

ECUADOR: AVIAN JEWELS OF THE NORTHWEST ANDES

NOVEMBER 10-19, 2020

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Ecuador's spectacular Chocó-Andean bioregion offers extraordinary biodiversity and unsurpassed endemism along with the greatest hummingbird and antpitta shows on earth. This jam-packed, weeklong adventure covers a relatively tiny natural corridor that runs from high-elevation elfin Andean woodland to remnant wet lowland jungle along the Pacific coastal plain while based at a single birding lodge!

Ecuador may well be the epicenter of Neotropical bird diversity, and perhaps no other destination expresses this better than the western slopes of Volcán Pichincha. This region stretches for only some 50 miles to the west of the country's charming capital city, Quito, and holds a phenomenal array of bird species. We will base our "operations" out of Séptimo Paraíso Cloud Forest Reserve in the renowned Mindo Valley and visit a variety of nearby bird sanctuaries, nature reserves and birding hotspots in search of the local avian specialties found here.



Breathtaking dawn vistas greet us on our first morning as we climb over the slopes of the inter-Andean plateau and wind our way up to Yanacocha Reserve. Here—where hummingbirds represent a truly major element of this stunted, moss and epiphyte-covered wonderland—we will search for high-Andean mixed foraging flocks and marvel at the wing-whirr of up to twelve species of these feathered jewels, including the unimaginable Sword-bill! We'll then continue birding onward and constantly down-slope through temperate and subtropical mountain-forest along Ecuador's first "Ecoroute," a pioneer community-based conservation project that has converted a 54-kilometer country road into a protected sustainable bird-tourism zone, to finally arrive at our destination and "headquarters" for the week.

Nestled in a dramatic, prime montane cloud-forest setting, Séptimo Paraíso not only offers comfortable accommodations, excellent cuisine and the best birding opportunities to be found in the area, but it's also strategically located to allow easy access to the key birding sites in this important bioregion. We will take good advantage of each day, working exceptional locations including Río

Silanche and Milpe bird sanctuaries, Amagusa Reserve, Refugio Paz de las Aves, and the “Paseo del Quinde” Ecoroute, among other important locations.

This is the domain of Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Toucan Barbet, Moss-backed Tanager, Guayaquil Woodpecker, and over 40 hummingbirds and tanagers, among more than 500 possible Neotropical avian specialties, with promises of unforgettable experiences for all.



Toucan Barbet © Paul J. Greenfield

November 10, Day 1: Arrival in Quito. Participants will be met upon arrival at Quito’s *Mariscal Sucre International Airport* (airport code UIO) and transferred to our hotel. Most flights to Quito from the United States are scheduled to arrive in the evening. Participants may wish to consider arriving a day or two in advance in order to acclimate, do some sightseeing around the beautiful capital city of Quito, or to shop for souvenirs and local crafts. Early arrival is also recommended to avoid complications in the event of flight delays. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with additional lodging arrangements.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

November 11, Day 2: Quito to Yanacocha Reserve; Then Continuing Along the “Paseo del Quinde” Ecoroute to Séptimo Paraíso. This morning we will have an early breakfast and depart from Quito to wind our

way over the northwestern flank of the massive Pichincha Volcano to the Yanacocha Reserve. At over 11,000 feet in altitude, Yanacocha (960 hectares; owned by the Jocotoco Foundation) Reserve's main goal is the protection of the very rare, critically endangered, and endemic hummingbird—the Black-breasted Puffleg. This absolutely beautiful area—with its commanding views of “Guagua” Pichincha Volcano and its deep gorges covered in lush



Great Sapphirewing © Paul J. Greenfield

elfin forest—is a hummingbird hangout, simply buzzing with many high-elevation species. We will be looking for Mountain Velvetbreast, Great Sapphirewing, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Sapphire-vented and Golden-breasted pufflegs, Purple-backed Thornbill, Tyrian Metaltail, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, and maybe even a Sword-billed Hummingbird or two, most of which visit the series of nectar feeders that are kept up here. The views will be mind-blowing, to say the least! We will walk the relatively flat and easy trail, which is lined with mossy, entangled vegetation; five to six foot-wide *Gunnera* leaves; an uncanny number of distinct flowering plants; and spectacular vistas while searching for mixed foraging species flocks including White-browed Spinetail, White-throated Tyrannulet, Crowned Chat-Tyrant, Barred Fruiteater, Red-crested Cotinga, Rufous Wren, Masked and Glossy flowerpiercers, Blue-backed and Cinereous conebills, Superciliaried Hemispingus, Blue-and-black Tanager, and Scarlet-bellied and Black-chested mountain-tanagers. We will also be on the lookout for Andean Guan and Undulated and Rufous antpittas, and we might even find an Andean Pygmy-Owl. As the late morning fog rolls in, as it usually does, we will continue our journey down-slope along the “Paseo del Quinde” Ecoroute towards our final destination in the Mindo Valley.

This Ecoroute is a 30-mile long, little-traveled country road that has been converted into a community-based, conservation-through-ecotourism pilot project designed by the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation. Here, three local

communities co-manage the road for bird and nature tourism. They have a reforestation and waste-management program, and are trained in the production of crafts and souvenirs, along with the know-how to provide various tourism and environmental services that will guarantee their wellbeing and improve their economies.



Black-chested Mountain-Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield

We will spend the remainder of the afternoon working our way along this natural corridor through temperate, subtropical and foothill habitats as we search for a wide variety of montane species, many of them unique to the *world's richest bird area* – often referred to as the Chocó-Andean Endemic Center. The possibilities are almost endless—among them are Black-and-Chestnut Eagle; Red-billed Parrot; Scaly-naped Amazon; Crimson-mantled and Powerful woodpeckers; Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan; Montane and Tyrannine woodcreepers; Streaked Tuftedcheek; Pearled Treerunner; White-tailed Tyrannulet; Streak-necked, Cinnamon, and Golden-crowned flycatchers; Glossy-black Thrush; Plain-tailed Wren; Gray-breasted Wood-Wren; Russet-crowned Warbler; Capped Conebill; Golden, Flame-faced, Golden-naped, Beryl-spangled, Black-capped and Grass-green tanagers; along with Blue-winged, Black-chinned and Hooded mountain-tanagers and a wide “spectrum” of hummingbird species!

NIGHT: El Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo



Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan © Paul J. Greenfield

November 12-17, Days 3-8: Séptimo Paraíso Grounds and the Mindo-Milpe-Río Silanche-Mashpi Area.

The Mindo Valley has become extremely well known over the last decade or so for its incredibly high biodiversity. While basing our “operations” out of Séptimo Paraíso, we will spend the next five days examining a wonderful selection of birding sites, exuberant roadside vegetation and forest trails, bird gardens, and forest reserves while searching for many of the nearly 600 species possible here. The lush, epiphyte-covered forests with their entangled understories seem to come to life in an instant. Bursts of mixed feeding flock activity appear to come from out of the blue! We will concentrate on sorting out confusing species and revel in the colorful splendor of this spectacular Neotropical avifauna during these feeding frenzies, trying to “sift” through the gaudy euphonies and tanagers in hopes of identifying some of the more cryptic and secretive denizens. We’ll have plenty of time to check out the hotel’s spectacular hummingbird feeders for some 15 to 20 species, while

on the watch for raptors and parrots flying overhead. We will also witness spectacular dawn feeding activity at a variety of areas at varying altitudinal zones.



Giant Antpitta, "Maria" © Paul J. Greenfield

We will head out very early one morning for an unforgettable visit to Refugio Paz de las Aves. Here we will be accompanied by Angel Paz himself, a local *campesino* who has created a most spectacular birding experience—starting off with a visit to a conveniently placed blind that overlooks an Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek and continue with what has become “the greatest show,” his feeding of up to five species of wild antpittas—Giant, Yellow-breasted, Chestnut-crowned, Moustached, & Ochre-breasted—along with a family of Dark-backed Wood-Quails! All of these species are normally extremely difficult to see at best, even with the greatest of luck; but here, Angel does wonders to bring these special birds ridiculously close, calling each individual by name!

We will also take separate day trips to visit two of the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation’s bird sanctuaries—Río Silanche and Milpe—along with several other key birding sites (everything is relatively close-by) to explore prime lowland and foothill hotspots that offer superb birding opportunities and some of the best conditions for great bird photography to be found anywhere! A canopy tower, nectar and fruit feeders have

truly converted this area into a birder’s paradise! Just a few of the target species we will be searching for here include Plumbeous Kite; Tiny, Bicolored, Semiplumbeous, Plumbeous & Barred hawks; Black Hawk-Eagle; Crested, Wattled & Sickie-winged guans; Sunbittern; Barred, Red-masked & Maroon-tailed parakeets; Red-billed, Blue-headed, Bronze-winged & Rose-faced parrots; Tawny-bellied, White-whiskered & Stripe-throated hermits; Purple-bibbed Whitetip; Buff-tailed & Velvet-purple coronets; Fawn-breasted, Green-crowned & Empress brilliants; Violet-tailed Sylph; Booted Racket-tail; Golden-headed & Crested quetzals; Masked Trogon; Red-headed & Toucan barbets; Chocó & Chestnut-mandibled toucans; Powerful, Guayaquil, Chocó & Smoky-brown woodpeckers; Uniform, Fasciated, Russet & Great antshrikes; Rufous-rumped, Checker-throated, White-flanked, Slaty, Dot-winged & Moustached antwrens; Chestnut-backed, Zeledon’s, Esmeraldas, Stub-tailed & Dusky antbirds; Red-faced Spinetail; Lineated & Buff-fronted foliage-gleaners; Streak-capped & Uniform treehunters; Strong-billed & Black-striped woodcreepers; Double-banded Graytail; Ocellated, Nariño & Spillmann’s tapaculos; Rufous-winged, Black-capped, & Sooty-headed tyrannulets; Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant; Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Green-and-black, Orange-breasted & Scaled fruit-eaters; Club-winged, White-bearded, Red-capped & Golden-winged manakins; Pale-eyed, Glossy-black,

Pale-vented & Ecuadorian thrushes; Sepia-brown, Bay, Stripe-throated & Southern Nightingale wrens; Tropical & Slate-throated gnatcatchers; Yellow-collared Chlorophonia (seasonal); Orange-crowned Euphonia; Yellow-tufted, Scarlet-thighed, Scarlet-breasted & Blue dacnises; Glistening-green, Metallic-green, Gray-and-gold, Rufous-throated, Emerald, Silver-throated, Golden-hooded, Rufous-winged, Bay-headed & Scarlet-browed tanagers; Blue Seedeater; Tricolored Brush-Finch; and Yellow-bellied Siskin.

NIGHTS: El Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo



Velvet-purple Coronet © Paul J. Greenfield

November 18, Day 9: Birding the “El Paseo del Quinde” Ecoroute and Return to Quito. This morning we will take off after breakfast on our return trip to Quito, birding our way back along the “Paseo del Quinde” Ecoroute, which winds up and over what was the original “old” road to Quito. Retracing our first-day’s steps for some 20-30 kms along this route into the Tandayapa Valley, we will have more time to enjoy the spectacular natural conditions being protected here. Today we will allow time to walk various stretches of the road so as not to miss anything. Again, the mixed foraging flocks will be of interest. We will be on the lookout with hopes of finding Sickle-winged Guan; Cloudforest Pygmy-Owl; Green-fronted Lancebill; Wedge-billed Hummingbird; Brown, Green, and Sparkling violet-ears; Western Emerald; Green-crowned Woodnymph; Andean Emerald; Speckled Hummingbird; Empress Brilliant; Brown and Collared incas; Gorgeted Sunangel; Purple-throated, White-bellied and the seasonal Little woodstars; Crested Quetzal; Rufous Spinetail; Pacific Tuftedcheek; Tyrannine Woodcreeper; Chestnut-crowned Antpitta; Ocellated Tapaculo; Barred Becard; Beautiful Jay; Black-

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chinned Mountain-Tanager; Grass-green Tanager; and the rare and secretive Tanager Finch. Depending on how the day goes, we may spend part of the early afternoon at Alambi Lodge to revel in the greatest hummingbird show in “town” (or on earth!) and as the afternoon falls upon us, we will head back to Quito. We may make a stop to search for the rare and threatened White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant, if time permits.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito



Crowned Woodnymph © Paul J. Greenfield

November 19, Day 10: Departure for Home. Transfers will be provided to the Quito Airport in time for your departing flight.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 14 participants.

TOUR LEADER: Paul Greenfield and Brian Gibbons



Paul Greenfield grew up near New York City and became interested in birds as a child. He received his B.F.A. from Temple University where he was an art major at the Tyler School of Art. Since 1972, he has lived in Ecuador where his fascination for birds and art has culminated with the completion of 20 years of work illustrating *The Birds of Ecuador*, which he co-authored with Robert Ridgely. He is also co-author of *Birds of Western Ecuador, a Photographic Guide* (Princeton University Press) and is presently working with Bob Ridgely on an App for *The Birds of Ecuador*, which hopefully will be available in 2018. Paul is very involved in saving Ecuador’s avian diversity and important habitats through his involvement with

various foundations, as well as working with local government and communities to encourage their involvement in the protection of “their” biodiversity and the promotion of birding tourism in Ecuador. He has been showing visitors the birds of this fascinating country for over four decades and has led many Ecuador bird tours. He and his wife, Martha, live in Quito.



Brian Gibbons grew up in suburban Dallas where he began exploring the wild world in local creeks and parks. Chasing butterflies and any animal that was unfortunate enough to cross paths with the Gibbons boys occupied his childhood. A wooden bird feeder kit sparked a flame that was stoked by a gift of the *Golden Guide* and family camping trips to Texas state parks. Thirty years ago Brian attended two VENT camps for young birders. Birds are now his primary interest, but all things wild continue to captivate him. After college, Brian undertook a variety of field biology research jobs that have taken him to the Caribbean, the Bering Sea, and the land of the midnight sun, arctic Alaska. He enjoys working with kids, hoping to spark environmental awareness through birds. For many years Brian’s field research has involved bird banding. His most amazing recoveries were

a female Wilson’s Warbler that had been banded in Alaska and was captured by Brian in Colorado, and a Sooty Tern that perished after a hurricane on the Texas coast; it had plied the Gulf of Mexico and the oceans of the world for 24 years. Brian’s recreational bird-seeking has taken him to Machu Picchu in Peru, the Great Wall in China, the plains of East Africa, and the Himalayas in Nepal. Brian leads birding trips in the United States, Central America, the Caribbean, South Africa, and Europe. As well as being a fanatical birder, he loves capturing birds with photography. He lives in Tucson, Arizona with his wife, Lacreia Johnson, and their son, Grayson.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for this tour is **\$3,695** per person in double occupancy from Quito. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to dinner on Day 8, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leader. It does not include airfare from your home to Quito and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, 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 this tour is **\$495**. 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.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard, Visa, or American Express 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, 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 (June 13, 2020) prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** 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 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 your protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

If you cancel:

180 days or more before departure date

179 to 151 days before departure date

150 days or less before departure date

Your refund will be:

Your deposit minus \$500*

No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance 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.

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.

FUEL & 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 a tour or cruise departure. Prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While VENT will do everything possible to maintain the original price of the cruise or tour, if fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to implement a fuel surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In most cases, these additional fuel costs are being passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers who reserve the right, in their agreements to provide services for VENT, to raise their prices due to significant changes in fuel costs.

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 be sure to check with the VENT office***

prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be responsible for any air ticket penalties.

BAGGAGE: As space in the vehicles is limited, we ask that you limit your baggage to one lockable piece of luggage and a carry-on bag. As a precaution, we suggest you pack a change of clothes, your binoculars, medications, basic toiletries, walking shoes, and travel documents in your carry-on.

CLIMATE: During this tour we will experience a variety of different climates. In the mountains out from Quito, temperatures are generally pleasant during the day; cool in the early morning to warm at midday (low 60s to 80s). However, at higher elevations, especially at Yanacocha Reserve on our first morning in the field, temperatures can drop to the low 40s on occasion, and you should be prepared to layer for warmth. There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in at least some mist or light rain, so a good umbrella or light rain jacket is essential. Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary is in the coastal lowlands and at this site you should be prepared for warm-to-hot temperatures at midday (typically 70s to low 90s) depending on cloud-cover. We may also get caught in an occasional rain shower.

CLOTHING: Dress is casual or informal throughout the tour. Lightweight field clothing is the norm for most areas visited, with a sweater or jacket for extra warmth. We suggest dark field pants and shirts for forest birding, and lightweight long-sleeved shirts that dry quickly (long sleeves are not essential, but offer additional protection from sun and biting insects). Please wear darker colors, not whites, and avoid startling patterns that frighten the birds. Also important are a hat and sunscreen for sun protection and a rain jacket, poncho, or umbrella. Good footwear is essential, and for this we strongly suggest sturdy mud boots or waterproof hiking boots. In any case, your footgear for the field should at the very least be rated “water-resistant,” as this is a damp climate. Even the dew on the roadside grass will get your feet wet!

At higher elevations the temperatures can be as low as the low 40s on occasion, and you should be prepared to layer for warmth with a warm, long-sleeved shirt, plus a warm jacket or sweater. You can shed layers as the day warms up (or add them as it cools down). Consider bringing gloves and a warm hat if you know that you chill easily. There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in at least some mist or light rain during this trip, so a good umbrella or light rain jacket is essential. Mud boots are recommended, but may not be essential here, as long as your footgear is waterproof or at the very least water-resistant. You may wish to bring a bathing suit along, as Séptimo Paraíso has a swimming pool and a hot tub.

Laundry facilities are available at Hotel Quito and Séptimo Paraíso.

CURRENCY: The U.S. dollar is the currency in Ecuador. Cash is needed only for your personal expenses, such as bar bills, laundry, souvenirs, and international airport departure tax (see below). Please be aware that U.S. traveler’s checks are NOT recommended, but U.S. dollars, MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Diner’s Club credit cards are widely accepted in Quito especially, and most other cities.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Ecuador is required, with at least one blank page for entry stamp. Visas are not required for United States citizens. You will be issued a tourist card to be completed on board your flight to Quito. You must hold onto this until your departure. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

EQUIPMENT: You will want to have a sunhat, sunscreen, and sunglasses for protection from the sun; a belt pack or day pack for carrying your field equipment and water bottle; a small flashlight or headlamp; a washcloth or small hand towel; a water bottle; and an alarm clock. Consider bringing an extra pair of binoculars, some between-meal snacks (such as trail mix, granola bars, dried fruit, nuts, etc.), and tissues or wet-wipes. Annoying insects are possible in some areas, so you should bring repellent. We recommend Cutter lotion (or a similar product) and a pump-style container (no cans) of OFF! Topsyn gel is useful for reducing irritation from bites and stings, as is cortisone cream. A sturdy, collapsible walking stick is also recommended for those who feel

unsteady on uneven trail surfaces, and will be especially useful at Paz Antpitta Reserve. Your leader will have a spotting scope; but if you wish to bring your own, that is fine. Again, as a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, basic toiletry items, medications and travel documents, and a change of clothing in your carry-on bag.

HEALTH: As in most Latin American countries, we recommend drinking only bottled water, and using no ice in beverages. Also avoid milk products which have not been pasteurized and unpeeled fruits and vegetables. Vaccinations for polio and tetanus are recommended. Malaria is present in Ecuador, including the chloroquine-resistant strain. 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 (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.canada.ca/en/public-health.html (click on travel and tourism).

Speak to your physician if you have any questions about high altitude, as we will be at elevations fluctuating between 9,000-11,000 feet.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, 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.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against hepatitis types A and B.

Zika Virus – This tour visits an area or areas where Zika virus is known to occur or could occur; however, we believe the risk to VENT travelers is extremely low. The Zika virus is a mosquito-borne infection transmitted by mosquitos of the genus *Aedes*, and is related to other tropical diseases: Dengue, Yellow Fever, and West Nile virus. This type of mosquito bites during the day and typically is found in areas of dense human habitation where sanitation and drainage of standing water is poor. Zika virus presents the greatest threat to women of childbearing age. For others who become infected, the effects are usually nonexistent to mild, although some people exhibit symptoms such as mild fever, rashes, joint and muscle pain, and red eyes. If infected, the best treatment is plenty of rest, nourishment, and other supportive care. There is no vaccine to prevent or cure the disease; however, Zika virus is not contagious and, therefore, cannot be transmitted through air, food, or water.

Your safety is our highest priority, and we want to emphasize that the best way to avoid Zika virus (and other mosquito-borne diseases), is to take appropriate precautions in avoiding mosquito bites:

- Stay informed about the Zika virus
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, socks and shoes, and a hat*
- Use effective insect repellents (those containing DEET) and reapply regularly

***We strongly recommend the use of Insect Shield® clothing.** Insect Shield is a process by which clothing is treated with an EPA-approved formula of the insect repellent permethrin. Such clothing is highly repellent to insects and provides durable and long-lasting protection, even after dozens of washings. Outdoor wear with Insect Shield protection includes name brands such as Ex Officio and Tilley, and can be purchased at outdoor recreation stores such as REI and from a variety of online retailers. In lieu of Insect Shield clothing, you should consider treating your clothes with permethrin, which has the same effect, and that can be purchased at outdoor recreation stores and from a variety of online retailers.

For the latest information and news about Zika virus, please visit the website of the CDC:
<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

MISC: Electricity - 110 volts AC, the same as the U.S.

Language - Spanish, with Quechua or Indian dialects; some English

Time - Eastern Standard Time

Internet Access – At the time of publication, internet access is available at Hotel Quito, Séptimo Paraíso, and Termas de Papallacta.

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.

Birds, Basic Reference:

Ridgely, Robert S. and Greenfield, Paul J. *The Birds of Ecuador*. Cornell University Press, 2001. This is the “Bible” for anyone interested in Ecuador’s birds. It consists of a two-volume set made up of the Field Guide, with 96 color plates, which include illustrations of basically all the species found in the country. The informative text, designed to help species identification, includes distribution maps for all 1,600 species of Ecuador’s birds. The Status, Distribution and Taxonomy volume treats each of Ecuador’s species with detailed information not included in the Field Guide.

Athanas, Nick and Greenfield, Paul J. *Birds of Western Ecuador, a Photographic Guide*. Princeton University Press, 2016. An excellent photographic field guide and useful complement to *The Birds of Ecuador* that treats over 900 bird species recorded in the western half of the country.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Greenfield, Paul J. *Birds of Ecuador – Field Guide App*. BirdsEye Apps, 2019. This is the interactive mobile field guide version of *The Birds of Ecuador* (see above) by Robert S. Ridgely and Paul J. Greenfield. It includes detailed, up-to-date species descriptions, full-color range maps, audio of bird songs and calls, and detailed illustrations of the nearly 1700 species of birds found in Continental Ecuador. For information on downloading this app from the App Store or Google Play, go to the following link: <http://www.birdseyebirding.com/app-pages/birds-of-ecuador-field-guide/>

Hilty, Steven L. and William L. Brown. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. An excellent complementary field guide useful for identifying many of Ecuador’s bird species, with excellent coverage of the birds in the eastern lowlands and northern mountains.

Fjeldsa, Jon and Niels Krabbe. *Birds of the High Andes*. Copenhagen: Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen; Svendborg, Denmark: Apollo Books, 1990. A good reference book for the birds of the mountains above 7,500 feet, with adequate illustrations, but too large to carry and expensive. Try www.abebooks.com.

Birds, Additional Reading:

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd, 1996. Subtitle: “A Watcher's Introduction to Behavior, Breeding and Diversity.” Highly recommended as the most readable and informative book on many different aspects of bird ecology (and birding!) in the Neotropics.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America: Volume I, the Oscine Passerines*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1989. Excellent reference volumes, with text entries for all species and fantastic illustrations of many. This volume and the next together include all of the passerines.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America: Volume II, the Suboscine Passerines*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994.

Other:

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997 (2nd edition).

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