



Magellanic Penguin – © Marcelo Gavensky

North-east Patagonia Birding Tour (Argentina)

8 days/7 nights tour

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Elegant Crested Tinamou - © Jorge La Grotteria

INTRODUCTION

Patagonia is one of the most iconic and famous regions of South America. Known for its wilderness, it is a very large region which comprises a wide arrange of habitats, landscapes and species. In terms of biodiversity, it can not be compared with the one of the tropics, but most of the species found here are not found anywhere else.

Being so large, logistics for visiting Patagonia can be quite challenging but in this tour we offer the possibility of a comprehensive coverage of the northeast region, one of the most famous areas for its wildlife (including Peninsula Valdes and Punta Tombo) but also including some incredibly seldom visited places where we will look for a wide diversity of birds from the Patagonian steppe, Monte desert (and its transitional area with Espinal forest), Patagonian coast and ocean (pelagic).

This tour offers good chances of seeing many attractive Patagonian birds, including Magellanic Penguin (visiting one of the largest breeding colonies), Lesser and Greater Rheas, Elegant Crested Tinamou, Sandy and Crested Gallitos, a big part of Argentine endemic birds, the rare and endangered Yellow Cardinal, marine birds such as Black-browed Albatross, Burrowing Parakeet (in the world's largest breeding colony), and a good number of marine and land mammals, such as Southern Right Whale, Southern Elephant Seal, Dusky Dolphin, Guanaco, Patagonian Cavy (Mara), armadillos and more.

Come with us and experience the wilderness of northeast Patagonia!



Carbonated Sierra-Finch - © Jorge La Grotteria

TOUR DESCRIPTION

Arriving in Trelew airport, we will travel to our first birding destination at Punta Tombo natural reserve. This reserve protects the world's largest breeding colony of **Magellanic Penguin**, with over one million penguins before the end of the season (when visited at the beginning of breeding season, the number is lower and most penguins are taking care of their eggs and young chicks, hiding in their burrows, but still lots of them are visible). Walking along the trails we will have the chance of seeing species such as **Elegant Crested Tinamou**, **Lesser Rhea**, **Sharp-billed Canastero**, **Patagonian Mockingbird**, **Scale-throated Earthcreeper**, **Mourning Sierra-Finch**, **Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch**, **Common Diuca-Finch**, **Long-tailed Meadowlark** and non-birds such as **Guanaco** and **Greater Hairy Armadillo**. Along the coast, we will be specially looking for **Chubut (White-headed) Steamer-Duck**, our first Argentine endemic target. Other coastal species include **Great Grebe**, **Chilean Skua** and **Southern Giant Petrel**.

After Punta Tombo we will start our way to Puerto Madryn, with a birding stop in the area of Isla Escondida. This place is already in Monte desert habitat so we will have our first chances for **Carbonated Sierra-Finch** (Argentine endemic) and **Hudson's Black-Tyrant**, among others. On the coast there is a small colony of **Southern Elephant Seal** that really worth a visit.

In Puerto Madryn we will spend our first night, and around the hotel we can have our first sights of **Austral Thrush**, **Chiguanco Thrush** and **Black-chinned Siskin**.



Sandy Gallito – © Jorge La Grotteria

From Puerto Madryn we will travel to Valdes Peninsula making birding stops on the way and hoping to get our first views of **Southern Right Whales** from the coast. Targets this day would include **Lake Duck, Black-headed Duck, Red Shoveler, (Southern) Silvery Grebe, Cinereous Harrier, Variable Hawk, Rusty-backed Monjita** (Argentine endemic), **Gray-bellied Shrike-Tyrant, Patagonian Yellow-Finch** and more. Spending one night in Valdes Peninsula (in the town of Puerto Piramides) we will take advantage of the following morning for birding in the surroundings, visiting a **South American Sea Lion** colony to look for **Snowy Sheathbill, Rock Cormorant** and **Dolphin Gull**, and also bird in the steppe and scrubland, looking for **Band-tailed Earthcreeper (Eremobius), Patagonian Canastero** (Argentine endemic), **Tufted Tit-Tyrant, Pallid Tit-Spinetail** and **Darwin's Nothura** among others.

After visiting Valdes Peninsula we will continue our way northwards to reach the town of Las Grutas, which we will use as our base for a couple of nights. The following day we will spend the morning birding in the surroundings of Las Grutas, where we will be looking for more Argentine endemic birds from the Monte desert habitat such as **Sandy Gallito, White-throated Cacholote** and **Cinammon Warbling-Finch**, the breeding endemic **Black-crowned Monjita, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant** and many of the other species mentioned before. After having a typical Patagonian lunch we will look for waders and coastal species in the San Antonio bay, where both boreal and austral migrants (as well as resident species) can be found. Possibilities include **Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, White-rumped Sandpiper, Sanderling, Two-banded Plover, Crested Duck** and more.

The following morning we will take a boat for a short (half-day) pelagic trip in the San Matias gulf, where we will be looking for birds such as **Black-browed Albatross, (Atlantic) Yellow-nosed Albatross, White-chinned Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel, Great**



Yellow Cardinal (female) - © Jorge La Grotteria

Shearwater, Manx Shearwater, South American Tern and also marine mammals such as **South American Fur Seal, Short-beak Common Dolphin, Dusky Dolphin** and more. Closer to the shore we will also look for **Chilean Flamingos, Royal Terns** and **Snowy-crowned Terns** among others.

In the afternoon we will move towards General Conesa, our next destination, where we will spend the night and get ready for the following day, when we will be birding in a transitional area between Monte desert and Espinal forest, where our targets will include the endangered **Yellow Cardinal** and many other specialties such as **Crested Gallito, Spot-winged Falconet, Greater Rhea, Brushland Tinamou, Brown Cacholote, Tufted Tit-Spinetail, Lesser Shrike-Tyrant, Ringed Warbling-Finch, Chaco Earthcreeper, White-tipped Plantcutter, White Monjita** and many more.

From General Conesa we will travel to El Condor, a small town located near the mouth of the Río Negro (the largest river in Patagonia) and home to the world's largest breeding colony of Psitacids (parrots and parakeets) of any kind, purely formed by **Burrowing Parakeets**, a large and colorful species. Their burrows are dug along a very tall cliff that faces the ocean, and the total number of birds can exceed 500 thousands by the end of the breeding season (fewer birds are found at the beginning of the season, but still in great and impressive numbers).

After that we will end the North-east Patagonian journey at the airport of Viedma.



Burrowing Parakeet - © Jorge La Grotteria

ITINERARY*

DAY 1: AM arrival at Trelew airport and transfer to Punta Tombo natural reserve. PM transfer to Puerto Madryn with birding stop at Isla Escondida. Night in Puerto Madryn.

DAY 2: AM transfer to Puerto Piramides (in Peninsula Valdes natural reserve) with birding stops along the way. PM birding around Puerto Piramides. Night in Puerto Piramides.

DAY 3: AM birding around Puerto Piramides (optional whale watching boat trip available in October-November). PM transfer to Las Grutas. Night in Las Grutas.

DAY 4: Full day birding in Las Grutas surroundings. Night in Las Grutas.

DAY 5: AM pelagic trip in San Matias gulf. PM transfer to General Conesa. Night in General Conesa.

DAY 6: Full day birding in General Conesa surroundings. Night in General Conesa.

DAY 7: AM transfer with birding stops to El Condor. PM birding in El Condor surroundings. Night in El Condor.

DAY 8: AM birding in El Condor surroundings. PM transfer to Viedma airport. End of the tour.

** The itinerary may change due to force majeure*



White-headed Steamer-Duck - © Jorge La Grotteria

TOUR DETAILS

Price

Please contact us to find out about our prices for the current and/or following seasons.

Our prices **include** all accommodations, three meals a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner), all land transfers in private vehicle, local guide/driver and tour leader with quality spotting scope, snacks and drinks (bottled water) during the tour. Our prices **do not include** flight tickets (unless asked on request) to and from Trelew nor Viedma airports, personal insurance, alcoholic drinks, tips, nor anything not mentioned on previous sentence.

Whale watching boat tour from Puerto Piramides (2 hours duration) is optional and will be added to the quote on request (only available on whale-watching season).

Group size

We run this tour on request for groups with a minimum size of 2 and a maximum of 8 passengers. Please contact us for information about larger groups and options for single travelers.

Physical difficulty

Easy to moderate.



Black-browed Albatross - © Andrés Terán

Accommodations

Comfortable 3 stars hotels in most locations, comfortable apart-hotel in El Condor.

Best time of the year

This is a tour that needs to be carried out during southern hemisphere summer time, from mid October to early March. In this period of time, chances of seeing Southern Right Whales are only from mid October to mid November.

Weather in northeast Patagonia

North-east Patagonia can be warm to hot in the summer (sometimes with temperatures over 30°C), but colder southern and western winds are still possible. Lower temperatures are expected during the pelagic trip. Rains are not expected but may occur. Wind is almost constant in Patagonia, from pleasant breezes to strong gusts at times (hard to predict).

Packing for the trip

Bring light clothing (long-sleeves shirts and long pants) with a good polar fleece sweater or jacket and an impermeable windbreaker. It's also important to bring closed shoes (2 pairs if possible), a good hat and sun glasses. Sun screen, insect repellent (which may not be needed) and a flash light (with its batteries or charger) would complete the list.



Lesser Rhea – © Jorge La Grotteria

Best combined with

South Patagonia Birding Tour 7 days/6 nights

Southern Entre Ríos 3 days/2 nights tour

Costanera Sur reserve (Buenos Aires) Half Day tour


Important (READ): our tours are designed for small groups, with low impact, personalized attention and hiring local guides whenever possible, in order to increase their quality. We keep the use of play back down to a minimum possible so to avoid stressing the birds or affecting their natural behavior, thus actively contributing to the conservation of the same and promotion of responsible birding and ecotourism practices.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Birds Argentina

& Southern South America

info@birdsargentina.com

 (+ 54) 9 11 6568 5344

Operador responsable: EVT 13058
Beruti 2954 – Buenos Aires, Argentina

WWW.BIRDSARGENTINA.COM