

## SELECTING YOUR TOUR

**W**ith so many destinations and such a variety of birds, wildlife, cultures, and habitats to experience, we'd like to offer some suggestions in choosing a tour. A good way to begin is by browsing the web site for ideas of tour destinations, dates, prices, and unique features that each tour has to offer. Our web site provides additional information, including day-by-day itineraries, complete species lists from previous tours, favorite species and highlights from past tours, photos, and trip reports by leaders and participants. Feel free to contact BIRD TREKS for additional information or recommendations from past participants. It is often possible for you to participate in a **portion of a tour** if you would rather not go for the entire time. Please inquire and we will work with you on a special arrangement. And we'd like to warn you that nearly 80% of our first-time participants return for their second, third, and fourth birding tours, so be prepared for lots of enjoyable birding. It's FUN!

Once you select a tour, registration is simple. All that we need is a deposit of 25% of the tour fee and a signed and completed registration and release form, which is contained in this catalog and on our web site. Payment is by check or through PayPal. We typically need 3-4 participants in order to run our domestic tours and 3-5 participants for a foreign tour, unless otherwise noted in the itinerary. So, the earlier you register, the sooner we can confirm that your tour will go. Receiving your registration and deposit 6-12 months prior to the tour is excellent, especially when the tour involves a pelagic trip, or lodges that are very popular and often require reservations a year or more in advance. We can usually accommodate you if you notify us 2-4 months in advance, but not always. The tour may be full, or we may have already cancelled it due to an apparent lack of participants. In extreme situations, people have contacted our office the **day before a tour is to begin**, and we have been able to make all of the necessary arrangements. So it is never too late to contact us, but the earlier you make your reservation, the better it is for everyone. We have a liberal cancellation policy and make recommendations on how to obtain trip and cancellation insurance. Both of these are outlined on the last page of the tour itinerary.

One month or more prior to your tour we will send you a letter with additional information to help you prepare for your birding experience. We advise you of the weather and conditions, and make suggestions for clothing, accessories, and equipment. We also tell you where you will stay and the names and addresses of the other participants. BIRD TREKS takes care of all your tour accommodations, reservations, and logistics to help give you the most relaxing, worry-free birding experience possible. Upon your request, we will also arrange your air travel to the city where your tour originates, such as Tucson for the Southeast Arizona Tour. We utilize the services of **Lori Heathcote** of Bailey

Travel for all of our arrangements. Lori has 24 years of experience in the travel industry and is a veteran birder; thus she understands your needs and concerns. She will obtain the best possible airfare for you, check flights for cost reductions, and take care of many of your pre- and post-tour travel needs. Let us know if you wish Lori to make your arrangements, or contact her directly at Bailey Travel by calling **1-800-224-5399**; her e-mail address is **lori@baileytravel.com**. There may be a fee for these services.

We meet in the city where the tour begins, typically at about noon on the first day. The leader will usually meet you at the curb outside of the baggage claim area of your airline. Some people drive or choose to arrive a day early in case there are any travel delays. Our leaders almost always arrive a day early. In that case we will meet you at a convenient motel prior to proceeding to the airport. All of these arrangements are finalized in the pre-tour informational letter. Departure flights at the end of the tour are typically scheduled for early afternoon so that we have some birding time on our final morning. Please contact BIRD TREKS if you intend to make your own airline reservations, to be certain that all of our schedules are coordinated. Some of our distant destinations such as Kenya, Peru, and India require overnight air travel. Be certain to check with our office so that you know the proper dates that you are to arrive and depart, especially when making your own airline reservations.

We hope that this helps you in choosing your tour. If you have any additional questions, please contact Bird Treks at **717-548-3303**, or e-mail **info@birdtreks.com**. We have been helping people plan their bird watching tours for 15 years, and we would be extremely happy to help you, in any way that we can.