

**NORTHERN ECUADOR
HUMMINGBIRD & TANAGER EXTRAVAGANZA:
A RELAXED & EASY TOUR**

MARCH 10-19, 2023

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Shining Sunbeam © Paul J. Greenfield

Ecuador is one of the world's top four bird-rich countries, and this exceptional natural wealth can be experienced perhaps best through its incredible hummingbird diversity. During this trip we will be able to observe some 60 different hummingbirds and perhaps 40 distinct tanager species under the most favorable and relaxed viewing conditions found anywhere. This tour has been specifically designed for hummingbird enthusiasts and photographers along with anyone who would like to experience the Neotropics through these spectacular living gems.

This tour follows an easy transect up and over the eastern and western Andean slopes to revel in a spectacle of unimaginable color, glitter and frenzy unlike anything one could ever imagine. This is a world of hummingbirds—these tiny (or not so!) creatures that can fly backwards, sideways, and even upside down, as they feed, battle, and interact with each other at a dizzying pace—and tanagers, characterized by their plethora of vibrant colors. We will concentrate on observing and/or photographing as many species within these intriguing families as possible.



Our journey takes us to a variety of key sites at varied elevations along both slopes of the northern Andes, each maintaining wonderful nectar and fruit feeding stations where we can watch, compare, and enjoy a wide range of species in surprising comfort. We will also take optional walks to explore forest trails and observe flowering plants in search of the few species that don't visit feeders regularly. This is an opportunity to focus on these marvelous creatures in a very relaxed and easy manner. We will stay at comfortable lodges and visit the most renowned hummingbird and tanager localities in northern Ecuador's high tundra-like páramo zone at Antisana and along the Papallacta Pass, temperate-zone forest at Guango Lodge and Cabañas San Isidro, Amazonian foothills at Wildsumaco Lodge, elfin temperate forest at Yanacocha Reserve, the western subtropical and foothill cloud forests of the Mindo-Milpe area, and the Pacific coastal lowlands at Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary among other hot-spots.

The names alone are mouth-watering! Just think—hermits, sylphs, trainbearers, pufflegs, incas, starfrontlet, sapphirewing, sword-bill, sunbeam, coronets, racket-tail, whitetips, hillstars, brilliants, thornbills, woodstars, woodnymphs, jewelfront, emeralds, sapphire and fairies! And what about Glistening-green, Orange-eared, Flame-faced, Golden-eared, Paradise, Emerald, Rufous-throated Golden-crowned & Grass-green tanagers, or Hooded, Lacrimose, Blue-winged, Black-chinned or Scarlet-bellied mountain-tanagers!

This is a perfect itinerary for fanatics, photographers, and even beginners who feel the urge to delve into the world of tropical hummingbirds and tanagers in a light-paced but "full-on" fashion. A mini-disclaimer: This trip is slated as a focus on hummingbirds and tanagers, which it is, but because Ecuador is one of the richest 'bird-countries' on Earth, it is ultimately inevitable that some other

avian creatures will inadvertently slip into view at times. Neither VENT nor your trip leader can be held responsible for these annoying interruptions from a possible raptor, guan, parrot, quetzal, trogon, motmot, puffbird, jacamar, barbet, toucan, woodpecker, furnariid, antbird, cotinga, manakin, jay or other feathered 'nuisance.' Thank you for your understanding!

This tour is one in our series of Relaxed & Easy (R&E) tours. These tours are appropriate for participants who want a slower paced tour, with somewhat fewer hours in the field and light physical activity. They are ideal for persons who prefer a somewhat later start in the morning (typically 7:00 a.m.), a break after lunch and a shorter afternoon outing. They involve only short walks, usually not more than a half mile, and avoid difficult terrain.

March 10, Day 1: Arrival in Quito. Arriving participants will be met at the airport and transferred to our comfortable hotel. If you happen to be interested in sightseeing around the beautiful capital city of Quito (**the world's first UNESCO World Heritage Site** (9,000 ft. altitude) or in doing some craft and souvenir shopping, please plan to arrive a day or two in advance. This is also recommended in order to acclimate and to avoid complications in the event of flight delays and lost luggage. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements.

NIGHT: San José de Puenbo, Puenbo

March 11, Day 2: Birding the Antisana Area and Papallacta Pass to Guango Lodge, and then onward to Cabañas San Isidro. This morning, after a sumptuous buffet breakfast, we initiate Part I of our journey as we depart from our hotel and head eastward to the temperate zone just below the Antisana National Park area, about an hour or so away. Here we will search out a few key hummers: the amazing Giant Hummingbird (seven inches long!), Black-tailed & (maybe) Green-tailed trainbearers, Sparkling Violetear, Shining Sunbeam, and the high-elevation Ecuadorian Hillstar. Although there are few tanagers at this elevation, we may come across Blue-and-yellow & Scrub tanagers *en route* or on the hotel grounds before we depart, and with some good fortune... the colossal Andean Condor (well, okay, not a hummer/tanager!). We then continue northward, and again to the eastern ridge of the Andean cordillera, and over the often cold and 'tundra-like' páramo zone of Papallacta Pass, reaching a whopping 13,000 ft. in altitude before dropping continuously downslope. Surprisingly, there are quite a few 'new' species of hummingbirds and tanagers to be found throughout this general region. We may be lucky enough to find a few of them, including Blue-mantled Thornbill, Viridian Metaltail, Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager, and Black-backed Bush-Tanager among the possibilities. Depending on time, we will try to examine shrubby, second growth scrub habitats from the upper slopes of the central valley to just about timberline, *Polylepis* woodland, páramo shrub and grassland, continuing down into humid temperate forest, as we descend the eastern Andean slopes. Along this stretch, we will reach Guango Lodge by around midday for lunch a brief emersion into the insane frenzy of hummingbird action at the lodge's fabulous nectar feeders and with luck, some flock activity might spring up. Among the many possibilities to be found here, we will especially be watching for Sword-billed Hummingbird, Mountain Avocetbill (rare), Long-tailed Sylph, Collared Inca, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, the common Buff-tailed and Chestnut-breasted coronets, Tourmaline Sunangel, and White-bellied and Gorgeted woodstars, along with possibilities of Streaked Tuftedcheek, Gray-hooded Bush-Tanager, Blue-and-black Tanager and Hooded Mountain-Tanager, Slaty Brushfinch, along with Black-eared & Black-capped hemispinguses



Hooded Mountain-Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield



Inca (Green) Jay © Paul J. Greenfield

(actually, bonafide members of the tanager family), and Spectacled Whitestart. We will pull ourselves away from this incredible show to continue our journey onward to today's planned subtropical-zone destination—Cabañas San Isidro. Aside from its great birding, San Isidro is renowned for its fine cuisine, and after settling in to our rooms we may have some time to check out its restaurant's super active deck... just a sample before our checklist session and dinner. With some degree of luck, we may be fortunate to get to see the now famous 'San Isidro Mystery Owl', possibly right from the deck or along the entrance drive before turning in for the night.

NIGHT: Cabañas San Isidro, Cosanga

March 12, Day 3: Morning at Cabañas San Isidro; Then drive to Wildsumaco Lodge. We will have a full morning to enjoy this *hot-spot*. We will gather at the restaurant deck before breakfast where a veritable 'extravaganza' is sure to play out. The nectar feeders should be quite active and we will surely enjoy some of the same hummingbird species we may have seen at Guango Lodge yesterday, but with a few new possibilities: namely Tawny-bellied Hermit, Lesser Violetear, and Bronzy Inca. The moth light that is set up there should have begun to do its magic and as the morning brightens more-and-more species will appear. Inca Jays, Subtropical Caciques, Russet-backed Oropendolas, Masked Trogons, Olive-backed & Montane woodcreepers, Pearled Treerunner, Azara's Spinetail, Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant, Cinnamon, Golden-crowned & Pale-edged flycatchers, Smoke-colored Pewee, Black-billed Peppershrike, Brown-capped Vireo, Mountain Wren, Pale-eyed & Glossy-black thrushes, Common Chlorospingus, Blackburnian, Black-crested & Canada warblers, Summer Tanager, and Oleaginous Hemispingus, are just some of the candidates that have been recorded from this great vantage point. We will also be led down to a 'feeding station' where we will hopefully be fortunate enough to see one or two White-bellied Antpittas. After breakfast, we'll do a little roadside birding along the Las Caucheras Road that runs past San Isidro's entrance gate; who knows what we'll find, but it will be promising and it should be productive. Among our targets, we'll be watching out for Sickie-winged Guan, Southern Lapwing, a hawk or

eagle perhaps, Andean (Highland) Motmot, Golden-headed & Crested quetzals, Southern Emerald-Toucanet, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Crimson-mantled & Powerful woodpeckers, Red-billed & White-capped Parrots, Scaly-naped Amazon, Green-and-black Fruiteater, Barred Becard, Rufous-breasted Flycatcher, Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, Plain-tailed Wren, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, along with a whole new selection of tanagers, which could include Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager; Red-hooded, Saffron-crowned, Flame-faced & Beryl-spangled, among them, and with some good fortune, we might even come across a 'wild' band of White-capped Tanagers. We will return for an early lunch, pack up our gear and towards our second destination—Wildsumaco Lodge—which is nestled along a heavily forested ridge in the Amazonian foothills. As we advance, we will make a couple of stops to break-up the drive a bit and to, of course, see more species. We should arrive with plenty of time to settle in and even get to sample some great birding from their lodge deck—hummingbirds and who knows what else!

NIGHT: Wildsumaco Lodge, Sumaco

March 13, Day 4: Wildsumaco Lodge and Its Spectacular Birds. This 'birders' lodge is set within the fascinating Amazonian foothills and is home to an unbelievable variety of tanagers... and hummingbirds! We will have an entire day-and-a-half to hang out at their awesome nectar feeding station to enjoy, among the 20-25 hummers we may find here are: Green Hermit, White-tipped & Buff-tailed sicklebills, Black-throated Mango, Wire-crested Thorntail, Fawn-breasted, Violet-fronted & Black-throated brilliants, Gould's Jewelfront, Rufous-vented Whitetip, Equatorial Piedtail; Napo Sabrewing; Golden-tailed Sapphire; Many-spotted Hummingbird; Booted (Peruvian) Racket-tail; Violet-headed Hummingbird. A fantastic pre-breakfast option will be offered to visit (right adjacent to the lodge) the moth-light station that has been set up, where several normally difficult to locate forest understory dwellers show themselves like nowhere else. White-chested & Black-streaked puffbirds, Lined Antshrike, Plain Antvireo, Black-faced Antbird, Western Fire-eye, Yellow-breasted Antwren, Buff-fronted & Montane foliage-gleaners, Black-billed Treehunter, wood-wrens, warblers, and other species are all possible. We will also offer an optional outing to another 'feeding station' where Plain-backed & Ochre-breasted antpittas, White-crowned Tapaculo, and Speckled Nightingale-Thrush, along with other possibilities are often seen. We will also watch flowering shrubs and trees, and explore roadside habitat and a trail or two in search of hummingbird species that don't often visit feeders and tanagers that abound in this region. The tanager possibilities seem endless and could include Silver-beaked, Orange-eared, Blue-gray, Palm, Blue-necked, Spotted, Yellow-bellied, Paradise (Wow!), Bay-headed, Golden-eared, Green-and-gold, Golden, Swallow, Summer and Scarlet tanagers along with a 'pile' of other members (honeycreepers, etc.) of this extensive family. There is also a whole treasure trove of 'non-target' species to be found here—six species of toucans, Chestnut-fronted & Military macaws, Red-headed & Gilded barbets, and Coppery-chested Jacamar, and Yellow-tufted, & Crimson-crested woodpeckers, are just a small sample of our possibilities!

NIGHT: Wildsumaco Lodge, Sumaco

March 14, Day 5: Morning at Wildsumaco Lodge; Then, after an early lunch, we will retrace our way back over Papallacta Pass to the city of Quito After some optional pre-breakfast birding from the deck or close to the lodge, breakfast and a bit more birding to seek out species we may have missed previously in this rich area (surely there will be more to see!), we will enjoy an early lunch, pack up and initiate our ascent, up and over the eastern Andean slope, retracing our tracks for a late afternoon arrival at the capital city of Quito. We may make, time permitting, a possible birding stop or two at varying elevations in hopes of finding species we may have missed on our first day.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito



Green-and-gold Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield

March 15, Day 6: Drive to the Mindo Valley via Yanacocha Reserve and the *Paseo del Quinde* Ecoroute.

We will head out early this morning, initiating Part II of our adventure, to explore the western slope of the Andes. From Quito, we will drive up and over Pichincha Volcano, accompanied by photogenic panoramas and pastoral Andean vistas, to Yanacocha Reserve, at over 11,000 ft. The entire region is home to an abundant avifauna, including a number of regional endemics, and we will enjoy a pleasant morning walking through magical high-Andean elfin forest and scrubland at this very special site. This is a tried-and-true hummingbird/tanager heaven—or at least a part of it! Nectar and fruit feeders have been set up at Yanacocha and we will take time to enjoy the activity which will be eye-catching and even dizzying at times, to say the least. The unbelievable Sword-billed Hummingbird, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Sapphire-vented & Golden-breasted pufflegs, Rainbow-bearded Thorntail, Great Sapphirewing, Mountain Velvetbreast, Tyrian Metaltail, and Shining Sunbeam are all possible here as are Scarlet-bellied, Hooded and Black-chested mountain-tanagers—all seeable at point-blank! We may want to enjoy our field-lunch here (depending on weather and timing); we will then continue downslope along the *Paseo del Quinde* Ecoroute (translated roughly as “Hummingbird Drive”), where we will make a key stop at Bellavista Cloud Forest Lodge, perched on a knife-sharp ridge that overlooks the Tandayapa Valley. Here, the impressive nectar feeders bring us face-to-face with yet another *mass* of hummers, including Collared Inca, White-booted Racket-tail and Gorgeted Sunangel, along with periodic visits by a few Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers. We will have to pry ourselves from this frenzy to continue to our west-slope destination and ‘center of operations’ for the next few days, but we will be on constant watch for the eventual mixed-species foraging flocks that could hold Blue-capped, Grass-green & Blue-and-black tanagers, among other species.

NIGHT: Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo



Sword-billed Hummingbird © Paul J. Greenfield

March 16-17, Days 7-8: Full Days in the ‘Greater’ Mindo Area. We will wake each morning to the whirr of literally thousands of very special wings as we now find ourselves in the heart of Ecuador’s Chocó bioregional endemism (meaning unique species found nowhere else). The grounds around our lodge are just unbelievable and we will have ample time to enjoy a parade of spectacular hummingbird and tanager species that reside here. Each day, for those who just cannot pull themselves away from this paradise, we will offer the option to remain at the lodge, enjoying the feeders and surrounding forest and gardens, or join our group for jaunts to a few key, nearby and important sites. We will want to visit Milpe Bird Sanctuary, ‘San Tadeo Birding,’ Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary and (possibly) Suamox, along with the *Paseo del Quinde* Ecoroute among other possibilities, with each site offering additional experiences and an array of different species. Some of the many possibilities we’ll be searching for include the following hummingbirds—Bronzy, White-whiskered, Baron’s, Stripe-throated & Tawny-bellied hermits; Band-tailed Barbthroat; White-tipped Sicklebill; Wedge-billed Hummingbird; Green-fronted Lancebill; Green Thorntail; Green-crowned, Fawn-breasted & Empress brilliants; Green-crowned Woodnymph; Purple-chested Hummingbird; Green & Brown violetears; Western Emerald; Andean Emerald; Brown & Collared incas; Buff-tailed & (the glowing) Velvet-purple coronets; Violet-tailed Sylph; Purple-bibbed Whitetip; Booted Racket-tail; Gorgeted Sunangel; White-bellied, Purple-throated, & Little woodstars; and tanagers—White-shouldered, Tawny-crested White-lined, Lemon-rumped, Fawn-breasted, Glistening-green, Blue-gray, Palm, Golden-naped, Black-capped, Gray-and-gold, Golden-hooded, Blue-necked, Rufous-throated, Beryl-spangled, Metallic-green, Rufous-winged, Bay-headed, Flame-faced, Blue-whiskered (rare), Golden, Emerald, Silver-throated, Swallow, and Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, among quite a few other members of this diverse family. This area holds one of the richest montane avifaunas found anywhere!

NIGHTS: Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo



Rufous-throated Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield

March 18, Day 9: Return to Quito via Amagusa-Mashpi Reserve and Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve. We will depart this morning after breakfast on our last field day and initiate our return to Quito, but first by heading farther westward to the Amagusa-Mashpi Reserve, which is owned and managed by a local Ecuadorian couple. This is a special place where nectar and, especially, plantain banana feeders have been set up; targets here include Glistening-green, Rufous-throated & Moss-backed tanagers, along with Golden-collared Honeycreeper. The incredible Chocó regional cloud forest in this area is quite amazing and we will also take some time to look for special endemics like Pacific Tuftedcheek, Uniform Treehunter, Black Solitaire, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, and Indigo Flowerpiercer, among the many possibilities. We will then return eastward to visit a local friend at Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve to check out his unbelievably active nectar and fruit feeders. This is an impressive site that offers mind-boggling activity and photo ops, if we haven't had enough already! We will then initiate our final push to the big city. This evening we will enjoy our farewell dinner along with the memories of a most memorable extravaganza!

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito



Glistening-green Tanager © Paul J. Greenfield

March 19, Day 10: Departure for Home. A transfer will be provided to the Quito Airport in time for all departures.

RELAXED AND EASY (R&E) TOUR INFORMATION: Relaxed & Easy (R&E) tours are similar to “regular” VENT tours, but set to a slower pace, with somewhat fewer hours in the field and lighter physical activity. They are ideal for participants who prefer a somewhat later start in the morning, a little lengthier afternoon break, and a shorter afternoon outing. Walking is limited to short walks of usually not more than a mile, avoiding difficult terrain. A typical day will begin with breakfast around 6:30-7:00 a.m., followed by birding until about noon. We will attempt to have lunch every day between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m., followed by an afternoon break (when possible). We will resume birding for a couple of hours in the mid-afternoon. On most days we will attempt to

provide 45 minutes to an hour for personal time before dinner. We will have dinner between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. Strenuous physical activity will be avoided, and all walking will be limited to well-marked roads and trails, excluding uneven or rough terrain.

Relaxed & Easy (R&E) refers only to the slower pace of a tour, not to a participant's birding skills or ability. Accordingly, birders of all levels of ability are welcome, as they are on typical VENT tours; R&E tours should not be mistaken as tours for beginning birders.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 8 participants.

TOUR LEADER: Paul Greenfield



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.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$4,295** per person in double occupancy from Quito. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 10, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leader. The tour fee 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 **\$550**.

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 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 <https://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 (October 11, 2022) 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 **\$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 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.**

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| <u>If participant cancels:</u> | <u>Participant's refund will be:</u> |
| 180 days or more before departure date | Participant's deposit minus \$500* |
| 179 to 151 days before departure date | No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded |
| 150 days or less before departure date | 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. ***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:

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/>.

CLIMATE: During the tour we will experience the rainy season on the west slope, and dry season on the east slope. The rain is mostly in short intervals and at night, and it rains even in the dry season on the much wetter east slope. The temperature is mostly in the upper 70s by day (perhaps the lower 80s on one day at one lower elevation on the west slope) and upper 50s at night. However, at higher elevations the temperatures can be as low as the 40s on occasion, and you should be prepared to layer for warmth. There is a possibility that we shall be out in at least some mist or light rain; therefore, a good umbrella or rain jacket is essential.

CLOTHING: Dress is casual or informal throughout. 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 striking patterns that frighten the birds. Also important are a hat and sunscreen for sun protection, rain jacket, poncho or umbrella. Good footwear is essential, and for this we strongly suggest sturdy waterproof hiking boots. In any case, your footwear for the field should at the very least be rated “water resistant,” as this is a damp climate and even the dew on the roadside grass will get your feet wet!

At higher elevations the temperatures can be as low as the 40s on occasion (on three days of the tour) and you should be prepared to layer for warmth. 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 on both slopes, so a good umbrella or rain jacket is essential.

CURRENCY: The U.S. dollar is the currency in Ecuador. Cash is needed only for your personal expenses, such as bar bills, laundry, and souvenirs. It is strongly advised that most of your money be in U.S. Dollars. MasterCard, Visa, and Diner’s Club are widely accepted in Quito, as are ATM cards. American Express cards are not always accepted.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Ecuador is required. Visas are not required for entry by United States citizens. Non United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag. Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

HEALTH: 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.

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: The world has been in the grip of a pandemic since early 2020, a result of the uncontrolled spread of SARS-CoV-2, the novel coronavirus that causes the illness COVID-19. COVID-19 is transmitted through person-to-person contact, almost always through inhaling respiratory aerosols or droplets exuded from an infected person. Common signs of COVID-19 illness include fever or chills, fatigue, shortness of breath, cough, loss of taste or

smell, and more. Based on what is known about the disease, COVID-19 is far more serious than seasonal flu. Few places in the world have been unaffected. The impact on travel has been substantial, as demonstrated by the fact that VENT did not operate a tour between late March 2020 and late April 2021. The development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines, particularly in the United States, has allowed VENT to return to tour operations. We emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. **With this in mind, VENT instituted a COVID-19 vaccination requirement.** All tour participants and tour leaders must be fully vaccinated in order to travel with us while we are still in a declared public health emergency. In accordance with the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), full vaccination is defined as an individual being 14 days beyond having received the required amount of vaccine for reaching full immunity to the degree specific vaccines confer. In the United States, so far, this means either the two-shot sequence for the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines or the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Proof of vaccination must be provided to our office at least one week before the start of the tour and kept with you while on the tour. Because the world is a very different place than it was before the pandemic, we've made a number of important adjustments to our processes to ensure that our tours can operate as safely as possible. 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. Our decision and policy are firmly rooted in the latest CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. As we move forward, VENT will continue to follow the latest information from the CDC and will update our policy accordingly. 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>.

We strongly recommend the use of Insect Shield® clothing on this tour. 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.

Insect Repellents – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.

- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-for-you#search

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).

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 – free WiFi at San José de Puenbo and Hotel Quito; internet access available at Séptimo Paraíso; sporadic availability at Wildsumaco; usually available at San Isidro

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 Paul Greenfield. *The Birds of Ecuador*. Cornell University Press. June, 2001. Primary 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.

Hilty, Steven L. and William L. Brown. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. An alternative field guide but does not have everything known from Ecuador.

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 ft., with adequate illustrations, but too large to carry and expensive.

Birds, Additional Reading:

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd, 1994. 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, 1989.

Restall, Robin; Rodner, Clemencia and Miguel Lentino. *Birds of Northern South America*. An identification guide. Volume 2: Plates and Maps. Helms Field Guides. 2006.

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 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 July 20, 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.