

HIGH ISLAND MIGRATION

APRIL 15-21, 2021

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Every spring, millions of birds migrate north from the American tropics to the forests of the eastern United States. At sunset, they take off from Central America for the long journey over the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Typically they are riding a south wind, so that when they reach the Texas/Louisiana coast, most of them continue inland before putting down. But if the trans-Gulf migrants encounter north winds and rain during their flight, they are forced down into the isolated groves and bushes of the Texas and Louisiana coastal prairie. The result can be a staggering phenomenon, a fallout, as thousands of migrants reach the safety of the coast. The greatest of these fallouts occur only once or twice a spring when conditions are just right, but some birds put down along the coast every day, and a great variety can always be seen over the course of the week.

This tour is designed to focus on spring migration along the upper Texas coast. Most nights will be spent near High Island, where isolated groves of live oaks and other trees may attract large numbers of migrants in a fallout, and where some migrants occur regularly even without the severe conditions of a fallout. Each day's activities will depend on the weather, and our schedule will be flexible. If fallout conditions occur we will bird High Island and



other migrant traps. If the weather is good, with a south wind, we will concentrate on the rice fields for shorebirds, the extensive marshes for wading birds, and the great Bolivar Flats for coastal shorebirds, terns, and wading birds. We will visit Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, which is famous among birders as a good place to observe such notoriously secretive marsh-dwellers as Least and American bitterns, King Rail, Purple Gallinule and Sora. If a group rail walk is scheduled at Anahuac, we will take part with the potential of seeing the much sought after Yellow Rail. Fulvous Whistling-Duck, White-faced Ibis, and occasionally Glossy Ibis are also seen at Anahuac. Nearby, flooded rice fields are often swarming with migrant shorebirds. Sometimes thousands of shorebirds in glorious spring plumage are present, including such scarce species as Hudsonian Godwit, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, American Golden-Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, and

Stilt Sandpiper. *Upland Sandpipers migrate through here too, most often found in pastures near grazing cattle.*

We will make a special trip into the pine forests and bayou country farther inland to look for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Brown-headed Nuthatches, and other specialty nesters such as Swainson's and Prairie warblers. Regardless of the weather, every day on the Texas coast in late April will be an eventful one.

April 15, Day 1: Arrival in Houston. Participants should plan to arrive in Houston at George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) today and transfer to our hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. The hotel offers a complimentary shuttle service from the airport. We will meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 p.m. for a brief orientation and dinner.

NIGHT: SpringHill Suites Houston Intercontinental Airport,
Houston

April 16, Day 2: Houston Area - Pine Woods; on to High Island. An early morning visit to W.G. Jones State Forest, about an hour north of Houston, offers our best chance on the tour to find the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. This scarce southeastern endemic shares these woods with other woodpeckers including Pileated, Red-headed, and Red-bellied woodpeckers, as well as such other nesting species as Brown-headed Nuthatch, Carolina Chickadee, Pine Warbler, and Wood Duck. Departing the pine woods, we will be on our way toward High Island, birding any flooded rice fields en route for shorebirds and watching pastures for migrating Upland Sandpipers. After checking in at our hotel in Winnie, we'll make our way to the famous High Island woods.



Pineywoods © Erik Bruhnke

NIGHT: Holiday Inn Express, Winnie



Black-throated Green Warbler © Erik Bruhnke

April 17-20, Days 3-6: High Island Area. Our activities at High Island for the next four days will depend on the weather. Wet or stormy weather on the Texas coast in the spring often means good birding – in the sense of more migrant songbirds stopping in the High Island sanctuaries – and we will hope that a “norther” hits while we are here. The rain and winds associated with such frontal movements can cause a large number of migrants to take sanctuary in the coastal groves. If this happens, we will tailor our plans to take advantage of the spectacle.

The Texas coast is the perfect place to get a feel for migration, and High Island is the best migrant arrival site on the entire coast. Despite the name, High Island is not an island but a geologically

raised area that stands about 30 feet above the coastal plain, high enough to support groves of larger trees within a sea-like expanse of coastal marshlands. We will check the High Island woods daily and should see many migrants including Hooded, Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, Kentucky, Chestnut-sided, Blue-winged, Tennessee, and Black-and-White warblers, among others. Both Scarlet and Summer tanagers are regulars in the sanctuaries, as are Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Painted Bunting, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and both Baltimore and

Orchard orioles. Our tour typically records 20 or more species of warblers over the week. At a breeding colony of large waders at High Island we'll get amazingly close views of nesting Roseate Spoonbills, Snowy and Great egrets, Tricolored Herons, and other species.

On at least one day we will visit Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Established in 1963, Anahuac is a haven for thousands of marsh animals, among them birds, otters, and alligators. Anahuac is famous among birders as a good place to observe such notoriously secretive marsh-dwellers as Least and American bitterns and King Rail, as well as Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Gull-billed Tern, Sora, Purple Gallinule, White and White-faced ibises, and Marsh Wren.



Roseate Spoonbill © Erik Bruhnke

Near Anahuac and along adjacent farm roads are rice fields that, when flooded in April, are magnets for migrating shorebirds. Sometimes thousands of shorebirds in glorious spring plumage are present, with 20 or more species including such scarce species as American Golden Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, and Stilt Sandpiper.



White-faced Ibis © Erik Bruhnke

We will visit renowned Bolivar Flats and nearby Rollover Pass, two of the best Gulf shoreline birding locales in Texas. Over 50 species of birds gather on the tidal edges and sandbars, including plovers, sandpipers, waders, terns, and gulls. Species typically include bright, breeding plumaged American Avocets; American Oystercatcher; Wilson's, Semipalmated, Piping, and Snowy

plovers (there isn't a better place to study small plovers); dowitchers; Whimbrel; Long-billed Curlew; Semipalmated, Western, and Least sandpipers; Marbled Godwit; Herring, Ring-billed, and Laughing gulls; Forster's, Common, Least, Royal, Sandwich, Caspian, and Black terns; and Black Skimmer. Seaside and Sharp-tailed sparrows and Clapper Rails frequent the nearby brackish marshes. One of the great things about the flats is how very close one can get to the birds. It is an excellent opportunity to study and compare a wide array of shorebirds and terns at once.

On one of our days we will visit the East Texas "Piney Woods" region and bayou country within about an hour of Winnie. Here we'll search for a number of other species including Painted Bunting, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Prairie Warbler. Canebrakes and cypress bayous are a likely spot for nesting Northern Parula, Prothonotary, Yellow-throated and Swainson's warblers, as well as Wood Ducks and Barred Owls.



American Avocets © Erik Bruhnke

NIGHTS: Holiday Inn Express, Winnie

April 21, Day 7: High Island to Houston; Departure for Home. There's still a half day of birding to check the woods for migrants or pursue some other avenue of birding, and we hope to make the most of it. Late morning we will pack up and have a quick lunch before driving to Houston, arriving at George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) by 2:30 p.m. Flights home should be booked for no earlier than 4:00 p.m.

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

TOUR 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 coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May, compiler of the Cape May Christmas Bird Count, and owner of 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.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$2,495** per person in double occupancy from Houston, Texas. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 7, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Houston and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$350**. 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 **\$500** per person. If you would like 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 (November 16, 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 **\$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 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 \$250*

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 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.

AIR INFORMATION: There are two airports in Houston, and flights for this tour should be planned to arrive at Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport, airport code "IAH," which is located north of the city. 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 air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

BAGGAGE: We ask participants to please limit their baggage to one medium-sized piece of luggage and one carry-on bag. Please avoid bringing rigid plastic suitcases. **Soft-sided bags are preferred** (roll-ons, duffel bags, etc.), as space for carrying luggage in vans is limited.

CLIMATE & CONDITIONS: Temperatures on the upper Texas coast in April normally involve lows in the 60s and highs in the 80s, with the possibility of even warmer weather. However, a late 'norther' may bring rain and temperatures in the 50s so you should bring along a warm sweater or light jacket and raingear.

Much of the tour will be based in Winnie at the comfortable Holiday Inn Express. Winnie is about half an hour from High Island. Birding activities will include easy walks on trails and along roadsides (most less than 1 mile) and drives to important birding areas. **The tour involves a good bit of level, slow walking and standing in the wooded sanctuaries; although the walks are not long you will be on your feet a good bit. Walking in the rain is possible.**

A typical day will begin with continental breakfast at the hotel and departure for the field at 7:00 a.m. We will bird in the field throughout the morning, breaking for lunch. Most lunches will be in local cafes. Most days we will take a break at the hotel after lunch. All travel will be aboard 15-passenger vans to various nearby natural areas. Because many migrant birds arrive late afternoon, we often bird until about 6 p.m., then have dinner at a local restaurant on the way back to the hotel.

CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR: Dress will be informal throughout. Light field clothing is the norm, you should also bring along a warm sweater or light jacket and raingear. Lightweight, long pants and long sleeve shirts are ideal for woods birding where some mosquitoes are typical. Dull colors or earth tones are preferable in the woods. Comfortable walking shoes or boots are essential. If there has been a good bit of rain, the trails can be muddy, in which case you might want to consider bringing along a pair of rubber boots that come up over your ankle. A hat and sunscreen for protection from the sun are essential.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). An alarm clock is essential. Your tour leaders will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. If you are bringing a camera, we suggest you bring sufficient memory cards as there may not be time, nor a convenient location, to shop for more during the tour. You may wish to bring a pocket notebook or something similar for taking notes in the field.

HEALTH: 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.

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 Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

INSECT PROTECTION: Chiggers and mosquitoes can be a problem in Texas, and insect repellent is strongly recommended (we suggest Cutters or OFF and some people like to use them in combination).

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

Chiggers can be avoided by following these procedures:

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

By following these methods, you should be able to avoid all chigger bites, as well as tick bites. If, however, you are bitten by chiggers anyway, you can reduce or eliminate the symptoms by applying benzocaine or hydrocortisone creams, calamine lotion, After Bite, or any number of anti-itch products.

MISCELLANEOUS: Restaurants able to accommodate vegetarian, vegan, diabetic, low-cholesterol or other special dietary requests are rare in the High Island area. Your leaders may be unable to fulfill these requests at many locations. Please feel free to bring food to supplement what is available on the tour.

A hat and sunscreen for protection from the sun is essential as is an alarm clock, and it is also recommended that you bring a refillable water bottle to carry water. The hotel in Winnie does have a coin laundry. A compact travel umbrella can come in handy when birding away from the van.

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.

For use during the tour, we recommend:

Bird Identification:

Dunn, Jon & Kimball Garrett. *A Field Guide to the Warblers of North America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

Kaufman, Kenn. *Birds of North America*. Kaufman Focus Guides. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000.

- National Geographic Society. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. Sixth Edition. Washington, D.C., National Geographic Society, 2011.
- Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. 2nd Edition. New York: Knopf, 2014. Excellent for all levels and highly recommended.
- Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*. 2003. Older than the above book but small, quite portable and still very serviceable.
- Peterson, Roger Tory. *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America*. 6th edition. The most recent of a long and classic series by the man who almost single-handedly invented modern bird identification. Particularly good for beginning and intermediate birders.
- O'Brien, Michael, R. Crossley, and K. T. Karlson. *The Shorebird Guide*. 2006. A particularly valuable reference for this trip where so many shorebirds are on stage.
- Paulson, Dennis. *Shorebirds of North America: The Photographic Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Stephenson, Tom and Scott Whittle. *The Warbler Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Migration:

- DeGraaf, Richard M. & John H. Rappole. *Neotropical Migratory Birds: Natural History, Distribution, and Population Change*. Ithaca: Comstock/Cornell U. Press, 1995.
- Wiedensaul, Scott, *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*. North Point Press. 1999. A must read for anyone visiting the Texas coast during migratory periods for birds. Brilliantly written. One chapter, "The Gulf Express," deals exclusively with the Texas coast migration in spring.

Finding Birds:

- Holt, Harold R. *A Birder's Guide to the Texas Coast*. American Birding Association, 1993.

General and reference:

- Choate, Ernest A. *The Dictionary of American Bird Names*. Boston: Harvard Commons Press, 1985.
- Ehrlich, Paul R., David S. Dobkin & Darryl Wheye. *The Birder's Handbook. A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds*. NY: Simon and Schuster. 1988.
- McFarlane, Robert W. *A Stillness in the Pines: The Ecology of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker*. New York: Norton, 1992.
- Peterson, Roger Tory and James Fisher. *Wild America*. Boston: Riverside Press, 1963. See chapters 16 and 17 for the adventures of two great naturalists as they bird their way through Texas.
- Oberholser, Harry C. Edited by Edgar Kincaid. *The Bird Life of Texas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974. The definitive two-volume reference work on the Texas avifauna, including distribution maps; with a few paintings by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Detailed description material. A classic 2 volume set but useful primarily as a library reference.

Wildflowers:

- Loughmiller, Campbell and Lynn. *Texas Wildflowers*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984. Field guide with nice photos of many representative wildflowers.
- Irwin and Wills. *Roadside Flowers of Texas*. Austin. University of Texas Press. Good selection of typical wild flowers and attractive line drawings.
- Tveten, John and Gloria. *Wildflowers of Houston and Southeast Texas*. Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1993. The wildflower guide most appropriate to the area of the tour.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any

vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. When this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on July 29, 2020, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.

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05/31/19-EB
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