



Hooded Grebes – © Jorge La Grotteria

# Quest for the Hooded Grebe

(5 days/4 nights tour)

*Looking for one of the rarest South American birds...*

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Magellanic Plover – © Andrés Terán

## **INTRODUCTION**

Patagonia is one of the most iconic and famous regions of South America, especially for its untamed wilderness and, without a doubt, a symbol of such wilderness is the rare and critically endangered Hooded Grebe.

A species just discovered in 1974, its population has severely declined in the last few decades to only around 800 birds, which every year migrate from their breeding colonies in few lagoons of the Southern Patagonian plateau, to the rough seas of the Atlantic coast.

In order to find this species, we will make a journey to one of the remotest places in the already remote Patagonia, that will also give us great chances of seeing other scarce south Patagonian birds such as Patagonian Tinamou, White-throated Caracara, Magellanic Oystercatcher, Magellanic Plover, Chocolate-vented Tyrant and the enigmatic Austral Rail.

Take the chance and travel to an amazing but seldom visited area, in search for its feathered treasures!



Austral Rail – © Jorge La Grotteria

### **TOUR DESCRIPTION**

Our adventure begins in El Calafate, from where we will take a transfer with birding stops to Estancia La Angostura. During this transfer we will have chances of seeing many interesting species such as **Lesser Rhea, Least Snipe, Austral Canastero, Scale-throated** and **Band-tailed Earthcreepers, Patagonian Yellow-Finch, Mourning Sierra-Finch, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, Variable Hawk** and **Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle**.

In Estancia La Angostura we will spend the first night of the trip and look for our first big target: the **Austral Rail**. This rare bird has only a few spots in its poorly known distribution range where it can be looked for with good chances of success, and this is the main one. Other attractive species in the area are **Many-colored Rush-Tyrant** and **Magellanic Oystercatcher**.

The following day we will start our way up to the Strobel's plateau, where we will stay in a lodge right next to one of the lagoons where we will have our first chances of seeing **Hooded Grebes**.

This species needs special conditions in the lagoons that they choose for building their breeding colonies, and such conditions can change from one year to the following one, so the grebes may choose different lagoons in consecutive years and in some years it can be hard to find them, especially at the beginning of the season. For such reason we are planning to spend two nights in this lodge, so that we have got enough time to look for them if they are not in the “usual” place.



Least Seedsnipe – © Jorge La Grotteria

Other attractive species that can be found in the lagoons chosen by the **Hooded Grebe** are **Southern Silvery Grebe, Flying Steamer-Duck, Crested Duck, Red Shoveler, Chiloe Wigeon, Chilean Flamingo, Two-banded Plover, Rufous-chested Plover** and the rare **Magellanic Plover**, among many others. The possibilities in the Patagonian steppe of the plateau area include the scarce **Patagonian Tinamou, White-throated Caracara, Least and Gray-breasted Seedsnipes, Tawny-throated Dotterel, Chocolate-vented Tyrant, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Short-billed Miner, Cordilleran Canastero, Greater Yellow-Finch** and many more.

**Guanaco, Culpeo Fox and (Patagonian) Gray Fox** are some of the non-bird animals that inhabit this territory and that we would be seeing.

After having explored the region for our main target and the other birds, we will travel back to Estancia La Angostura, where we will spend the last night of the trip (having a second chance for possible missing targets) and prepare for the last transfer that will deliver us back in El Calafate.

### **ITINERARY\***

**DAY 1:** Arrival in El Calafate airport. Transfer with birding stops to Estancia La Angostura. Night in Estancia La Angostura.

**DAY 2:** Early morning birding in Estancia La Angostura. AM transfer with birding stops to Strobel's plateau. Night in Laguna Verde.



Chocolate-vented Tyrant - © Andrés Terán

**DAY 3:** Full day birding in Strobel's plateau. Night Laguna Verde.

**DAY 4:** AM birding in Strobel's plateau. PM transfer to Estancia La Angostura. Night in Estancia La Angostura.

**DAY 5:** AM birding in Estancia La Angostura. PM transfer to El Calafate. End of the tour.

*\*The itinerary may change due to force majeure.*

## **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 El Calafate airport, personal insurance, alcoholic drinks, tips, nor anything not mentioned on previous sentence.

### **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.



Many-colored Rush-Tyrant - © Alec Earnshaw

### **Physical difficulty**

Easy to moderate.

### **Accommodations**

Comfortable traditional Patagonian Estancia and Fishing Lodge accommodations.

### **Best time of the year**

This is a tour that needs to be carried out during southern hemisphere summer time, from late October to March.

### **Weather in south Patagonia**

In this trip we will be visiting cold areas that even in the summer can have temperatures around zero degrees Celsius. Wind is almost constant in Patagonia, and can be strong in the steppe. Rains could happen, but they are hard to predict.

### **Packing for the trip**

Bring comfortable clothing (long-sleeves shirts and long pants) with a couple of good polar fleece sweaters or jackets and an impermeable windbreaker, as well as a stronger coat in case of cold days. It's also important to bring closed shoes (2 pairs if possible), a good hat and sun glasses. Sun screen and insect repellent (which may not be used) would complete the list.



Hooded Grebes in breeding display – © Jorge La Grotteria

### **Best combined with**

*South Patagonia Birding Tour 7 days/6 nights*

*North-east Patagonia Birding Tour 8 days/7 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**

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