

BIRD TREKS

BIRDING ARGENTINA'S NORTHWEST

Tuesday, 9 October through Tuesday, 23 October 2012, 15 days and 14 nights
This includes your two travel days to and from Argentina.

Northwestern Argentina is a land full of spectacular landscapes and with a vast cultural heritage. Remnants of buildings and roads from the 'Great Inca Empire of the Sun' are commonly seen. Many cultural events and pre-Hispanic rituals, such as the one in honor of the 'Pacha Mama' (Mother Earth), are still celebrated by the locals. Andean music is heard everywhere and people play their traditional instruments. This incredibly varied region has a great diversity of natural habitats, ranging from Yungas Cloudforest to dry Chaco Woodlands. The three provinces in the extreme northwestern part of Argentina, Jujuy, Salta, and Tucuman, host some pristine representatives of these habitats, all very valuable to birders to observe both diversity and good numbers of native species.

Forming a wedge along the southern Andean chains of Bolivia and northwestern Argentina, the Yungas Cloudforest supports one of the greatest biological diversities in the Neotropics. It harbors a wide variety of forests and woodlands, each hosting its own unique community of flora and fauna, and all varying according with their altitudinal ranges. Wildlife is abundant in this humid environment. Ferns, bromeliads, and other epiphytic plants are particularly stunning and widespread here. This biological treasure is well protected within the boundaries of several national parks and nature reserves and we plan to explore it thoroughly in different areas. Just south the Humahuaca Valley lies the small village of Yala and the Yala River, which is bordered by lush Yungas Cloudforest. Exploring this area is a must for birders, since it is here that chances are high to find such unique species as **Rufous-throated Dipper**, **Torrent Duck**, **Red-faced Guan**, and **Lyre-tailed Nightjar**.



Andean Avocet -- Luis Segura, Trogon Tours

A local reserve just above Yala protects a stand of pure Alder forest, offering great chances to visit yet another habitat with its specialty wildlife. Continuing north and up to higher elevations, we will leave behind the Yungas and the Alder forest to enter the pre-Puna. The Andes in this part of Argentina are very dry, but they are crossed by a series of humid valleys, with Humahuaca standing out for its unique setting. Nestled amidst spectacular rock formations of the most incredible and diverse colors, this is the heart of one of the richest cacti flora on Earth, and home to a wide array of birds, mammals, and other wildlife. Lake Pozuelos Natural Monument, a mountain-ringed basin with shallow brackish water, lies some 90 km north of Abra Pampa, in the heart of the Puna. It harbors thousands of Andean, Chilean, and Puna Flamingoes, so we hope to witness the spectacle of large concentrations of these creatures amidst the



White-fronted Woodpecker - - Luis Segura

solitude and grandeur of High Andean landscape. After visiting the Humahuaca Valley area, we will drive back into the Province of Salta, where we will explore the Chaco habitats. The Chaco is a very special ecosystem, mainly thorny woodland, that covers most of northernmost Argentina, and it is well divided into a dry, a montane, and a wet area, each of them with different flora and fauna. We will spend three days exploring the Chaco, searching for its unique birds.

No birding tour to northwestern Argentina would be complete without visiting the Andean habitats of the famous Cachi Road, an area well-reputed among birders the world over for the quantity and quality of bird species present here. We will follow this road on our way to Los Cardones National Park, looking for birds like **Aplomado Falcon, Andean Flicker, Rock Earthcreeper, White-tipped Plantcutter, Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, White-winged Black-Tyrant, Black Siskin, Rufous-sided Warbling-Finch,** and the localized **Rufous-bellied Saltator.**

The last part of our journey will take us to the south of Salta and into the Province of Tucuman, to explore two wonderful habitats: the Monte at the Calchaqui Valleys, and the mountains of the Aconquija. The latter is home to several specialties including **White-browed Tapaculo, White-winged Cinclodes, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Paramo Pipit, Buff-breasted Earthcreeper, Cordilleran and Puno Canasteros, Gray-hooded Parakeet, Slender-billed Miner,** and three endemics: **Tucuman Mountain-Finch, Yellow-striped Brush-Finch,** and **Moreno's Ground-Dove.**

YOUR TOUR *ITINERARY* AT A GLANCE . . .

Bird Treks Northwestern Argentina Tour, 9 - 23 October 2012

Day	Date	Program	Overnight	Meals
1	9 Oct, Tue	Depart for Argentina.		
2	10 Oct, Wed	Arrival to Buenos Aires. Depending on arrival time, tour to Costanera Sur.	Buenos Aires	D
3	11 Oct, Thu	Flight to Tucumán and drive to Tafí del Valle.	Tafí del Valle	B/L/D
4	12 Oct, Fri	Birding in Tafí del Valle area.	Tafí del Valle	B/L/D
5	13 Oct, Sat	Drive from Tafí del Valle to Cafayate.	Cafayate	B/L/D
6	14 Oct, Sun	Drive from Cafayate to Cabra Corral.	Cabra Corral	B/L/D
7	15 Oct, Mon	Full day birding the Cachi Road.	Cabra Corral	B/L/D
8	16 Oct, Tue	Drive from Cabra Corral to the Calilegua area, birding the dry Chaco on the way.	Libertador General San Martín	B/L/D
9	17 Oct, Wed	Full day birding the Yungas at Calilegua National Park.	Libertador General San Martín	B/L/D
10	18 Oct, Thu	Drive from Libertador General San Martín to Purmamarca.	Purmamarca	B/L/D
11	19 Oct, Fri	Drive to the high Andes.	La Quiaca	B/L/D
12	20 Oct, Sat	Full day birding the High Puna habitats.	La Quiaca	B/L/D
13	21 Oct, Sun	Drive from La Quiaca to Yala.	Yala	B/L/D
14	22 Oct, Mon	Drive from Yala to the local airport and flight to Buenos Aires.		
15	23 Oct, Tue	Return home after a wonderful two weeks in Argentina!		

YOUR DETAILED *ITINERARY* . . .

Depart from your home airport for Buenos Aires on **DAY 1**.

Upon your arrival our meeting point is the Airport of the City of Buenos Aires on **DAY 2**, where you'll be received by your Trogon Tours' leader.

On **DAY 3** we will fly to the city of Tucumán, and from there drive to Tafí del Valle, where we will have our first contact with the Yungas Cloudforest. It is here where we will have good chances to see one of the most colorful Argentine endemic birds, the **Yellow-striped Brush-Finch**, and some additional spectacular birds like **Torrent Duck**.

We will spend **DAY 4** birding the montane forest and Andean grasslands in the vicinity of Tafí del Valle, looking for birds such as the near-endemic **Tucuman Mountain-Finch**.

On **DAY 5** we will head toward Cafayate, in the Province of Salta. We will cross the dry, high Andean pass of 'El Infiernillo' and a diversity of dry Andean habitats on our way there. We will make frequent stops along the road to search for a great variety of birds including some endemics like **Sandy Gallito**, **Steinbach's Canastero**, **Cinnamon Warbling-Finch**, and **White-throated Cacholote**.

We will spend the morning of **DAY 6** birding the Monte habitat, looking for endemics and specialties. In the afternoon we will drive through the vineyards of Cafayate, enjoying the stunning views of Quebrada de las Conchas, toward Cabra Corral, where we'll spend the following two nights.

On **DAY 7** we will visit one of the most famous birding locations in southern South America, the 'Cuesta del Obispo' also known as the 'Cachi Road'. The great diversity of habitats here includes Yungas Cloudforest, cacti scrubland, and high Andean grasslands. **Andean Condors**, **Plain-colored Seedeater**, the rare **Rufous-bellied Saltator**, and **Maquis Canastero** are all possible in this region.

We will leave the area of Cabra Corral in the morning of **DAY 8** and drive toward the Province of Jujuy, where we are going to spend the following two nights in the City of Libertador General San Martín. The drive there is very scenic and we will have the chance to explore the dry Chaco habitats on the way. Some birds we expect to see include **Chaco Chachalaca**, **Suiriri Flycatcher**, **Black-legged Seriema**, and **Chaco Puffbird**.



On **DAY 9** we will explore one of the few areas devoted to protect the Yungas Cloud Forest in Argentina: Calilegua National Park. Throughout this day we will stop frequently at different altitudes to explore the forest and search for its unique bird life.

Pucará de Tilcara - Jujuy

-- Lucas Marti, Trogon Tours

We will leave the Calilegua area in the morning of **DAY 10** to drive up to the Humahuaca Valley, in the dry Andean habitats of Jujuy. En route we will cross many different ecosystems, with chances to find some special birds such as **Rufous-throated Dipper**. We will spend the night in the village of Purmamarca.

On the morning of **DAY 11** we will drive to the northernmost city of Argentina, La Quiaca, located on the border between this country and Bolivia. The road to La Quiaca is truly spectacular and we will travel from the Andean valleys to the high Andean Puna at 3400 meters. Our next two nights are in La Quiaca.

DAY 12 we will explore the Puna habitats between La Quiaca and Yavi, looking for high Andes specialties: **Puna Canastero, Citron-headed Yellow-Finch, and Black-fronted Ground-Tyrant**.

On **DAY 13** we will drive from La Quiaca to the small village of Yala, on the southernmost end of the Humahuaca Valley. Our plan today is to take a gravel road rather than the main paved one to explore some high Andean lagoons. Here we may find specialties like all three species of South American **flamingoes: Chilean, Andean, and James's**. Tonight we will try for one of the most spectacular **nightjars** of them all in the area of Yala, the **Lyre-tailed**.

We will drive to the airport of Jujuy on **DAY 14** to take a return flight to Buenos Aires. Those who are taking the extension will connect with a flight to Iguazú. The folks who are ending their tour here will be transferred to the International Airport to begin their return flight home.

You will be home on **DAY 15** after two incredible weeks in **ARGENTINA!**

Some *Birds* That We'll Look For . . .

Yungas Dot-fronted and Cream-backed Woodpeckers, Mitred Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, White-bellied Hummingbird, and Rufous-capped Antshrike. The long list of passerines includes White-winged Becard, Brown-capped Redstart, Stripe-crowned and Azara's Spinetails, Buff-browed Foliage-Gleaner, Rough-legged and Sclater's Tyrannulets, Mountain Wren, Fulvous-headed and Stripe-headed Brush-Finches, Fawn-breasted Tanager, and Golden-winged Cacique.

Humahuaca and The High Andes Tawny-throated Dotterel, Least Seedsnipe, Andean Gull, Mountain Caracara, Andean Flicker, Golden-spotted Ground-Dove, Ornate Tinamou, Andean Goose, Andean Avocet, Crested Duck, Puna Teal, Andean, Horned and Giant Coots, Puna Plover, and several North American migrant shorebirds including Baird's and Pectoral Sandpipers, American Golden-Plover, and Wilson's Phalarope.

Dry Chaco Spot-winged Falconet, Chaco Chachalaca, Gilded Sapphire, Checkered and White-fronted Woodpeckers, White-barred Piculet, Brown Cacholote, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Crested Gallito, Stripe-backed Antbird, Variable Antshrike, Cinereous Tyrant, Swainson's Flycatcher, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Hepatic Tanager, and Ultramarine Grosbeak.

Monte White-throated Cacholote, Sandy Gallito, Burrowing Parrot (northern race), Chaco Earthcreeper, Spot-winged Pigeon, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, White-banded Mockingbird, Black-crested Finch, White-crested Tyrannulet, White-fronted Woodpecker, and Black-legged Seriema.



**Gray-hooded Parakeet and
Long-tailed Meadowlark**

- - Luis Segura, Trogon Tours

Financial information for Argentina's Northwest Tour

The **tour fee** is approximately \$4495 based upon double occupancy and a minimum of six participants. Single accommodations are available for an extra charge of \$375.

Included on the tour fee:

Domestic flights within Argentina.

Private transportation for all transfers and excursions.

All tours (activities) as per program (Itinerary).

Trogon Tours' leader to accompany the group from day 2 to day 14.

Local guides where required by law.

Accommodations en suite on a twin/double basis in selected hotels, as per program, with breakfast included.

All lunches, box lunches, and dinners from dinner on day 2 to breakfast on day 14, with one non-alcoholic beverage per person included.

Admission fees to National Parks and Fauna Reserves.

All tips, except for the tip to your tour leader(s).

Not included:

International flights to and from Argentina, and airport taxes. BIRD TREKS will, upon request, help you obtain the most suitable airfare.

Personal medical and travel insurance.

Items of a personal nature, such as telephone calls and laundry service.

Tip to your tour leader(s).

Anything not specified in 'Included on the tour'.

Deposit A \$1000 deposit will assure your reservation on the tour. The balance is payable 9 July 2012. Send your deposit soon to insure your reservation and to obtain the best possible airfare.

Extra Services We offer the services of our exclusive BIRD TREKS travel agent, **Lori Heathcote**, in arranging your air travel and other extras. Lori has 26 years of experience in the travel industry and is a veteran birder. Contact her at Bailey Travel at **1-800-224-5399**, or e-mail **lori@baileytravel.com**. By dealing with Lori you have the security of a 24-hour toll-free telephone number in case of any travel emergency. She can also assist you with all pre- and post-tour travel plans. There may be a fee for these services.

Refund and Cancellation Policy With written notice more than 90 days prior to the first day of the tour, 100% of your deposit will be refunded, minus a \$100 service fee. With 30-90 days notice, you will receive a 50% refund of the full cost of the tour. No refund can be made with less than 30 days notice. You will receive a full refund if you provide a replacement for your spot on the tour. No partial refund can be given once the tour begins. We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment. Contact **Allianz Global Assistance** (formerly Access America) and mention **BIRD TREKS ACCAM # F021096**. You can apply via the Internet at **www.allianztravelinsurance.com** or by phone at **1-800-284-8300**.

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Cacti field and ruins of the citadel - Ruinas de Quilmes - - Luis Segura, Trogon Tours