

MEDITERRANEAN BIRDING IN CHILE

DECEMBER 27 - JANUARY 4, 2010

with

CLAUDIO VIDAL & DEBRA SHEARWATER

The friendly atmosphere and many spectacular parks of Chile, make birding in this country a truly delightful adventure. None, more so than with my dear friend, Claudio Vidal, a true Patagonian gentleman. Claudio and I will co-lead this tour, as we did in 2004. The excellent field guide, *Birds of Chile* by Alvaro Jaramillo, will be useful on our voyage to The Falkland Islands, as well as for seabirds throughout the voyage. Our tour will cover a variety of habitats, including a half day trip offshore to search for pelagic birds that we will not see on the main trip to Antarctica, South Georgia, and The Falkland Islands. We hope to show you a good selection of birds that are endemic to Chile, indeed, along with the Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, they will be our main targets.

December 27-28, Day 1-2: Travel to Santiago, Chile. Arrive Santiago. Afternoon visit to Farellones and Valle Nevado. Nights: On board commercial aircraft (Dec 27). Hotel Novotel, Santiago (Dec 28) (LD) After arriving at Santiago airport, we will be met by our birding guide, Claudio Vidal. We will spend the afternoon birding in the vicinity of Farellones for Andean species including: Mountain Caracara, White-sided Hillstar, Band-tailed and Creamy-rumped Miners, Cinereous, Black-fronted, White-browed, and Rufous-naped Ground Tyrants, Greater Yellow-Finch, Grey-hooded and Band-tailed Sierra-Finches. We will also look for the endemic Chilean Tinamou and Chilean Mockingbird.

December 29, Day 3: Birding El Yeso Reservoir. (BLD) Night: Hotel Novotel, Santiago. We will have a full day exploring the surroundings of El Yeso Reservoir in the Andean foothills, where we will hope to be rewarded with sightings of the endemic Crag Chilia, as well as Andean Condors, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Variable Hawk and several other Andean specialties such as Black-winged Ground-Dove, Grey-flanked Cinclodes, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant and Bright-rumped Siskin. Careful scanning of grasslands and streams may produce the stunning Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, our main target for the day. This is a lovely mountain spot where we will also have chances for flocking Mountain Parakeets.

December 30, Day 4: Drive to Talca and Vilches. Altos de Lircay Nature Reserve. (BLD) Night: Roble Cabins, Talca. During the morning, we will make a drive of about 5 hours south of Santiago to seek forest-dwelling birds of the Andean slopes. While

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traveling, we shall have a very good chance for finding Chilean Tinamou and Fire-eyed Diucon. At the reserve, we will continue our exploration in search of Magellanic Woodpecker, Chucao Tapaculo and the strictly nocturnal Rufous-legged Owl.

December 31, Day 5: Birding Altos de Lircay Nature Reserve & Colbun Reservoir.

(BLD) Night: Roble Cabins, Talca. Today we shall be seeking the near endemic Chestnut-throated Huet-huet, only recently discovered! Also a good chance for Magellanic Woodpecker and Chucao Tapaculo. At the reservoir, we will look for the largest of the tyrant-flycatchers, the Great Shrike-Tyrant. Also, we will concentrate on finding the diminutive Dusky Tapaculo and the threatened Chilean race of the Burrowing Parrot, which usually congregates in noisy flocks. We could have another nocturnal search for the Rufous-legged Owl.

January 1, Day 6: Birding El Peral Nature Reserve, Vina del Mar. (BLD) Night:

Radisson Hotel, Concon. After an enjoyable time in the beautiful temperate forests of Vilches Altos, we will travel to the scenic Chilean coast. Here, we will visit the Maipo rivermouth and surrounding wetlands, including the exceptional El Peral Nature Reserve, where we will concentrate on finding the cryptic-colored Stripe-backed Bittern, the brood-parasitic Black-headed Duck and the striking Many-colored Rush-Tyrant. We will also have a chance to find the scarce and local Warbling Doradito. Later on, we will descend towards the productive rocky coast of Valparaiso. Searching here, we hope to find the endemic Chilean Seaside Cinclodes and endemic seabirds of the Humboldt Current such as Red-legged and Guanay Cormorants, Peruvian Booby, Grey Gull, and the stunning Inca Tern.

January 2, Day 7: Half day pelagic trip. Visit Cachagua Penguin Colony. (BLD) Night:

Radisson Hotel, Concon. This morning we will make an unforgettable pelagic trip to the cold waters of the Humboldt Current, considered to be one of the world's most productive marine areas. We can expect to see a great variety of tubenoses such as Black-browed and Salvin's Albatrosses. On recent trips, we have also recorded Buller's, Chatham, Wandering (Antipodean), Albatrosses and both Northern and Southern Royal Albatrosses. We should also find Northern and Southern Giant Petrels, Cape (Pintado), Masatierra, White-chinned, and Westland Petrels, Pink-footed, Buller's, and Sooty Shearwaters, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, and Peruvian Diving Petrel. Red Phalaropes, Sabine's Gull, and Chilean Skua are also possible.

In the afternoon, we will continue exploring the coastal areas, visiting a protected breeding colony of Humboldt Penguins. We may encounter the very rare Marine Otter. Stopping at a coastal marsh we hope to find waterfowl—Red Shoveler, Yellow-billed Pintail, Speckled Teal, Chiloe Widgeon, and all three lowland coot species: Spot-flanked Gallinule, and Plumbeous Rail.

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January 3, Day 8: Birding La Campana National Park, Lampa y Batuco. (BLD). Night: Hotel Novotel, Santiago. Early in the morning, we will visit this national park, where we will look for three endemic passerines—Dusky-tailed Canastero, Moustached Turca, and White-throated Tapaculo. We may also encounter Giant Hummingbird, Austral Pygmy Owl, and Chilean Pigeon. In the afternoon, we visit Lampa marshes and Batuco Ponds. Our main targets will be South American Painted Snipe, Rosy-billed Pochard, White-cheeked Pintail, and Cocoli Heron.

January 4, Day 9: Transfer to airport for flight to Ushuaia. Transfer to airport for flight to Ushuaia. (B) Night: at Hotel Albatros, Ushuaia. Upon arrival in Ushuaia, transfer to our hotel. The day is free for shopping, visiting museums, catching up at the internet cafe, birding the shoreline, and ponds nearby, or anything you desire. More information about things to do in Ushuaia will be available at a future date. We may organize informal birding. Lunch and dinner are on your own. Transport to the hotel is included. Hotel in Ushuaia is included.

January 5, Day 10: Full day of birding in Ushuaia. See, “Fin del Mundo: Birding the Ends of the Earth.” You may elect to join this one day of intense birding around Ushuaia, including Tierra del Fuego National Park. It is not included in the Mediterranean Birding in Chile tour. Night at Hotel Albatros, Ushuaia, included in your cruise package. (B)

January 6, Day 11: Half day of birding in Ushuaia. You may elect to join this day of birding, or bird on your own, sightsee, or relax. The half day of birding is not included in the Chile tour.

EMBARK PROFESSOR MULTANOVSKIY, our home for the next 18 nights and 19 days at 4 p.m. We sail out the Beagle Channel approximately at 6 p.m. All aboard for the journey of a lifetime!

PLEASE NOTE: This tour may change in itinerary, due to flights with Lan Chile. Their schedule is not yet out for 2010. Normally, Lan flies from Santiago to Ushuaia via Puerto Montt on Mon., Wed., and Sun., during the months of October through March. Please remain flexible. Dates should remain as in this outlined program.

Chile Pre-trip leaders: Claudio Vidal, December 28- January 4, and Debra Shearwater.

CLAUDIO VIDAL is a Chilean naturalist who has been dedicated to the observation and study of the birds and general wildlife since childhood. He has a particularly deep interest in the birds and marine mammals occurring on the Southern Ocean, Patagonia, and Antarctica. Claudio leads birdwatching and natural history trips throughout Chile and South America for the leading wildlife tour companies of England and the USA. He

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has co-authored many publications, including, *Birds of Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego & Antarctic Peninsula: The Falkland Islands & South Georgia, Birds of the Beagle Channel and Cape Horn*, and *Birds of Torres del Paine* with Enrique Couve. A dedicated wildlife photographer, flora and birds are his favorite subject. He is a partner of Fantastico Sur and lives in Punta Arenas, Chile with his wife Soledad. Claudio and Debra co-lead this tour in 2004. Most recently, Claudio visited Debra in California and went on a pelagic trip from Monterey with her.

REGISTRATION: The fee for this tour is \$2995 double occupancy. Rates are based on a minimum of 10 participants. If fewer than 10 participants register, a small party charge may apply. To register for this tour, a NON-REFUNDABLE deposit of \$600 is required. The single supplement is \$500. If you desire a single room, or if we cannot find a roommate to share with you, you will be charged the single supplement. Please register as soon as possible. A second payment of \$1300 is due on June 1, 2009. Final payments are due September 1, 2009. We strongly recommend purchasing trip cancellation insurance.

INCLUDED IN THE TOUR: All accommodations beginning, December 28, 2009 through January 5, 2010. All meals, beginning with lunch on December 28 and ending with breakfast on January 4, 2010. Please note: LD on Jan 4 are not included. Services of Claudio Vidal and Debra Shearwater throughout the tour. Park entrance fees, boat trip fee, transfers to and from airports during the tour. Gratuities for restaurants and porters. One bottle of mineral water per day,

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR: Flights from your home to Santiago, Chile, and from Santiago Chile to Ushuaia, Argentina, and return. Laundry, excess baggage, Chile entrance fee, passport fees, a la carte dishes, snacks, drinks, telephone calls, emails, postage, gratuities to the guides and drivers, and anything of a personal nature.

FLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA: When Lan Chile has its flight schedule available, Debra will try to arrange a group flight from either San Francisco, or Los Angeles, California. Lan Chile flies non-stop from Los Angeles to Santiago. Lan partners with American Airlines. If you wish to book a flight using frequent flier miles, you can do so on your own. If you wish to join the group flight, please inform Debra as soon as possible. This is only a good possibility at this stage in planning.