotinga, Blue-fronted Lancebill, and Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, and Hooded, Mountain-Tanager, as well as Yellow-throated Tanager.

Mixed species flocks at still lower elevations below the ledge (ca 4,500-6,000 feet) are likely to contain more small birds. Here, in a kaleidoscope of fast-moving color we may encounter Versicolored Barbet, Scaled Fruiteater Lemon-browed and Ornate Flycatcher, Golden-collared and Purple honeycreepers, Black-faced Dacnis, Blue-naped and stunning Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia, Vermilion Tanager, Paradise Tanager, Orange-eared Tanager, Green-and-gold Tanager, Golden, Tanager Blue-browed, Tanager Blue-necked Tanager, Beryl-spangled Tanager, and Blue-and-black Tanager. Other species in these mid-elevation flocks could include Yellow-breasted Antwren and Rufous-rumped Antwren, Black-throated Tody-Tyrant and Gray-mantled Wren.

A few very locally-distributed species also occur near the lower limit of this wet forest (ca 3,000-5000 feet), including the Ash-throated Antwren, Equatorial Graytail, and yes, even the Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, and Amazonian Umbrellabird (rare).

One day we will drive westward to the small villages of Pedro Ruiz and Florida to see the Marvelous Spatuletail, a hummingbird that is endemic to a small area in northern Peru, and one that surely ranks as one of the most spectacular hummingbirds in the world. It is severely threatened by deforestation and the loss of its dry-woodland and scrub habitat. But a new reserve operated by ECOAN, the Centro de Interpretación Biológica Colibrí Maravilloso, which provides good habitat for it. Strategically placed hummingbird feeders now greatly simplify our task of seeing this remarkable hummingbird, and we should be able to see several of them. Other hummingbird possibilities at this small reserve include Sparkling and Lesser violetear, White-bellied Hummingbird, Andean Emerald, Bronzy Inca, Green-tailed Trainbearer, and both White-bellied Woodstar and Little Woodstar. On nearby trails we also may see Emerald Toucanet, Speckle-chested Piculet, Black-streaked Puffbird, endemic Buff-bellied Tanager, Silvery Tanager, Rufous-capped Antshrike and Speckle-breasted Wren.

Night birding offers many possibilities, more in fact than we are likely to have time to pursue. Among the possibilities are Rufous-banded Owl, White-throated Screech-Owl, and Rufous-bellied Nighthawk all of which often occur in the lodge garden. Other species in the area include the impressive Lyre-tailed Nightjar, Cinnamon Screech-Owl (hard to see) and of course the rare and endearing Long-whiskered Owlet which will be one of our targets although it usually requires good weather to descend, excellent fitness for a long strenuous hike and great patience. A sighting of this diminutive little owl is never assured. Finally, it is worth noting that the endangered and endemic Yellow-tailed Woolly Monkey occurs in these beautiful cloud forests although we would have to be quite lucky to see.

NIGHTS: Owlet Lodge at Abra Patricia
February 22, Day 8: Tarapoto to Lima. After some final birding this morning, we will return to Tarapoto for a flight (early to mid-afternoon) to Lima. Upon arrival in Lima you will proceed across the street to the Costa del Sol Airport Hotel where a day room will be reserved for you.

February 22-23, Days 8-9: Lima to home. Those participants with an international flight home will walk back to the airport in time to check in. Flights generally depart for the USA after 10:30 p.m. on Day 8 arriving in the USA early the following morning. For participants not wishing the rigors of this long overnight flight may wish to consider spending your final night in Lima and taking an international flight the following morning (if available).

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least four months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and arrange transfers often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may NOT be available. For this reason, travel insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour. This coverage is included in the Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™ program. Through Ripcord, “emergency evacuation” can be purchased as a stand-alone benefit or as part of a comprehensive travel insurance policy. If you choose not to purchase insurance through Ripcord, you are required to obtain it through another provider.

TOUR SIZE: The Amazon River Cruise will be limited to 31 participants; the Machu Picchu Pre-trip will be limited to 14 participants; and the Cloud Forests of Northern Peru Extension will be limited to 8 participants; and

TOUR LEADERS: David Ascanio and Andrew Whittaker will lead the Amazon River Cruise; Doris Valencia will lead the Machu Picchu Pre-trip with a second local leader added with a group size of 10 or more; and Andrew Whittaker will lead the Cloud Forests of Northern Peru Extension.

David Ascanio, a Venezuelan birder and naturalist, has spent 33 years guiding birding tours throughout his native country, Colombia, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, the Orinoco and Amazon river basins, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the Lesser Antilles, Cuba, Costa Rica, Chile, and Panama. He is especially interested in bird vocalizations and has a private library containing voices of more than 70% of all the birds of Venezuela. David combines superb birding skills with an astonishing command of bird vocalizations. He has published a book for children about the songs of the birds of Venezuela, and has coauthored the descriptions of two new species, the Rio Orinoco Spinetail and the Delta Amacuro Softtail. David has also published various manuscripts about the birds of the llanos (plains), the Orinoco River island species, and the pan-tepui endemic species for which he has become an authority. He is the first author of the Field Guide to the Birds of Venezuela (2017). David is an excellent communicator, has a great sense of humor, and is tireless in helping others find birds and wildlife. These traits have made him one of the most popular naturalists/guides in the Neotropics.
Andrew Whittaker, a senior member of the VENT staff, has led tours since 1993 throughout Brazil, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Argentina, Costa Rica, Panama, Europe, Israel, and Antarctica. An avid birder from an early age (thanks to his father), he became a licensed bander/ringer at age 17. Andy is an all-round naturalist who immensely enjoys sharing his fascination and deep knowledge of birds, animals, orchids, and all aspects of nature in a really fun way. Since 1982 Andy’s fascination with migration has seen him working around the world at bird observatories in Eilat, Israel; Sabah, Borneo; Long Point, Canada; and at two in Britain including the top UK bird observatory on Fair Isle, Scotland. Andy was born in England; however, he considers himself Brazilian having lived more than 30 years in this mega biodiverse country, first working for the Smithsonian Institution, studying Amazonian rainforest birds in Manaus. Andy is best known for his passionate and intimate knowledge of bird vocalizations and taxonomy, which has enabled him to discover several new species (such as the Cryptic Forest-Falcon in 2003) and rediscover others thought to be extinct. He loves nothing better than finding and showing rare and challenging skulkers to groups. In 2010 Andy, along with colleagues, produced a DVD-ROM of Brazilian bird songs, calls, and photos of 1,250 species. Andy was a consultant for the prestigious Life of Birds series by Sir David Attenborough and is considered an authority on Amazonian birds, having authored numerous technical publications on the region’s avifauna. At present Andy is working with Kevin Zimmer on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil to be published by Princeton University Press. Andy is a member of the Brazilian Records Committee, an associate researcher at the Museum Goeldi, and an active conservationist and orchid lover living with his partner in life, Jaqueline, in Porto Alegre, southern Brazil.

Doris Valencia, a naturalist born in Cuzco, Peru, began her study of the Manu wilderness at a young age. She has served as a volunteer park ranger in Manu National Park and has been working as a naturalist tour guide for about twelve years. She is an avid student of the flora and fauna of Manu and has a special interest in birds. Doris is an excellent birder and leads birding groups throughout Peru including Paracas National Marine Reserve, Bajauha-Sonene National Park, Tambopata-Candamo National Reserve, Pampas del Heath, Machu Picchu Historical Sanctuary, and Manu Biosphere Reserve. Doris is also an avid student of Peruvian history and of the history of Machu Picchu. Her lectures on the history of Machu Picchu are superb.

CRUISE INFORMATION

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: All staterooms are outside cabins with two lower beds or one queen bed and have private facilities. Cabins will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Quoted prices are per person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suite Type</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Suites, Cabins #1-8</td>
<td>$9,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Master Suites, Cabins #9 &amp; #10</td>
<td>$11,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Suites, Cabins #11-18</td>
<td>$10,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Zafiro Suite, Cabin #19</td>
<td>$12,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Lower Suites, Cabins #1-8</td>
<td>$15,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Upper Suites, Cabins #11-18</td>
<td>$16,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fee for the **Amazon River Cruise** includes breakfast on day 2 through dinner on day 10; hotel and ship accommodations as stated in the itinerary; internal Peru flights (Lima-Iquitos-Lima)*; domestic departure tax; ground transportation during the tour; group transfers and baggage handling between airport, ship, and hotel; shore excursions and river cruises as described; gratuities to the crew and staff including the Naturalists and Expedition Leader of Zafiro; and the services of on-board leaders and lecturers.

Not included in your cruise fee is roundtrip airfare from your home to Lima and return; alcoholic beverages; phone calls; laundry; excess baggage charges; international departure taxes; passport or visa fees (if applicable); accommodations, meals, and transfers prior to joining/after tour; personal and baggage insurance; and all items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

*Please Note: Domestic airfare Lima-Iquitos-Lima is included in the tour fee. At the time of printing the cost of these air segments is $399 but is subject to change without notice until the time of ticketing. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours reserves the right to assess a surcharge for this air ticket should costs increase before ticketing.

Single accommodation while on Zafiro will be limited to a total of five cabins. After these cabins have been reserved, single travelers will have cabin mates assigned and will only be charged the double occupancy rate. When pairing roommates, we will always pair participants of the same sex, and all shared accommodations are nonsmoking. If it is not possible to pair you with a roommate, you may be asked to pay a single supplement for the land portion of the trip of $315.
Technical Information

- Length: 164 feet; Width: 31 feet
- Built: 2015
- Registry: Peru
- Passenger Capacity: 40; Staff and Crew: 21

CLOUD FORESTS OF NORTHERN PERU INFORMATION

The fee for the Cloud Forests of Northern Peru Pre-trip is $3995 in double occupancy from Lima. The tour fee includes all meals beginning with breakfast on day 2 through dinner on day 7; internal Peru flights (Lima-Tarapoto-Lima)*; domestic departure tax; lodging as stated in the itinerary; ground transportation during the tour; domestic departure taxes; gratuities; and guide services provided by the tour leader.

Not included in your tour fee is roundtrip airfare from your home to Lima and return international departure taxes; alcoholic beverages; special gratuities; phone calls; laundry; passport or visa fees (if applicable); accommodations, meals, and transfers prior to joining/after tour; personal and baggage insurance; or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for the Northern Peru Extension is $235. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share, but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

*Domestic airfare Iquitos-Tarapoto-Lima is included in the tour fee. At the time of printing the cost of these air segments is $250 but is subject to change without notice until the time of ticketing. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours reserves the right to assess a surcharge for this air ticket should costs increase before ticketing.

MACHU PICCHU INFORMATION

The fee for the Machu Picchu Pre-trip is $4895 in double occupancy from Lima. The tour fee includes all meals beginning with breakfast on day 2 through lunch on day 7; internal Peru flights (Lima-Cuzco-Lima)*; domestic departure tax; lodging as stated in the itinerary; ground transportation during the tour; two entrances into Machu Picchu; domestic departure taxes; and guide services provided by the tour leader.

Not included in your tour fee is roundtrip airfare from your home to Lima and return; a second entrance fee and bus transport for Machu Picchu on Day 5 (optional); international departure taxes; alcoholic beverages; special gratuities; phone calls; laundry; passport or visa fees (if applicable); accommodations, meals, and transfers prior to joining/after tour; personal and baggage insurance; or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for the Machu Picchu Extension is $710. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share, but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

*Domestic airfare Lima-Cuzco-Lima is included in the tour fee. At the time of printing the cost of these air segments is $370 but is subject to change without notice until the time of ticketing. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours reserves the right to assess a surcharge for this air ticket should costs increase before ticketing.
**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this voyage. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of brochure printing. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** If you prefer to pay the initial deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard, Visa, or American Express at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at www.ventbird.com) should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. The balance of the tour fees is due 150 days prior to the cruise departure date (September 9, 2019).

**DEPOSITS:**
- **Cruise:** The deposit is **$2000** per person with a second deposit of **$3,000** due 210 days prior to departure (July 11, 2019).
- **Pre-trip:** The deposit for **Machu Picchu** is **$1000** per person
- **Extension:** The deposit for the **Cloud Forests of Northern Peru** is **$1000** per person.

This Amazon River Cruise is designed for persons in reasonably good health. By forwarding the expedition deposit, you certify that you do not have a physical condition or disability which would create a hazard to you or other passengers. VENT reserves the right to decline to accept or retain you or other passengers should your health, actions, or general deportment impede the operations of the expedition or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of other passengers.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION POLICIES:**
- **Amazon River Cruise:** $1000 of your initial deposit is non-refundable if cancellation occurs up to 210 days prior to the departure date. For cancellations that occur between 209 and 151 days, both deposits are non-refundable; cancellations within 150 days of the departure date are 100% non-refundable whether previously paid or not. Any refunds will be reduced by applicable airline cancellation penalties. No refunds will be made in the event of “no shows” or cancellations made on the day of sailing.

- **Cloud Forests of Northern Peru Pre-trip:** Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before departure date, the deposit less **$300** per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. **We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.**
Machu Picchu Extension: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 120 days or more before departure date, the deposit less $300 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.

Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where you, the customer, are not at fault and have not cancelled in violation of the terms and conditions of any of the contract for transportation or travel services, all sums paid to VENT for services not received by you will be promptly refunded by VENT to you unless you otherwise advise VENT in writing.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of $50,000. CST #2014998-50.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Resolutions as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most highly regarded travel insurance programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; medical evacuation and rescue services from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, primary medical expense coverage, and much more. Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available but must be purchased within 14 days of tour deposit. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause (must be purchased within 14 days of tour deposit). Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: ripcordrescuetravelinsurance.com/ventbird; or click the Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™ logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of $50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. All internal flights will be booked through our local operator. Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour(s) is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be responsible for any air ticket penalties.

BAGGAGE: The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and airline to find out specific weight restrictions. As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag.

Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government’s attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: http://www.tsa.gov/
Baggage limits for the domestic flights within Peru are one checked bag of no more than 50 lb. and one carry-on of 17 lbs. Guests may also carry on one personal item such as a purse, duty free bag etc., and all luggage is weighed at check-in. Excess baggage fees will be calculated based on the weight of the bag and the route. Guests should consult the LATAM website for more information if they have extra or overweight baggage. Persons with luggage in excess of this amount will be required to pay their own overweight charges. Therefore, we request participants limit their baggage to one medium-sized suitcase of no more than 50 pounds and one carry-on, as space in vehicles and on the riverboat may be limited. Please note, quoted restrictions are valid as of April 2019 and are subject to change without notice.

Participants on the Machu Picchu Extension should travel with only a small to medium-sized backpack and perhaps another hand or shoulder bag during the portion of the trip that visits the ruins. You will be able to leave any extra luggage with our local agents and they will return them to the hotel in Cuzco which will be waiting for you upon return. This will greatly facilitate getting on and off the train, checking in at the hotel, and re-boarding the train for the return trip to Cuzco. The train has very limited space for luggage; also, travelers will have to board a bus for the last 30 to 40-minute portion of the return trip to Cuzco, where, again, having less luggage will be more convenient. With this in mind, all travelers will be much happier with a minimum of luggage for this portion of the trip (please do not bring any suitcases or large duffels for this portion of the trip).

CLIMATE & WEATHER: In Amazonian Peru, temperatures will be warm, but they will rarely exceed 90° F and often are 85° or less at this time of year. However, because of high rainfall and humidity, it may feel somewhat uncomfortable at times. The climate, of course, is warm and humid. Along the main course of the Amazon River, which is close to the equator, there is no pronounced dry season. In almost any month, rains may vary from brief afternoon showers to more extended periods of heavy rain. For Northern Peru’s Cloud Forest Pre-trip, weather conditions can be extremely variable. The lowland is likely to be warm-to-hot with temperatures in the 90s. The driest months are June through October. Conversely, time spent in the mountains (Abra Patricia) will see cool temperatures at night and in the mornings (low 50s) warming quickly on sunny days. Visitors here should be prepared for rain and foggy conditions any month of the year although it is generally drier (rains less) during the June through October period. Temperatures also can be quite variable. During a visit we may see almost no rain, or conversely, there can be extended periods of drizzle and rain. We should point out, however, that birding is generally best during misty conditions, or periods with intermittent light rain, and worst on hot sunny days.

Participants on the Machu Picchu Extension should be prepared for the possibility of rain, mainly in the vicinity of Machu Picchu itself, even though this trip is scheduled for the dry season. Bring an umbrella and/or a lightweight poncho. The Urubamba Valley can be quite chilly in the early mornings, and a sweater and/or fleece and jacket combination (layers) will be necessary for the first few hours. You also should bring gloves and a warm hat. Bear in mind, however, that although mornings can be chilly (upper 30s to upper 40s) temperatures warm rapidly by mid-morning, and mid-day is quite pleasant. Around Machu Picchu (about 6,500 to 7,500 feet), mornings are generally fairly warm and pleasant (70s or higher), and a light jacket or fleece should be sufficient. Mid-day temperatures can sometimes be quite warm and sunny but one should always be prepared for the possibility of a rain shower. The train is heated, so very warm clothing for the return train trip is not necessary. Participants should have long pants and long shirts to protect against a few black-flies that may be present around Machu Picchu.

CLOTHING: We ask that participants bring hats and clothing of mostly subdued colors (i.e. khakis, tans or shades of dull blue, green or brown) which serve to reduce the conspicuousness of our movements. White T-shirts or white shirts are suitable in boats but please do not wear them in the forest. We do not recommend wearing military-style clothing.

- **Pants and Shorts**: A couple pairs of pants and shorts each are recommended. Many people prefer loose-fitting pants made of cotton or other material. Shorts or other comfortable lightweight clothing will be desirable for warmer times of day while onboard the riverboat.
• **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela’s and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of lightweight, yet durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular and more reasonably priced than in the past.

• **Shirts:** Several shirts, (long and short-sleeved), in addition to other comfortable styles suitable for warm weather.

• **Lightweight Poncho:** Quite useful on boat outings in the event of rain.

• **Hat:** A good hat for protection from the sun and rain is essential.

For the **Machu Picchu Extension** please be aware that we stay only two nights at the ruins area (very elegant hotel), and that space for luggage is quite limited on the train. Train stations also are very crowded. Therefore, when we depart the city of Urubamba for Machu Picchu, your large luggage will be sent back to Cuzco by bus and will be waiting for you on our return. We recommend that participants bring only one or two small packs (e.g. back pack and a hand carry bag) for the nights at Machu Picchu. This will make it much easier to board and disembark the train and check in and out of hotel at Machu Picchu.

When we arrive Machu Picchu, we will not immediately have the use of our rooms (usually not until our return to the hotel in the evening as the staff needs time to clean rooms) so luggage must be stored at the hotel upon arrival. Therefore, it is important that participants have either a sturdy plastic bag or (preferably) a second light weight back pack that you can use for your day trip to the ruins as you will be leaving toiletries and your change of clothes in a bag or pack, checked at the hotel for the day. On the morning we depart we will not have to check out of our rooms until 11 a.m. so we will be able to spend the morning birding, then return and check out before lunch. The hotel at Machu Picchu supplies bottled water, shower thongs, robe (for room use); also, a small oil heater is present in each room in case temperatures get cool.

**Clothing and equipment for the overnight ruins trip:**

- Sturdy walking shoes (or hiking boots if you prefer)
- Walking Stick may be useful (optional)
- One change of clothes including long-sleeved shirt and long pants
- Light jacket or fleece (it will not be cold at Machu Picchu)
- Umbrella
- Broad brim hat and sunscreen (sun very intense at ruins)
- Binoculars, camera, field checklist of birds (supplied by VENT)
- Book: *Birds of Peru*
- Passport and air tickets (keep with you at all times)
- Toiletries, medicines, personal items such as small pocket notebook, etc.

**CONDITIONS:**

**The Program** – This **Amazon River Cruise** is an all-around natural history expedition as well as a birding trip. While seeing as many birds and other wildlife is of high importance, an overarching goal is to experience the many habitats that comprise the region we call “Amazonia,” one of the world’s most dynamic ecosystems. Travel on the river will be aboard a new and very comfortable riverboat. Off the boat, we will explore back channels and tributary rivers aboard stable motorized skiffs. In some years, the program includes a morning in “terre firme” habitat where we’ll have the opportunity to walk a forest trail on higher ground. Nevertheless, we might try other options based in the trail conditions. Physical demands for this trip are light.

Our routine for most days will involve an early morning breakfast (usually about 5:30 a.m.) followed by a skiff expedition lasting from approximately 6:10 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Thereafter, we will return to the boat for a 15 to 20-minute break followed by a second late morning excursion (optional) lasting from about 10:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. After a noon lunch we’ll enjoy some personal time, or down time, until about 3-4:00 p.m., at which point there will be a late-afternoon skiff trip exploring a new location. Dinner will usually be at 7:00 p.m. most nights and this will usually be followed immediately by a checklist and recap session in the lecture room. Depending on
weather, also we will offer two or three 20 to 30 minute lectures or conservation discussion prior to our afternoon outings. An optional nighttime outing to search for night birds, frogs, and insects may be offered, at least, on one night. The schedule is always subject to amending based on discretion of your tour leaders or the boat’s expedition leader and the ship captains. Occasionally we may enjoy breakfast in the field.

For the Cloud Forests of Northern Peru Pre-trip, we’ll travel to the northern Andes seeking a range of regional specialty special birds. We’ll spend one night at a lodge near Moyobamba and the remainder of the trip at the Owlet Lodge at Abra Patricia. Accommodations are fairly good at both lodges. Rooms are comfortable and the food good at the lodge near Moyobamba and the elevation here is low (3300 feet). The trail to the hummingbird garden is fairly short but steep and can be slippery after a rain. However, at the garden itself, there is an elevated lookout with bench seats. The longer trail into the upper forest is well maintained initially but once inside the forest some sections are steep and less well-maintained. Persons in reasonably good physical condition, however, should not experience problems. The Owlet Lodge at Abra Patricia is located at 7600 feet (2300m) and the climate here is decidedly cooler, and damp and foggy conditions (especially at night) are frequent. Rooms are comfortable but unheated and can be cool to chilly some nights. From the parking lot there is an approximately 125 yard uphill trail leading to the main lodge and dining area and an additional 75 yard walk beyond to the rooms, which are located in three buildings. All lodging consists of private two-room suits, each suit with a shared bathroom and an entry room. There are six two-room suits at present (a total of twelve rooms with six bathrooms). Physical demands range from light to light-strenuous. Forest trails at the Owlet Lodge are generally wide and well-maintained but involve considerable walking both uphill and downhill because the terrain is hilly. Expeditions to see owls here generally require considerable physical exertion. Most birding is done along the main highway, or on short trails. At the Spatulatail Reserve, an hour drive away, both sets of hummingbird feeders are accessed by fairly short and well-maintained, but moderately steep, trails.

The Machu Picchu Extension is a birding trip with a strong slant on Inca history and regional culture. We’ll travel to Peru’s southern Andes and the old colonial city of Cuzco, jumping off point for the Urubamba River Valley and Machu Picchu. This trip will spend time at considerable high elevation, and with considerable daily elevational changes, so participants with any health problems or concerns should take this into account before registering. We will spend part of a day around Cuzco (approximately 11,000 feet) and another day birding the Andes up to 14,000 feet at Abra Malaga Pass. At Machu Picchu the ruins are at approximately 7700-8,000 feet but our hotel is at 6000 feet. We’ll travel aboard buses for most of the tour; however, the trip to Machu Picchu and return involves an exciting three-hour train ride through the Urubamba River Valley. At Machu Picchu we will participate in a guided walking tour of the archaeological site. Physical demands for this trip are generally light-moderate but with any visit to Machu Picchu there is a certain amount of physical exertion involved in walking and especially in climbing up and down the many uneven rock steps at the ruins and at significant elevation.

Dining – The riverboat’s spacious window-lined dining room accommodates all passengers in a single seating with tables unassigned. All meals are served buffet-style using fresh local ingredients when possible. The chefs prepare a range of culinary options to accommodate everyone’s tastes, including vegetarians. Participants with special dietary needs should inform our office at the time of registration.

While on the boat – While cruising the river, you’ll have options to join your leaders on the viewing decks for birding and wildlife viewing, or relax in your room, on deck, or in the Lecture Room. The January-March period is generally a time of high water on the Amazon River, but cruising conditions should be smooth throughout the voyage.

While on land – The nature of this program precludes walking on land; however, we will make at least one effort to go ashore in “terre firme” habitat for birding in the drier, more heavily forested uplands. This type of excursion will involve a short-to-moderate length walk on a forest trail. Please be forewarned that the trail could be muddy if it has recently rained. Please see the notes on FOOTWEAR.
Motorized skiffs – *Zafiro* is equipped with three motorized skiffs for exploring back channels and tributary rivers—places where the larger vessel cannot travel. Each skiff is of metal construction and features a flat bottom for better access to shallow water. This design also ensures a stable and comfortable excursion. Twin outboard motors of four-stroke design provide plenty of power while yielding a remarkably quiet ride.

**FOOTWEAR:** A lightweight hiking boot or trail shoe with good traction is strongly recommended throughout the *Cloud Forests of Northern Peru Pre-trip* and the *Machu Picchu Extension*. Heavy duty hiking boots are not necessary for either of these trips. While on the *Amazon River Cruise* you may prefer sandals and/or tennis shoes for the duration of the time spent on the boat.

**Rubber Boots (optional):** Rubber boots are recommended for the cruise when visiting during high water periods of March to June, and in September and October although some areas can be muddy at any season of the year. Rubber boots also provide protection against chiggers at any season. Please be aware, however, that the majority of our outings will be in the skiffs and we will not be doing extensive hiking. Boots will not be needed on the Pre-trip or Extension.

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** Limited laundry service is available Monday through Thursday on the riverboat, with the first ten items are at no extra cost. Any overage will be billed to your ship account.

**EQUIPMENT:** One of the most important aspects of having an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with proper equipment. The following items will come in handy during your trip to Peru:

- **Strong Sunscreen**
- **Insect Repellent (and some Permethrin-treated clothes)**
- **Reliable Flashlight:** A flashlight, or at least a small L.E.D. –type headlamp or SMA light is essential. These can be used in rooms and for doing checklists and writing in the evenings (even though the boat will have electricity on a 24-hr. basis)
- **Umbrella and Light weight, Waterproof Poncho:** We recommend you bring both, which are especially useful on the small boats. Ponchos are especially useful on the small excursion boats.
- **Plastic Bags or “Dry Bags”:** Rain showers are unpredictable and often appear suddenly in the Amazon. Those with larger camera and optical equipment should consider bringing plenty of plastic bags or a “dry bag” to protect equipment against moisture intrusion.
- **Other Plastic Bags:** Other plastic bags of various sizes, including a couple larger, heavier bags for protecting duffels and luggage from rain during transport to and from lodges; bring enough medium-sized plastic bags to fully pack all your clothes inside of them for waterproofing during boat and lodge transfers
- **Shower Thongs for Showers** (and for walking to and from them)
- **All personal medications and toiletries:** There will be no opportunity to restock once we leave Iquitos
- **Binoculars** – We strongly recommend good binoculars of at least 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 magnification. Please do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars using “minis” is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 7x35 or 8x42 binoculars are compact and light enough.
- **Spotting Scopes** – Since most wildlife viewing will take place on a moving ship or skiff, or among the birds and animals at very close range, you do not need to bring a spotting scope. Your tour leaders will have one available for group use on the occasions where it is necessary to have one. For the pre-trip and extension, we also recommend you refrain from bringing your scope as it adds to the size and weight of your luggage.
- **Small Backpack or Over-the-shoulder Bag:** For carrying items in the field; a pack that is completely or partially waterproof, or sheds water and dries quickly, is most useful
OPTIONAL ITEMS:

- A very lightweight, thin mesh head net in case insects are a problem.
- A small canteen and some packaged snacks. Bottled water is provided in abundance by the ship.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

PASSPORTS - A valid passport is required for entry into Peru for United States citizens. Please check the expiration date on your passport. If it is not valid for at least six months after your trip return date, you will need to get it renewed. You will also want to make sure that you have at least two blank pages in your passport for stamps. If you need a passport, you should get it well in advance of your trip departure date. For additional fees, a passport can be issued on an expedited basis. In the United States this can be done at the nearest passport office, most post offices, or the county clerk’s office. You may also visit www.state.gov/travel/ for information on how to get or renew a passport.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport. Keep the photocopies in a safe place, so if your passport is lost you will have proof of identification. Your passport should be signed and easily available at all times. You will need it for check-in at the airport on your first day of departure, so do not pack it in your checked luggage. On board ship, it is often customary for the purser to hold all passports for clearance with port authorities. Your passport may be collected upon embarkation and returned upon disembarkation.

VISAS – American citizen do not need a visa if they are traveling as a tourist with a valid U.S. passport to enter Peru. You will be issued a tourist card upon entry, which is valid for up to 90 days. Rules and regulations pertaining to non-U.S. citizens may vary; please check with the immigration office, consulate, or embassy of Peru for information on entry requirements. Visa requirements can change without notice, and you should check the latest entry requirements as far in advance as possible in order to allow time to obtain a visa in your home country should that be necessary.

CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS: Your trip to Peru includes all necessary expenses, including all meals and accommodations aboard Zafiro. While U.S. dollars might be accepted in large cities and shops, it is always convenient to have a supply of local currency for such items as taxi rides, gifts, non-meal-time and off-ship refreshments, laundry tips, meals on your own, extra gratuities, and personal items. It is best to acquire local currency before leaving the U.S., although U.S. dollars can be exchanged in Lima at banks and major hotels. Small denominations of cash are always best as it is easier for individuals and businesses to provide change. It is not recommended to exchange money from street vendors.

Upon embarkation, a shipboard account will be opened for your convenience. The U.S. dollar is the official currency aboard the ship. Credit cards, Visa and MasterCard (not American Express or Discover) are accepted for expenses on board that may be paid and settled at the end of the cruise. Note that it may not always be possible to make change for travelers’ checks and cash in large denominations; the ship staff would appreciate the use of U.S dollars, if paying by cash in smaller denominations for settlement of your shipboard account.

There is no facility on board for exchanging U.S. dollars into local currency. Should you extend your vacation in Peru beyond what is offered in the cruise program, you should strongly consider obtaining local currency. ATM machines can be found in large cities and in some towns; you shouldn’t have any problems using major cards in hotels, restaurants, and some shops. Please check with your bank and credit card issuer for more information regarding banking and the use of ATM and credit cards overseas.

The official currency of Peru is the Peruvian Nuevo Sol (PEN). You can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting “XE-The World’s Favorite Currency Site” at: http://www.xe.com/.
**ELECTRICITY:** Power in Peru is 220V, with use of outlet types “A” and “C” most prevalent. The “A” type outlet accommodates a flat two-bladed plug while the “C” type outlet, also known as the European-style outlet, accommodates a plug with two round pins. To ensure that use of American standard 110V equipment with the flat-pronged plugs will work, you should bring an all-purpose transformer to convert the current for 110V use, in addition to proper plug adapters.

**LANGUAGE:** Spanish is the primary language spoken in Peru; English is spoken by our local guides and agents in addition to the boat’s expedition staff.

**TIME:** The time zone of Peru is Peru Time (PET) and is standard all year. For Amazon River cruises departing in January and February, PET is the same as Eastern Standard Time (EST). Trips departing after day light savings time goes into effect will be one hour ahead of Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

**HEALTH:** Those passengers who are not fit for a cruise, including those with physical disabilities that affect mobility and balance, heart or immune deficiencies, or other conditions associated with poor health, are advised not to join the cruise. A serious health emergency may result in an air evacuation, which will come at considerable expense to you. Comprehensive optional insurance, including coverage for medical evacuation (REQUIRED), can be purchased with your trip cancellation policy. Please consult your insurance agent or existing policy, if in effect, for the terms and limitations of your existing coverage. Please refer to the section on Trip Cancellation Insurance.

As of this writing (May 2019), no major shots or inoculations are required for entry into Peru; however, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination or prophylaxis against a variety of preventable diseases, including: 1) **Routine Vaccinations** / 2) **Yellow Fever** / 3) **Malaria**

1) **Routine Vaccinations** (if you are not up-to-date), which are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine; diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine; and poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers who have received a primary series with either inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) or oral polio vaccine (OPV); they should receive another dose of IPV before departure). You should also be up-to-date with your **Hepatitis A**, or Immune Globulin (IG), **Hepatitis B** and **Typhoid** vaccinations. Note that a combined hepatitis A/B vaccination is now available.

2) **Yellow Fever** is a viral disease transmitted between humans by a mosquito. It is a very rare cause of illness in travelers, in part because of the precautions taken by affected countries. In Peru it is recommended for all travelers visiting lowland/jungle areas east of the Andes, or travelers arriving from any country where Yellow Fever is endemic. It is not recommended for those whose travels will be limited to Lima on the coast or highland areas such as Cuzco and Machu Picchu. The yellow fever vaccine is a live virus vaccine which has been in use for several decades. A single dose confers immunity for ten years or more if you are not continually exposed. Adults and children over nine months can take this vaccine. The vaccine is not recommended for certain types of travelers, including pregnant women, persons hypersensitive to eggs, or persons suffering from a condition related to HIV/AIDS. Your doctor can help you make the best decision about the vaccine.

3) **Malaria** is a protozoan transmitted between humans by a mosquito. Malaria has been confirmed in Peru including the chloroquine-resistant strain in rural areas. Travelers to most places in Peru lying below 6,600 feet, except the Lima area, are advised to take anti-malarial medication. To reduce the risk of contracting this disease, travelers are strongly urged to take one of the following antimalarial drugs (brand names in parentheses): mefloquine (Lariam), doxycycline, or atovaquone/proguanil (Malarone). Some travelers may experience serious side effects from antimalarial drugs; consult with your physician to determine the best preventative medication. These medications are available by prescription only. Please consult your physician or local travel clinic for recommendations. Please see the **Biting Insects** section below regarding bite prevention.
If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the expedition safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

**Sun Exposure** – The sun’s ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes). Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. Severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

**Biting Insects** – Mosquitoes occur along the Amazon River and can be numerous, particularly around the forest. To protect you from being bitten, we recommend wearing long-sleeved shirts, pants, and a hat when in the field, particularly between the late afternoon and cooler morning hours. If your cabin has an open balcony, please keep windows closed while you sleep, and make sure that your insect repellent contains DEET (we strongly recommend that you bring the stick one and avoid using spray types). Repellent can be applied to exposed skin and/or clothing. Clothing (two sets) sprayed with Permethrin is another option (pre-treated or you can treat yourself).

**A Note About Chiggers:** This tour visits a couple of areas where chiggers are known to occur, mainly around villages and settlements along the Amazon. Chiggers are tiny parasitic mites found in most warm weather areas of the southern United States and the world’s tropics. They are especially numerous in grassy areas, where, in the immature stage, they attach themselves to other animals or humans who make contact with the grass as they pass by. Chiggers do not suck blood and the majority of the world’s species do not carry disease. They do feed on bodily fluids, however, through a process in which a digestive enzyme is produced by the chigger which essentially liquefies the skin around the area where the chigger is attached. The chigger is not usually attached to the skin for more than a few hours before it either falls off or is knocked off. Our bodies respond by producing a hardened area as a defense against the chigger’s digestive enzyme. Though the chigger may be long gone, it is the presence of the hardened area, and the body’s natural process of reabsorbing it that typically causes intense itching, often lasting for a week or more. Chiggers like to attach themselves to areas of thin skin, like around the ankles, beltline, undergarment lines, knees, and elbows.

Chiggers can be avoided by following these procedures:

- Avoid walking, or standing in particular, in areas dominated by grass. These areas are where one is most likely to encounter chiggers.
- Tuck your pants into your socks to avoid direct skin-to-grass contact. Chiggers can find their way through clothing, but this is a standard and effective prevention technique commonly employed by many.
- Apply a cream-style insect repellent, such as “Cutters” to your body from the waist down BEFORE putting on your clothing.
- Spray your pants and socks with a spray repellent such as “Cutters” or “Off.” Repellants with high concentrations of DEET (70-100%) are most effective (must do prior to the cruise). You do not need to apply these to your skin, only to clothing. (Be careful as DEET will damage plastics and lens coatings). Repel Permanone is an odorless aerosol insecticide that offers perhaps the best defense against chiggers. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online. It should only be applied to clothes and allowed to dry before you dress. Never apply Permanone directly to the skin. Permethrin is known to be a highly toxic chemical to insects. It is the active ingredient in Permanone, but is present in a small amount (0.5%).
- Powdered sulfur applied to waist, bottoms of pants, sock and boots is also effective at repelling chiggers. However, be warned that clothes will retain the sulfur odor for several washings.
- Shower at the end of each day in the field. Use a washcloth to vigorously rub your legs, feet, and ankles.
By following these methods, you should be able to avoid all chigger bites, as well as tick bites. If, however, you are bitten by chiggers anyway, you can reduce or eliminate the symptoms by applying benzocaine or hydrocortisone creams, calamine lotion, After Bite, or any number of anti-itch products.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers’ Information Line 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

DEPARTURE TAX: At present, the international departure tax is about $35. For travelers who purchased their air tickets from major U.S. carriers, the tax should be included in the cost of the ticket. We recommend that you keep some extra cash handy when checking in for your flight.

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

AMAZON CRUISE

BIRDS – ESSENTIAL:


BIRDS – APP’s:

BIRD VOICES:
Xeno-canto. https://www.xeno-canto.org/ This website offers an impressive collection of recordings made by thousands of contributors.

GENERAL TOPICS:


**FURTHER READING ON BIRDS, MAMMALS, REPTILES, & AMPHIBIANS:**


**MACHU PICCHU**

**BIRDS:**

Schulenberg, T. S., D. F. Stotz, D. F. Lane, J. P. O’Neill, & T. A. Parker III. *Birds of Peru.* 2007. Princeton University Press. Excellent for Machu Picchu and perhaps more difficult to use than the Walker book listed below because it contains so many more birds, but this book has better illustrations and does have fine maps and a concise text.

Walker, B. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Machu Picchu.* 2001. Peruvian National Trust for Parks and Protected Areas (PROFONANPE). Lima, Peru. This is the recommended book for Machu Picchu although it may be difficult to find. Advantageous because of its relatively small size and that it covers the subset of birds found in the Machu Picchu area. It illustrates all of the birds we will see on our trip and has a useful text.

**GENERAL:** (this is but a sample of the many books available on the Machu Picchu area and Inca History)

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on all land portions of this tour, including the pre-trip and extension. Gratuities for the ship’s Naturalists, Expedition Leader, and the crew and staff are included in your cruise fee. If you feel one or all of your VENT leaders or any local guide or Naturalist has provided exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on April 22, 2019 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.