



## **Itinerary and Trip Description: Birding Patagonia Argentinian-Tierra Del Fuego and Bit of Buenos Aires**

### **Day 1: Arrival Day and bonus Birding Late PM.**

The entire group is getting in today. Please see arrival plans for all. After the participants arrive at our hotel we will have lunch as a group. Our guide and local partner will join us in the lobby at 12:30 PM and we will go to lunch. This lunch price is not included in the tour.

At 2:00 PM, Our guide will meet us and we will do some birding at the 350 hectare Constanera Sur Reserve near central Buenos Aires until late afternoon. This is an excellent introduction to Pampas birds and wildlife. Habitats include marshes, lagoons and a bit of forest and grassland birding. Our target birds here will be White-tufted Grebe, Black-necked Swan, Rosy -bellied Pochard, Silver Teal, Wattled Jacana, Monk Parakeet, Campo Flicker, Guira Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cardinal, Grey-necked Wood Rail Picazuro Pigeon, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Checkered Woodpecker, Black-and-Rufous Warbling-finch, Pampas finch, and Masked Gnatcatchers and others of note.

At about 7 PM, all the birders that have arrived for this afternoon tour to Constanera Sur, will have a fine dinner with your guide. He will do the daily checklist with them and announce the plans for tomorrow.

Our hotel for a good night will be one of our preferred hotels in Buenos Aires.

*Meals in Package for Today: Only Supper.*



## **Day 2: Entre Ríos Birding: Terrific Start to Argentina, Driving Across the Parana River to Bird Entre Ríos Province.**

After an early 6:00 AM start we will first visit Otamendi Nature Reserve, a 3000 hectare reserve located along the shores of the Parana River. The reserve protects grasslands, marshes, riverside forest and woods. After crossing the Parana Delta we'll explore the Northern delta marshes and Espinal woodlands of Entre Rios province. This mosaic of different habitats holds an incredible diversity of birds. We expect to find many species of heron, Long-winged Harrier, Limpkin and Giant Wood Rail, Spectacled Tyrant, Great Pampa-Finch and Scarlet-headed Blackbird. Also possible are Curve-billed and Straight-billed Reedhaunters, Many-colored Rush-Tyrant and Long-tailed Reed-Finch, among others. The thorny woodlands and gallery forests are home to, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Stripe-crowned Spinetail, Rufous-capped Antshrike, Red-rumped Warbling-Finch, Crested Doradito, Austral Thrush, and Giant Wood Rail, Once in Entre Rios, we expect to find, Southern Screamer, Savanna Hawk, White-fronted Woodpeckers, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Brown Cacholote, Lark-like Brushrunner, Firewood-gatherer, Short-billed Canastero, Chotoy Spinetail, White-naped Xenopsaris and Crowned Slaty Flycatcher, among others.

By about 8:00 PM, they will have supper together with our guide. He will do the bird checklist with the group tonight, and confirm plans for the morning.

Tonight the group will be staying at a nice hotel in Gualeguaychú.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

## **Day 3: Full Day Birding Entre Rios Woodlands, Grasslands and Wetlands before Returning to Buenos Aires for the Evening.**

Today we will make excursions to nearby marshes and Espinal Woodlands looking for area specialties in this wonderful birding site, in the province of Entre Rios.

Some of the species we are aiming to find today include Greater Rhea and Red-winged Tinamou and 2 species of Ibis. Also Long-winged Harrier, Savanna Hawk, White Woodpeckers; Scimitar-Billed Woodcreeper; Gilded Sapphire; Wren-like Rushbird; Brown Cacholote; Lark-like Brushrunner; Tufted Tit-Spinetails; Rufous-capped Antshrike; Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant; Warbling Doradito; Yellowbrowed Tyrant; White Monjita; White-naped Xenopsaris. Spotted Nothura, White-throated Hummingbird, Firewood-Gatherer, Rusty-collared Seedeater, Gray Monjita, White-browed Blackbird, Long-tailed Reed-Finch, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant and Whistling Heron Slaty-flycatcher; Diademed Tanager; Rufous-browed Peppershrike; Ultramarine Grosbeak; and Scarlet-headed Blackbird. Many more birds can be expected as well here.

By about 7:30 PM, they will have supper together with our guide. He will do the bird checklist with the group this evening, and confirm plans for the morning.

Tonight the group will be staying at one of our preferred hotels in Buenos Aires.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

**Day 4: AM Flights to Trelew; Drive to Punta Tombo; PM Drive to Puerto Madryn.**

On our first morning in Patagonia, we'll drive through the steppes toward Punta Tombo, a rocky beach that bears the largest colony of Magellanic Penguins in the world. This place is teeming with other coastal and marine birds. After birding here, in the afternoon we continue our drive North toward Puerto Madryn, the gateway to Peninsula Valdes, for a two night stay.

At around 7:00 PM, we will have a fine dinner together, where our guide will do the bird checklist with the group and confirm plans for the morning.

Tonight the group will be staying at a nice and comfortable hotel in Puerto Madryn.

*Meals in Package for Today:  
Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*



## **Day 5: Full Day visit to Valdez Peninsula; Afternoon Drive back to Puerto Madryn.**

We will have an early start and drive to Valdez Peninsula where we will spend a full day of birding in this UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is a spectacular place with remote overlooks and marine mammals including the Southern Elephant Seal and South American Sea Lion. Orcas are seen here as well.

- From the overlook at Punta Pyramides, we will look for the Snowy Sheathbill, which winters here. At this time of year most of them will have migrated southward. There are usually one or two still present.
- Here we will also add some nice of nice coastal species, including a variety of cormorants, terns, and oystercatchers.
- The nearby scrub, grassland, dune and wetland habitats harbor numerous Hawk, American Kestrel, Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail, the endemic Patagonian Canastero Austral Negrito, Rusty-backed Monjita, Short-billed Pipit, Patagonian Yellow-Finch and often a few surprises as well.
- We will bird most of the day here.

We will return late this evening to our hotel in Muerto Madryn. Along the way back we will stop for dinner in a restaurant and, if quiet enough, will do our daily bird checklist here.

Before heading to bed, our guide will review the morning plans with the group that will include plans for breakfast and a morning departure time.

Tonight the group will be staying at a nice and comfortable hotel in Puerto Madryn.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

## **Day 6: AM Early Morning Drive to San Antonio del Oeste; PM Birding Las Grutas.**

This morning we'll drive north toward San Antonio Oeste, and while the landscape changes from steppes to arid scrubland we'll make a few stops outside of town on the way to look for new birds. The San Antonio and Las Grutas area has proven to be one of the most exciting birding spots in all of Patagonia. At least five rarely seen Argentine endemics are present



here: Darwin's Nothura, Sandy Gallito, White-throated Cacholote, Carbonated Sierra-Finch and Yellow Cardinal. Irregularly, a sixth endemic, the Cinnamon Warbling-Finch, can also be found here. The area boasts a tremendous roost and nesting site for Burrowing Parakeets (local and persecuted in many places)

and many other sought-after species. In the region there are splendid aquatic habitats as well.

The Yellow Cardinal, a rare and rapidly declining species, is listed as endangered in the ICBP Red Data Book, as well as the Sandy Gallito is local and infrequently seen. It also must rank as one of the most charming little birds imaginable, running rapidly like a wind-up toy, climbing up through bushes, popping up to sing, then climbing down again, and racing off across the sand, although it is usually very difficult to get a good look at this little mouse like speedster.

After dinner and before bed, our guide will go through the bird checklist with the group. He will also review the plans for the next day, including morning wake up and breakfast plans.

Tonight we will be at our preferred hotel in Las Grutas.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

### **Day7: Full Day Birding “Las Grutas”.**

We plan to visit several areas around Las Grutas today, and will concentrate specifically on seeing some of the endemic and nearly-endemic species of this interesting area.

The arid "Monte" is an endemic biome in Argentina, and here at Las Grutas, it dominates the surroundings. Here we'll look for the bird specialties and endemics of this brushy scrubland that grows abundantly near our hotel.

In addition to the species already mentioned, we will be searching for Elegant Crested-Tinamou, Least Seedsnipe, Spot-winged Pigeon, the Lesser, or Magellanic, race of the Great Horned Owl (rare), Short-eared Owl (also rare), Checkered Woodpecker, Band-tailed Earthcreeper, Scale-throated Earthcreeper, Short-billed Canastero, Sharp-billed Canastero, Patagonian Canastero, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant (here at southern end of range), Lesser Shrike-Tyrant, Black-crowned Monjita, Rusty-backed Monjita, White-tipped Plantcutter, Patagonian Mockingbird, White-banded Mockingbird, Common Diuca-Finch, Ringed Warbling-Finch (surprisingly common), and Golden-billed Saltator.



The rare Hudson's Black-Tyrant breeds here, although the similar-looking White-winged Black-Tyrant is also present.

There are often good mud and tidal flats exposed where we can see many aquatic species, especially Baird's Sandpiper and White-rumped Sandpiper,

plus gulls, terns and the lovely Two-banded Plover.

By about 5 PM/6 PM, we will be back at the hotel for supper.

We will spend the night again at our preferred hotel in Las Grutas.

Around supper time, our guide will go through the bird checklist with the group. He will also review the plans for the next day, including morning wake up and breakfast plans.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

**Day8: AM Drive Back to Trelew, with a Morning Flight to Ushuaia; PM Le Martial Glacier visit.**

Today, during the early morning, we will leave Las Grutas behind and drive back to Trelew in time to take our flight to Ushuaia, in the island of Tierra del Fuego where we will be staying for the next two days.



We will be picked up by our Ushuaia-based driver at 2:30 PM, and we will stop for a quick bite to eat to support some birding this afternoon.

We have two full days to explore the region of Ushuaia, situated at the southern end of Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego. Which is part of a great number of islands in the area known as Tierra del Fuego, or “Land of Fire,” This is a truly spectacular region of rolling grasslands, snowy mountains, glaciers, and beech forests.

We will start our first full afternoon heading up towards the Martial Glacier. Good birding will present itself as we drive higher in altitude to above treeline. Above treeline, we will enjoy a nice one mile walk, and will be looking for Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrant, Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant, Yellow-bridled Finch, and look for the very difficult to find White-bellied Seedsnipe

This evening we will be at the Hotel Mi Vida, Ushuaia. At supper, our guide will complete the bird checklist and review morning wake up plans and birding plans for the next day.

Note: After checking with some guides in the National Park about recent success in finding the Rufous-legged Owl, our guide will survey the group for their interest in paying the extra permit fee to see this species. There is a chance the owl has not been seen recently, as well as bad weather can make this expedition fruitless. If there is enough interest it will likely require 3 or 4 participants. If the interest and weather is right,

Our guide will try to set this tour up for following evening. A special permit is needed here and an additional cost can be \$60 to \$100 per person. We will do our best to make this opportunity possible if there is enough interest.

Before heading to bed, we will review the morning plans with the group, including plans for breakfast and a morning departure time. Our guide will also review birding plans for the next day.

We will spend the night at a nice and comfortable hotel in Ushuaia.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

### **Day 9: AM Birding Tierra del Fuego National Park; PM Beagle Channel Boat Tour.**

On our first full day here, we will visit Tierra del Fuego National Park in the morning. We will have another early start, as we will aim to reach the gates of the National Park at an early hour. We will bird throughout the park in the morning.

The diversity of birds in Tierra del Fuego is low, but most of them are found nowhere else in the world but here and in a few adjacent parts of southern Patagonia and Chile. Birds that we should see include the spectacular south temperate geese, Upland Goose, Kelp Goose, and Ashy-headed Goose, plus Magellanic Woodpecker, Magellanic Tapaculo, White throated Treerunner, Dark-bellied Cinclodes, Thorn-tailed Rayadito, Fire-eyed Diucon, Rufous-tailed Plantcutter, Austral Thrush, Patagonian Sierra-Finch, Austral Blackbird and Black-chinned Siskin.

The cold oceanic waters surrounding Tierra del Fuego are extremely rich in food, consequently many interesting seabirds may be seen from the shoreline and on the Beagle Channel boat trip we will take in the afternoon tomorrow.



In the afternoon, depending upon our success the afternoon

before, we will take a ski-lift up to the highland basin. In addition to searching for the Yellow-bridled Finch and Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrant, we will have unparalleled views of the Beagle Channel and the southern end of Tierra del Fuego.

This evening we will be at a nice and comfortable hotel in Ushuaia. At supper, our guide will complete the bird checklist and review morning wake up plans and birding plans for the next day. Your guide will also clarify plans for trying for the Rufous-legged Owl tonight (assuming there is enough interest).

Note that on one of the two nights that we are in Ushuaia we will offer, weather permitting, a late night owling trip into Tierra del Fuego National Park to search for the Rufous-legged Owl. Because the weather is often rainy and because of the late departure hour and the time required to search for this bird, we offer this as an option only. The cost of this excursion (which can last from 9:30 or 10:00 PM until after midnight) is not included in the trip price.

During this afternoon we might board a catamaran for a boat trip on the Beagle Channel. We'll visit several important island breeding colonies of cormorants and get a fine panorama of the entire eastern half of the Beagle Channel

Our route today also visits a small breeding colony of Magellanic Penguins at the southeast end of the channel, and for the last decade a small founding colony of Gentoo Penguins has also nested here.

This trip is very scenic with a sweeping array of snow-clad mountains from start to finish and a fine overview of the wildlife of the Beagle Channel. Though some wildlife has diminished in numbers, as whales are seldom seen in the channel now, we will see Upland Geese, Kelp Geese, good numbers of Flightless Steamer-Ducks, occasional Flying Steamer-Ducks, tiny Magellanic Diving-Petrels scattering across the water and Black-browed Albatrosses. Magellanic Cormorants, Imperial Cormorants, as well as Chilean Skuas and Dark-bellied Cinclodes are also present. Other possibilities include Southern Fulmar, Snowy Sheathbill, though most will have migrated southward to breed by the beginning of December, Blackish Oystercatcher, Magellanic Oystercatcher and Blackish Cinclodes.



At some point this early afternoon, we will spend some time visiting the municipal dock facility where we hope to see the White-throated Caracara, a species that is quite local here. In addition, there are always hundreds other birds, mostly gulls and cormorants. Our guide will help us sort out the Kelp Gulls, Dolphin Gulls, Rock (Magellanic) Cormorants, Imperial Cormorants, Chilean Skuas and other key species present.

By late afternoon, we will return to Ushuaia.



Before heading to bed, our guide will review the morning plans with the group including departure time the next morning. We will also review birding plans for the next day and do the bird checklist.

We will spend the night at a nice and comfortable hotel in Ushuaia.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

**Day 10: Early AM Birding  
Ushuaia, Flight to El Calafate; PM  
Birding Laguna Nimez.**



Before our flight to Calafate we will have some time to explore the vicinity of our hotel in Ushuaia, we will be looking for any species that may have eluded us the previous days or perhaps trying for better views. After our arrival in El Calafate we will go to visit the superb Laguna Nimez, where we will be looking for: Lesser Rhea, Black-necked and Coscoroba Swan; Upland, Ashy-headed and Ruddy-headed Goose; Flying Steamer-Duck; Chiloe Wigeon; Black-headed and Lake Duck; Red-gartered, Red-fronted and White-winged Coot; Magellanic Plover; Magellanic Oystercatcher; Chimango Caracara; Scale-throated Earthcreeper; Dark-bellied Cinclodes; Austral and Sharp-billed Canastero; Fire-eyed Diucon; Austral Thrush; Patagonian Mockingbird; Patagonian Yellow-Finch; Austral Blackbird and Black-chinned Siskin.

By late afternoon, we will return to El Calafate.

Before heading to bed, we will review the morning plans with the group (including plans for breakfast and a morning departure time). Our guide will also review birding plans for the next day.

We will spend the night at our Hotel in El Calafate.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

**Day 11: Full Day Excursion to Los Glaciares National Park and Perito Moreno Glacier.**

We will want to time our breakfast and morning wake up to assure we are at the gates of Los Glaciares National Park as the gates open. Los Glaciares National Park is perhaps Argentina's most spectacular national park, which we will see is really saying something.

We plan to spend most of our day here, including a visit to the park's most famous glacier, Perito Moreno. Newly-constructed park trails permit a

breathtakingly close approach to this enormous glacier. It is a photographers paradise, and usually we are able to witness huge chunks of ice calving into the lake.

The park hosts a fine list of exciting birds, including Upland Goose, Flying Steamer-Duck, Chilean Flamingo, Black-faced Ibis, Andean Condor, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Austral Pygmy-Owl, Chilean Flicker, Austral Parakeet, Dark-bellied Cinclodes, Thorn-tailed Rayadito, Fire-eyed Diucon, Rufous-tailed Plantcutter, Austral Thrush, Patagonian Sierra-Finch, Austral Blackbird and Black-chinned Siskin. The rare Bronze-winged (Spectacled) Duck also nests in marshy wetlands higher up and is occasionally seen. The park is an excellent locality for Magellanic Woodpeckers as well.

In beautiful high country grasslands outside the park, we can find both Least Seedsnipe and occasionally Gray-breasted Seedsnipe. The broad-but-shallow streams often teem with many kinds of waterfowl, canasteros, ground-tyrants, sierra-finches, and occasionally the rare Great Shrike-Tyrant.

Throughout the day, we will be watching for Patagonian Tinamou (rare), as well as Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant and Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch.

We will return to the hotel by 6:00 PM, and have supper shortly thereafter. At supper, our guide will review the bird checklist with the group and confirm morning plans and birding plans for the next day.

Tonight we will be staying at a Hotel in El Calafate.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

### **Day 12: Birding in El Calafate Area: Focusing on Any Species We May Have Missed and Midmorning transfer to our Buenos Aires Flight.**



Birding today depends upon our guide's reliable judgment on how to focus on any species we may have missed the rest of the trip and based upon what can reasonably be found. Some of the choices today will be dependent upon the wind and other weather factors. No matter, we will certainly find a way to spend the morning birding and enjoying this beautiful area.

We will also be searching for the locally-distributed and iconic, Magellanic Plover. This strange shorebird that is so unusual it is placed in a family of its own.

We will spend at least one or two hours at a nearby lake, which hosts a number interesting species. The lake is near town

and will provide us a good chance to see Andean Ruddy-Duck; Lake Duck; Red Shoveler; Yellow-billed Pintail, Chiloé Wigeon, one or more kinds of coots, Cinereous Harrier and a variety of gulls and shorebirds, as well as the ubiquitous Austral Negrito.

As we were blessed with a late flight, we will be able to squeeze in some additional birding today which will depend upon the weather. We will need to be to the airport during late afternoon, and we will likely need to eat before getting to the airport. Our guide will do the bird checklist with the group. Here we will be able to plan a cash stop, so that you can tip your guide and the driver.

Upon arrival in Buenos Aires, and before departing the group, our guide will confirm the airport transfer plans for January 25<sup>th</sup>.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

### **Day13: Departure Summary**

Clients fly out today. See Departure Plans for more details.