

CAMP CHIRICAHUA

JULY 5-17, 2023

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Red-faced Warbler @ Michael O'Brien

Camp Chiricahua, co-sponsored by Black Swamp Bird Observatory (Ohio) offers young naturalists between the ages of 14 and 18 the opportunity to explore the biologically rich ecosystems of Southeast Arizona, centering on the famed Chiricahua Mountains.

The primary focus is on the birdlife of the Chiricahuas (pronounced Cheer-ick-ow-wahs) and other important sites in Southeast Arizona, but we will take time to observe all facets of nature and emphasize patient field observation, note taking, and learning bird sounds. The camp is set in a productive learning environment in which participants are educated on ecology, habitats, and ecosystems, and on increasing observation skills. Daily activities are based on thorough exploration of each of the distinct regions we visit. Hikes, field trips, and discussions will complement free time, during which campers will have the luxury of exploring their natural surroundings in small groups.



Cave Creek Ranch © Michael O'Brien

Starting in Tucson, we will first do some desert birding on the east side of town before ascending Mount Lemmon in the Catalina Mountains. Two nights of camping in the forested highlands will acquaint us with the “sky islands” so very characteristic of the borderlands of Southeast Arizona.

Much of our time is spent in the Chiricahuas, an 80-mile-long mountain range rising out of the Chihuahuan Desert to nearly 10,000 feet, and encompassing five distinct life zones. Long famous amongst naturalists for its biological diversity and rich assortment of “Mexican” type birds that inhabit these mountains, the Chiricahuas are also a place of considerable scenic grandeur. Enormous orange-tinted rock formations tower over shaded canyons and the surrounding desert. Perhaps it is the remoteness of the place, or maybe it’s the enchanting spell of summertime monsoons, or even the spirit of Apache warriors long gone, but the Chiricahuas are a true naturalist’s paradise, totally unspoiled and wild. We will have three days to explore this mystical mountain range, from the dry desert grasslands that encircle it to the lofty ponderosa pine forests that crown it. In between are a multitude of habitats that converge in majestic Cave Creek Canyon. While the prolonged drought that continues to affect the Southwest, along with the forest fires of 2011, has resulted in extensive modification to the plant communities here, the majority of specialty birds can still be found. It should also prove a fascinating opportunity to observe the resilience of southwestern species, avian and otherwise, in the dynamic process of post-fire ecological succession.

We will also explore the Huachucas, another of Southeast Arizona’s “sky islands.” Closest in proximity to the Mexican border, the Huachucas attract a greater number of hummingbirds and Mexican “strays” than the other ranges in Arizona. Contingent upon post-fire recovery/restrictions from the large Monument fire of 2011, we will explore at least two of the major canyons in the range, while visits to a variety of hummingbird feeding stations may net us a dozen species of hummers!



We'll finish the trip around Patagonia and Nogales, where cottonwood-lined Sonoita Creek provides some of the best birding in all of Arizona. Though "listing" is not the goal of the camp, campers should expect to see most of the special birds of Arizona, highlighted by its own bird of paradise, the Elegant Trogon. Other prized sightings are likely to include Gray Hawk, Montezuma Quail, Arizona Woodpecker, Lucifer and Violet-crowned hummingbirds, Thick-billed and Tropical kingbirds, Mexican Chickadee, Red-faced Warbler, and Varied Bunting.

Other wildlife unique to the region deserves our attention as well. Summertime in Arizona is an excellent time to see a host of butterflies, dragonflies, and other insects. Arizona is, additionally, one of the premier regions of the country for encountering snakes and lizards. We'll take advantage of this biological richness and focus some of our attention on all of these animals.

Camp Chiricahua presents a rare chance for young naturalists to be in the field with their peers and with expert leaders. Together we will all come to learn and appreciate the complex and beautiful ecosystems of the Southwest.

Camp Chiricahua starts and ends in Tucson, Arizona.

July 5, Day 1: Arrival in Tucson; welcome and orientation; afternoon birding. Campers should plan to arrive in Tucson no later than 2:00 p.m. today. After leaving the plane, campers should proceed directly to the baggage claim area where they will be met by camp supervisors holding signs displaying the word VENT in large letters. Please wear your VENT name badge so you will be easier to recognize. Campers will be shuttled with their luggage to the Comfort Inn Airport where we will spend our first night.

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In the mid-afternoon, the staff will assemble all campers in the hotel lobby for a camp orientation and welcome. The staff will introduce itself and outline the exciting events of the coming days. Afterwards, we'll depart the hotel for our first Arizona birding! A trip to the surrounding desert will surely yield such characteristic desert birds as Gambel's Quail, Greater Roadrunner, Gila Woodpecker, Cactus Wren, Verdin, and many others.

NIGHT: Comfort Suites, Tucson Airport

July 6, Day 2: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum; Catalina Mountains. After an early breakfast, we'll visit the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. This exquisite museum, with its interactive and live exhibits, provides an excellent introduction to the flora and fauna of the Southwest. Famous both locally and internationally, this "living museum" is an essential first stop for anybody new to the Desert Southwest. Set amid towering saguaro (pronounced sah-war-o) cactus, thickly foliated mesquite and palo verde, barrel cactus and ocotillo, the displays and exhibits are literally part of the native landscape. We will spend most of the morning meandering through the museum's numerous paths and walkways. Our exploration will offer an excellent introduction to the amazing Sonoran Desert and its attendant life forms. Spacious enclosures feature many of the birds and animals native to the region. The hummingbird house is a must see, and the walk-in aviary offers a delightful way to encounter many of the special birds of the mountains and deserts. Wild birds are plentiful and are sure to keep excitement levels high. Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Verdin, and Hooded Oriole are among the many possibilities.



Rose Canyon Lake Campground © Michael O'Brien

After lunch we will climb the Mt. Lemmon Highway for two nights of camping in the Santa Catalina Mountains, heading first to Agua Caliente Park on the east side of Tucson. This desert oasis harbors an excellent diversity of species, and will be the perfect place to kick off our birding in Southeast Arizona. Just a few of the species we may find here include Gambel's Quail, Harris's Hawk, Greater Roadrunner, Gila Woodpeckers, Gilded Flicker, Black Phoebe, Cactus Wren, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Curve-billed Thrasher, Phainopepla, Rufous-winged Sparrow, and Hooded Oriole.

By late afternoon, our route will take us from rugged saguaro covered hillsides through the oak/juniper transition zone, and eventually up to 7000 feet in the cool conifer-dominated highlands, where we will set up camp at Rose Canyon Lake.

NIGHT: Camping at Rose Canyon Lake, Catalina National Forest



Pygmy Nuthatch © Michael O'Brien

July 7, Day 3: The Santa Catalina Mountains. We'll have a full day to explore this beautiful "sky island" range. The birds here are very different from those in the desert around Tucson. Our dawn alarm clock might include the calls of Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Pygmy Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Hermit Thrush, Grace's Warbler, and Yellow-eyed Junco. As we explore Rose Canyon and other nearby trails, we'll be watching for other highland species such as Steller's Jay, Mountain

Chickadee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Greater Pewee, Olive and Red-faced warblers, and Red Crossbill. Other wildlife is around as well; we will look for the local Abert's Squirrel (a colony has been established here in the Catalinas) and black bears are sometimes seen in this area. If summer rains have been good, meadows and forest clearings will be decorated with a profusion of wildflowers. Butterflies, in turn, can be outstandingly abundant, with many different kinds possible, including blues, hairstreaks, cloudywings, roadside-skipper, fritillaries, swallowtails, ladies, and sulfurs.

NIGHT: Camping at Rose Canyon Lake, Catalina National Forest

July 8, Day 4: Mt. Lemmon to the Chiricahua Mountains. We'll descend the Catalinas this morning, stopping en route, and head for the Chiricahua Mountains. The journey will take approximately three hours and will see us traversing a broad slice of Southeast Arizona. All along the route is a continual succession of sky island mountain ranges, bearing such names as Santa Catalina, Santa Rita, Rincon, Whetsone, Dragoon, Dos Cabezas, and Pinaleno. Moving east, the cactus-studded deserts of the Tucson area give way to mesquite dominated grasslands. The highway runs through the heart of scenic Texas Canyon, where mountains of igneous rock provide an improbable break in the landscape. Swainson's Hawks and Chihuahuan Raven are birds to watch for along this route.

To break up the drive, we'll make a midday stop at Lake Cochise on the west side of Wilcox. Really a large municipal wastewater treatment pond, the "lake" is the single most famous birding location in the entire Sulphur Springs Valley. The interface of man-made and natural habitats found here provides food and shelter for an impressive diversity of birdlife all year long, and the presence of permanent water represents an important refuge in a region nearly devoid of large bodies of water. An astonishing array of birds has been recorded here through the years, and we hope to encounter a variety of waders and grassland species, as well as any surprises that may turn up. Wayward gulls and terns are frequently found here, and the open water often holds a variety of summering ducks and grebes. The first southbound shorebirds will provide some identification challenges, and such dandies as Wilson's Phalarope and Baird's Sandpiper are likely. American Avocets nest here in some years, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds breed in the reed-lined ponds. Swainson's Hawks, Scaled Quail, Horned Lark, and "Lilian's" Eastern Meadowlark are typical sights of the grasslands. In the distance the Chiricahua and Dos Cabezas mountain ranges form a backdrop of considerable panoramic beauty.



Shorebirds at Lake Cochise © Michael O'Brien

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East of Wilcox, the highway skirts the north flank of the Chiricahuas, offering fine views of the peculiar geologic formation known as Cochise's Head. We'll arrive in the Portal area, near the mouth of Cave Creek Canyon, late this afternoon. Our first view of the canyon, with its towering, multi-colored cliffs and lush riparian floor, will make a lasting impression. It is these secret enclaves of cool and verdant growth, filled with specialty birds and surrounded by arid grasslands that make birding Southeast Arizona so special.

NIGHT: Cave Creek Ranch, Portal

July 9-11, Days 5-7: Cave Creek Canyon and the Chiricahuas. In a region known for its many legendary birding locations, the Chiricahua Mountains are probably the most famous. The cool shaded canyons, mountain forests, and dramatic geologic formations that define this sky island range have attracted birders, naturalists, and scientists for decades. We will have three full days to explore the Chiricahuas, visiting all the major habitats and searching for as many of the special birds and animals of the region as we can find. The Chiricahuas are a living laboratory of biological diversity, and though birding is of primary interest, we will want to take advantage of all that these mountains have to offer.

Mammal viewing is often wonderful; past camps have been fortunate enough to encounter black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, mule deer, javelin (collared peccary), black-tailed jackrabbit, ringtail, and several species of skunk and kangaroo rat. Many campers have an interest in butterflies, and we will take time to identify any that cross our path. Due to its warm and semi-tropical climate, Arizona is superb for butterflies, and hosts a beautiful array of species. We are likely to encounter large, showy types such as giant, two-tailed, pipevine, and black swallowtails; red-spotted admiral; mourning cloak; cloudless sulphur; southern dogface; Arizona sister; and an impressive diversity of blues and skippers.



Arizona Sister © Michael O'Brien

Field trips to a variety of ecosystems are designed to provide campers exposure to the amazing variety of the Chiricahua Mountains and surrounding desert and grasslands. In addition to time in the field, campers will participate in discussions that cover a variety of topics, including bird observation, journal keeping, botany, climate, and geography. We will have numerous options to consider when planning our birding activities, but campers should expect to visit the majority of the following sites:

Cave Creek Canyon – One of the most exciting days will be our first visit to the South Fork of Cave Creek. This is a beautiful riparian habitat in the lower elevations of the Chiricahuas, where oaks, sycamores, pines, and cypress provide shade for the lush green undergrowth. The birds here are wonderful; Elegant Trogon must lead the list, but Blue-throated Mountain-Gem, Arizona Woodpecker, Sulphur-bellied and Dusky-capped flycatchers, Hutton’s and Plumbeous vireos, Grace’s Warbler, Painted Redstart, and Hepatic Tanager are nearly as special. We’ll spend



Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher © Michael O'Brien

as much time as possible in this very rich area, observing how the habitat becomes much drier as soon as one leaves the shaded canyon and starts up the mountain slope. Here we can expect to find Mexican Jays traveling in noisy flocks and Black-throated Gray Warblers and Bewick’s Wrens foraging in the scrubby oaks. The geology of Cave Creek Canyon is not to be underestimated or overlooked either. Stunning cliffs of rhyolite and granite dominate the skyline, and bizarre caves and pockmarks give character to the canyon walls. The rock seems to burn under the morning sun, emanating a luminous mix of orange and yellow hues. Cave Creek Canyon may be home to some of the best birding in North America, but it is the tremendous geologic formations that give the canyon its splendor.

Chihuahuan Desert and Rodeo - The desert and grasslands of the San Simon Valley below Portal hold an entirely different set of birds and plants than are found higher in the mountains. This is wide-open ranch country, dominated by soap tree yucca, honey mesquite, and a wide variety of desert plants and scrub. The birds and other animals that live out here are dry country specialists, adapted to survive in the harsher conditions of the desert environment. We will make a couple of trips into this desert ecosystem, making several strategic stops at different elevations and driving key side roads in search of the birds and reptiles that live out here. Scaled and Gambel’s quail, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Chihuahuan Raven, Curve-billed Thrasher, Loggerhead Shrike, Black-throated Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark are all birds we are likely to encounter. The old railroad town of Rodeo, New Mexico provides a curious oasis amid the surrounding desert, but it also happens to be a premier site for Bendire’s Thrasher. The main highway running north from Rodeo provides beautiful vistas of the expansive deserts and Chiricahua and Peloncillo ranges.

Evening Night Drives and Owling Expeditions – Nighttime in the Chiricahuas reveals another face to this wondrous place. A whole host of birds, insects, reptiles and mammals emerge after the sun goes down and the heavens fill with millions of stars. We’ll go on a nightbird prowl one night after dinner. The voices of Elf Owl, Western and Whiskered screech-owls, Common Poorwill, and Mexican Whip-poor-will elevate the ambience of a Chiricahua summer evening, and we have decent chances of seeing some of these nocturnal sprites. On another evening we will load up and head out to the desert for a night drive. Cruising lightly traveled side roads brings opportunities for a variety of other critters, including snakes, toads, kangaroo rats, scorpions, and tarantulas.



Western Screech-owl © Michael O'Brien



Montezuma Quail © Michael O'Brien

Paradise Road – The road to Paradise takes off from Portal and follows a long section of Silver Creek. While it is still quite dry here, the environment is very different from that of the desert we've just seen. The creek provides a year-round source of water, and this allows trees like oaks and sycamores to become established. The drier hillsides are dominated by a high desert plant community, with sotol and agaves decorating rocky hillsides. This area is, in fact, another major transition zone, where a variety of habitats come together. The great mix of trees and plants is paralleled by an interesting mix of birds. Specialties here are Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay,

Juniper Titmouse, Crissal Thrasher, Rufous-crowned and (rarely) Black-chinned sparrows, and Scott's Oriole. Near the old mining town of Paradise, we may be lucky enough to come across the furtive Montezuma Quail.

Barfoot Park and the Chiricahua Highlands – No trip to the Chiricahuas would be complete without a visit to the highlands. Similar to the highlands of Mt. Lemmon, the cool coniferous forest here offers additional opportunities for species like Steller's Jay, Pygmy Nuthatch, and mixed warbler flocks including Olive, Red-faced, Grace's, and perhaps a migrant Townsend's or Hermit. But our main target for the day will be the very local Mexican Chickadee, and species who's range in the U.S. is limited to the Chiricahua Mountains of Arizona and the Animas and Peloncilla Mountains of New Mexico. We'll also keep a sharp eye out for Short-tailed Hawk, a species that has nested near Barfoot Park in recent years.

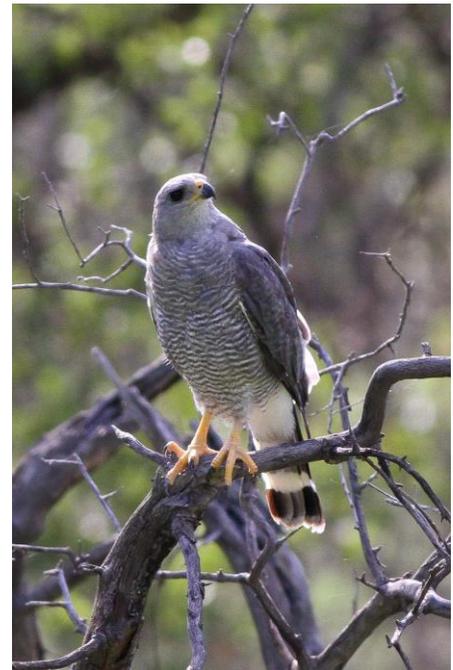
NIGHTS: Cave Creek Ranch, Portal

July 12, Day 8: From the Chiricahuas to Sierra Vista. Today will be a day of transition, from the cool canyons of the Chiricahuas to the riparian lowlands of the upper San Pedro River Valley. The drive will take most of the day, broken up by birding stops and lunch. We'll load the vans after breakfast this morning and begin the long descent of the western face of the Chiricahuas. The road takes us down through the heart of Pinery Canyon (reliable for Red-faced Warbler and Hepatic Tanager) and back into the oak-juniper zone of the lower slopes. This is prime country for Montezuma Quail and we will watch the grassy breaks and swales for these beautiful, but shy ground-dwellers. We'll emerge into the expansive Sulphur Springs Valley, which is actually the bed of an ancient Pleistocene lake, and make our way west toward the highway. We will arrive in Sierra Vista in the middle to late afternoon. After check-in, campers will have the remainder of the day for relaxation and perhaps a swim in the pool.

NIGHT: Windemere Hotel, Sierra Vista

July 13, Day 9: San Pedro River and the Huachuca Mountains.

We'll devote the early morning hours to exploring the bird-rich cottonwoods of the San Pedro River area. Gray Hawk, Scaled and Gambel's quail, Common Ground-Dove, Vermilion Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Botteri's Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak are just a few of the species we may encounter here. Following a picnic lunch (perhaps enlivened by a monsoon thunderstorm!), our afternoon birding will be spent in the cool mountain forests of the nearby Huachucas, where we will likely visit Miller Canyon. Miller Canyon is well known for rarities, having hosted such exciting subtropical wanderers as Eared Quetzal, Aztec Thrush, Brown-backed Solitaire, and Tropical Parula. While such dream sightings should not be expected, the possibility of something new and remarkable awaiting discovery at the next turn of the trail adds an undeniable sense of excitement.



Gray Hawk © Michael O'Brien



Lucifer Hummingbird © Michael O'Brien

The summer months are a fabulous time for hummingbirds in southern Arizona and no place is more reliably productive than the Huachucas. Vigils at feeding stations may yield up to a dozen species. Beside the quality, we can expect quantity. Dozens of hummers are typically zipping around the feeders at all times, feeding, chasing and fighting. Black-chinned and Anna's are most common, but Magnificent, Blue-throated, and Broad-tailed

periodically put in appearances. The first southbound migrants will certainly be around and we can look forward to the coppery-colored Rufous Hummingbird earnestly defending favored feeders. Costa's is less common but certainly possible, while the very first Calliopes may even be around. For even greater viewing enjoyment, Miller is now the premier place for seeing the highly localized White-eared Hummingbird, several of which summer in the canyon every year. And nearby Ash Canyon is best for the elusive Lucifer Hummingbird.

NIGHT: Windemere Hotel, Sierra Vista

July 14, Day 10: Huachuca Mountains and Sonoita Grasslands. We'll spend another full morning in the Huachuca Mountains, perhaps visiting Carr or Hunter canyons, or maybe spending more time at hummingbird feeders in Ash or Ramsey canyons. Our itinerary will depend largely on what specialties of the Huachucas we are still seeking. In the afternoon, we'll head west toward Patagonia, making a stop in the Sonoita Grasslands at Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. One of the best grasslands in southeastern Arizona, this beautiful area is home to "Lilian's" Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper, Lark, and Botteri's sparrows, and sometimes White-tailed Kite. In addition, we'll keep a sharp eye out for Pronghorn, which is frequently seen in this area.

NIGHT: Stage Stop Inn, Patagonia

July 15, Day 11: Patagonia and Sonoita Creek. We will spend a full and exciting day searching the riparian and desert thornscrub habitats of the Patagonia-Sonoita area. The list of birds possible from this locale underscores the uniquely subtropical flavor of the Sonoita Creek drainage: Neotropic Cormorant, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Black Vulture, Gray and Zone-tailed hawks, Violet-crowned Hummingbird (an exceptionally classy and elegant bird; always a trip favorite among the campers), Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Thick-billed Kingbird, and Varied Bunting are representative. We will try for as many of these species as possible, all the while hoping for a glimpse of a true rarity. In recent years, Rose-throated Becard, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, and Rufous-capped Warbler have regularly turned up in this special area. While seeing these Mexican species is not to be expected, their distinct possibility will charge our visit with that anticipation which makes birding in southeast Arizona such a pleasure.

NIGHT: Stage Stop Inn, Patagonia

July 16, Day 12: Santa Rita Mountains; Return to Tucson. We will depart *early* today to explore our final mountain range, the Santa Ritas. Our itinerary will be somewhat flexible, but our first stop will likely be Montosa Canyon, a remote and rugged landscape with rocky slopes covered in ocotillo. Montosa has received more attention from birders in recent years due to the presence of a few pairs each of Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Five-striped Sparrow. Though seeing these special birds is by no means guaranteed, Montosa is always an

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interesting and birdy place to visit. Varied Buntings and Bell's Vireos are numerous here, and other possibilities include Costa's Hummingbird, Rock Wren, Crissal Thrasher, Lucy's Warbler, Indigo Bunting, and Scott's Oriole.

Our afternoon will likely be spent in the deservedly famous Madera Canyon. Hummingbird feeders here often host a rarity or two – White-eared and Berylline are regular, and trails through mountain canyons are home to the likes of Elegant Trogon, Arizona Woodpecker, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Mexican Jay, and Hepatic Tanager. In the late afternoon we'll return to our hotel in Tucson. After a well-deserved dip in the pool, we will meet for a final group dinner.



Texas Horned Lizard @ Michael O'Brien

After a well-deserved dip in the pool, we will meet for a final group dinner.

NIGHT: Comfort Suites Tucson Airport, Tucson

July 17, Day 13: Depart for Home. Campers will be escorted to the airport in time for flights home. All campers should plan to depart Tucson no later than 12:00 PM today.

CAMP SIZE: Camp Chiricahua is designed for boys and girls ages 14 through 18 who have an interest in birds and natural history. The camp will be limited to 10 participants.

LEADERS: Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis



Michael O'Brien is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has a passionate interest in bird vocalizations and field identification, and a serious addiction to migration and nocturnal birding. His travels have taken him throughout North and Central America and beyond. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*, and is primary author of *Larkwire*, an online and handheld application for learning bird sounds. His illustrations have been widely published in books and field guides, including the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the new Peterson field guides. Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies, leads several "Birds & Butterflies" tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis, and is coordinator of the Cape May Butterfly Count.



Louise Zemaitis is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey where she is a popular field trip leader teaching birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory. She also enjoys leading birding groups and lecturing at birding festivals and is known for her enthusiasm for all natural history subjects. Louise and her husband, Michael O'Brien, have been guiding young birders at birding events and conferences for many years. In addition to leading, Louise is field coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May, served as compiler of the Cape May Christmas Bird Count for over 20 years, and owns Swallowtail Studio at West End Garage in Cape May. An honors graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art, she

enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published. Her proudest accomplishment has been the raising of her two sons, Bradley, a biologist and artist, and Alec, a philosopher and musician.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: The parents, or legal guardian, of all camp participants are **required** to purchase emergency/medical evacuation insurance for his/her son or daughter for this program, and will be asked to sign and return to the VENT office a waiver stating that this has been done. Such insurance should be available from any insurance company which provides trip cancellation coverage. Please refer to the **Trip Cancellation & Medical Evacuation Insurance** section of this itinerary for more information.

CAMP POLICIES: Summer youth camps operated by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours are designed to expose camp participants to the treasures of the natural world. The settings for VENT youth camps are selected for their biological richness and natural beauty. The staff of the camps designs programs that camp attendees will find exciting and educational. It is our expectation that campers will have the kinds of experiences that create memories that last for a lifetime. The success of our camps depends on the leadership and organization of the staff, but the level of enjoyment that an individual camper achieves will depend on his ability to demonstrate a willingness to cooperate and share. **In over 30 years of offering youth nature camps, a camp participant has never been sent home.**

In order to maintain a perfect record, campers must adhere to the following rules:

- There will be no usage of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products permitted. We take a zero tolerance approach.
- Any disputes that arise between campers will be mediated by staff members. Fighting will not be tolerated.
- Cooperation is essential. Every day brings a host of responsibilities to the staff members, from preparing meals to cleaning camp sites, vehicles, ice chests, and cooking supplies. Campers will be required periodically to help with these endeavors. Non-cooperation is not an option.
- Damage or destruction of the property of others is strictly prohibited and is considered grounds for dismissal.

Finally, Campers will NOT be permitted to attend a VENT Camp unless they, along with their parents or legal guardians read, sign and return the following documents. These documents will be included in materials the Camper will receive after registering:

1) To the Applicant: This document, signed by the camp participant, certifies that the camper has read and understands the rules and regulations of the camp.

2) Release and Assumption of Risk: This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that participation in birding camp activities involves some degree of risk of injury from, but not limited to, the hazards of traveling, hiking in various types of terrain, accident, illness, and the forces of nature. A parent or guardian's signature holds VENT harmless from any and all liability. VENT is also granted permission to seek medical assistance for an ill or injured camper.

3) Tetanus Shot Certification Document: This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges that the prospective birding camp participant is up to date with tetanus vaccination. Campers must provide proof of vaccination.

4) Acknowledgement of Receipt of Camp Packing List: This document, signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges receipt of a packing list provided by Victor Emanuel Nature Tours.

5) Emergency/Medical Evacuation Insurance: This document signed by a parent or legal guardian, acknowledges purchase of insurance that covers emergency evacuation and medical coverage.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the camp is **\$2940** per person in double occupancy from Tucson. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 12, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and leadership services provided by the camp staff.

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The fee does not include airfare from your home to Tucson and return, airport departure taxes, airline baggage fees or special assistance charges, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. **Also not included is the camping equipment (tent, sleeping bag and pad, and eating utensils) which must be brought by each camper.**

Partial camp scholarships MAY be available through the American Birding Association (ABA) and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours and awarded to campers who couldn't otherwise attend. Please contact the ABA and VENT for more information.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your 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 be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), 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 (February 7, 2021) prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Cancellation by Participant:

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants' protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

If participant cancels:

180 days or more before departure date

179 to 151 days before departure date

150 days or less before departure date

Participant's refund will be:

Participant's deposit minus \$250*

No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded

No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

Cancellation by VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A "**Force Majeure**" event means any act beyond VENT's control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats

or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

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.

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 departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. 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.

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 Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend their **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord 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. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, **waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion**, and a “**Cancel for Any Reason**” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird; or click the **Ripcord** 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.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 14 days of making your tour deposit. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 14 days in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

The coronavirus pandemic has brought uncertainty for many people currently holding travel insurance policies or who are considering future travel and purchasing such insurance. Redpoint has added a **Coronavirus FAQ page** to its website that addresses questions and concerns regarding its travel insurance and the impact of COVID-19. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of topics such as policy coverage and limitations, policy modifications, cancellation, refunds, and more. Among the most important points: 1) Trip cancellation

solely for concern or fear of travel associated with COVID-19 is not covered; 2) Should you request cancellation of your policy, a full refund of your premium is available only under a limited set of conditions; and 3) Should you request cancellation, you may be eligible to receive a pro-rated refund of the unused portion of your premium or a travel insurance credit. Travel insurance credit (“Premium Credit”) is for the value of the policy purchased and may be applied to future policies. Premium Credits have no expiration dates. Rules and regulations apply.

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ** page at the following link:

https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/

Additionally, as countries begin opening up for travel, many are instituting an array of COVID-19 entry requirements, including mandates to purchase travel insurance covering medical expenses due to COVID-19 Illness and accommodation in case of quarantine. Ripcord’s comprehensive travel insurance plans are designed to satisfy the various country-specific travel insurance entry requirements. Those who purchase a Ripcord policy will receive a “letter of confirmation” that affirms that the policy satisfies such requirements.

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. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

BAGGAGE: As space in the vans is limited, campers should pack as carefully and efficiently as possible. Please avoid bringing any unnecessary items that may take up more room. We require that campers pack their clothing and equipment in a pliable, middle to large size duffel bag, and perhaps a smaller bag for camping gear. Campers may wish to bring a carry-on or other small travel bag for toiletries, personal items, or valuables. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING HARD-SIDED SUITCASES OR FRAME BACKPACKS. Campers who bring excess or oversized luggage may be required to ship some of their luggage home at the beginning of camp.**

The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. 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/>.

A note about cameras: Many campers may wish to bring a camera, and it is perfectly fine to do so. However, excessive camera gear is not appropriate for this camp, and **bulky, hard-framed camera cases are not permitted.** The camp experience is about being in nature and observing wildlife. An aggressive pursuit of photographs can get in the way of this, and is not appropriate. **Participants whose primary objective is photography should not sign up for this camp.**

CLIMATE: Southeast Arizona is a large and diverse region, so campers should expect to experience a variety of conditions. Temperatures during the camp could range from 45 to 105 degrees! The Sonoran Desert around Tucson sees daytime temperatures in excess of 100 degrees on a daily basis at this time of year. Our activities will be limited to the morning hours, and we will be off the desert during the hottest time of day. In the mountains, daytime temperatures will be warm to very warm, with temperature readings in the upper 80s and maybe even reaching 90 degrees. Most of our time will be spent in and around Cave Creek, where temperatures will range from 60 degrees at night to 85 degrees in the daytime. Mornings at Mt. Lemmon can be chilly, often with temperatures in the 40s or 50s. The altitude will be moderate to high, about 5,000-9,000 feet.

A fascinating weather feature of the Southwest is the summer “monsoon” season. Usually beginning in early to mid-July, a pattern develops in which moisture-laden air, streaming north from Mexico, runs into extremely hot air, produced by intense heating of the earth. Since hot air rises, great updrafts of superheated air condense the moisture, creating magnificent cumulo-nimbus clouds. Cumulo-nimbus clouds bear a trademark anvil appearance in which the flat, gray bottoms (where the rain is), rapidly spread out into massive, white multi-headed formations,

some of which tower up 10,000 feet. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms are a daily occurrence in the monsoon pattern. These storms are highly concentrated and typically produce a large amount of heavy rainfall in a short period of time, accompanied by booming thunder claps and dramatic lighting shows.

The arrival of the summer rains in Arizona (if it's a normal to good year) provides welcome relief from the searing heat of early summer. These daily storms have the ability to magically transform parched deserts and mountain forests into vibrant, thriving landscapes. Campers should be prepared for rain and humidity.

CLOTHING: Since summer is a warm and dry time of the year in Arizona, campers will want to pack clothes associated with hot weather. Campers should pack several t-shirts, but making sure to avoid white and other bright colors. A long-sleeved t-shirt will come in handy for evenings and the early morning hours. Shorts will be fine, even preferred most days, but you should also pack a pair or two of long pants. Jeans are acceptable, but are not as comfortable as cotton or other lightweight materials. Packing a light rain jacket is essential in the likely event of rain. Mornings on Mt. Lemmon can be quite chilly so campers are advised to bring an item of clothing for cooler weather, such as a fleece, flannel shirt, or light jacket. A hat for protection from the sun is essential. A wide-brimmed hat is best, but campers should bring a baseball cap at the very least. Laundry services will be available in Sierra Vista.

For footwear, campers should bring a good fitting, broken-in pair of hiking boots or trail shoes. There will be one or two hikes of moderate length planned and campers will have a much better time if they do not have to cope with sore feet or blisters. A pair of lightweight walking shoes will provide more comfort for most other situations.

CONDITIONS: A typical day will see us out bright and early to take advantage of the cooler morning hours. We will stay busy and active up to lunch, and then take a lengthy break during the heat of the day. During periods of down time, campers will be free to relax, play games, catch up on notes and lists, or explore the immediate area in small groups. We will venture out again in the mid- to late afternoon, when the heat of the day begins to abate and bird and animal activity is picking up again. The days are long in the summer, and darkness does not fully descend until after 9:00 p.m. There will be post-dinner activities some days including short hikes/walks, evening night drives, and night-birding excursions. All vehicle travel will be in 15-passenger touring vans.

Meal times will usually fall within these timeframes:

Breakfast:	6:00 – 7:00 a.m.
Lunch:	12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
Dinner:	6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Campers will “tent-camp” in a developed campground on Mt. Lemmon. Potable water and outhouses are available, but there are no shower facilities. Accommodations at the other locations will be two to four persons per room.

Campers should expect to participate in several lengthy, lightly strenuous hikes. No activities will be scheduled, however, for which not all campers will be able to participate.

In addition to bird observation, campers can expect to participate in discussions about birding, biology, and ecology. Campers should bring a notebook for note taking and journal entries.

Campers will be encouraged to call home on a regular basis and keep their families informed of their activities. A cell phone is recommended. However, the use of cell phones should be limited to personal down time away from the group. Use of cell phones (other than for photography) during any group activity, either in the field or during checklist sessions, is prohibited.

EQUIPMENT: Campers should pack a binocular in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, two water bottles, notepads, extra clothing, cameras etc.). Your camp supervisors will have spotting scopes, but if you have one and wish to bring it, feel free to do so. Two one-quart water bottles are

essential for lengthier hikes. Bicycle type bottles are not a good choice, as they tend to leak. Other items to bring include a camera, towel and washcloth, flashlight, and or headlamp. Sunscreen is required for a trip to Arizona in the summer, as the sun's rays are intense and can easily burn exposed skin. A travel alarm clock is also recommended. Other items to consider are personal toiletries and medications. Campers should bring a notebook and pens. Some optional items are your favorite snack foods and extra batteries. **Please refer to the packing list, which will be included in materials the Camper will receive after registering for a more complete listing of items to bring to camp.**

Note: As it is our intent to be immersed in the natural world, we prefer that you do not bring portable music devices, electronic games, etc. to camp.

HEALTH: We want your time at Camp Chiricahua to be as rewarding and memorable as possible. To ensure this comes to pass, we offer the following information and suggestions for health-related issues:

- Staff members are certified to perform standard first aid and CPR and carry an assortment of first aid supplies.
- Those campers on prescribed medication should remember to pack it **in their carry-on luggage.**
- **VENT requires that all campers be up to date with his/her tetanus shot. Campers will not be permitted to attend a VENT Camp unless the accompanying tetanus shot certification document has been returned to the VENT office, signed and dated by a parent or legal guardian.**
- Due to the high temperatures of summer, campers will always be provided with plenty of cool drinks in the forms of bottled water and juice.
- On the portion of the camp where camping is required, staff members will do all the cooking. Campers should expect healthy meals that are low in fat, salt, and sugar, but high in protein, starch and vitamins. Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables will be available.
- Throughout the trip, campers are allowed to buy items of their choosing (with their own money) at rest stops.

**** Campers with special dietary needs should notify our office upon registration.**

VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

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 tour 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.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. **With this in mind, VENT maintains a COVID-19 vaccination requirement.** All tour participants and tour leaders must receive the primary series vaccinations in order to travel with us while we are still in a declared public health emergency. Proof of vaccination must be provided to our office at least one week before the start of the tour. More recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its guidance to recommend people be Up to Date with COVID-19 vaccinations. Although the CDC website defines "Up to Date" as the primary series vaccinations and all recommended boosters, for those eligible, VENT requires the primary series and strongly recommends boosters. While VENT no longer requires a booster shot for participation

on its tours, the high transmissibility of certain variants and subvariants should encourage everyone who is eligible to receive boosters to please do so. VENT has determined this approach to be the best one for keeping our tour leaders and tour participants safe during this time. Our decision and policy anchor a regime of protocols firmly rooted in the latest CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19>, where you may view our **COVID-19 Protocols for VENT Tours** document, which details the guidance VENT will follow in the operation of its tours in the time of pandemic. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

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.

The bookstores of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, www.laaudubon.org and Tucson Audubon Society, www.tucsonaudubon.org also carry a fine inventory of books on birding and natural history. The bookstores can be accessed through their respected websites.

Bird Identification:

Kaufman, Kenn. *Kaufman Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000.

National Geographic Society. *Field Guide to North American Birds*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 7th edition, 2017.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf Publishing Company, 2nd edition, 2014.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2nd edition, 2016. This is a slimmed down version of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*.

Bird References:

Baichich, Paul J. and J. O. Harrison. *A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2nd edition, 2005. This is a superb and usually overlooked reference to the breeding biology of North American birds. Offers far more information that is available in standard field guides.

Ehrlich, Paul R., et. al. *The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988. (An excellent reference guide full of essays and information about North American birds.)

Mammals:

Kays, Roland W. and Wilson, Don E. *Mammals of North America*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2nd edition, 2009.

Bowers, Nora, Rick Bowers, and Kenn Kaufman. *Kaufman Focus Guides: Mammals of North America*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007.

Reid, Fiona. *Peterson Field Guide to the Mammals of North America*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 4th edition, 2006.

Butterflies:

Brock, Jim P. and Kenn Kaufman. *Kaufman Focus Guides: Butterflies of North America*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2nd edition, 2006. This guide is, overall, the best North American butterfly identification resource available.

Reptiles:

Brennan, Thomas C., and Andrew T. Holycross. A Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles in Arizona. Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, 2009. An excellent book – very useful!
Stebbins, Robert C. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Reptiles and Amphibians*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 3rd edition, 2003.

Trees:

Petrides, George A. and Olivia. *Peterson Field Guides: Western Trees*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, second edition 1998.

Geology:

Chronic, Halka. *Roadside Geology of Arizona*. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press, 1986.

History:

Trimble, Marshall. *Roadside History of Arizona*. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press publishing, 1996.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant 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 participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on September 30, 2022 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant’s Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant’s risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the “**Airline**”) is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline’s aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole

contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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