



Chile

Birds and Wine with Patagonia/Tierra del Fuego Extension

Tour Leaders: Rob Ripma and Claudio Vidal

March 26-April 4 with extension April 4-9, 2022

This trip is a unique and special journey across the Andes Mountains in South America designed to discover the wealth of birds and landscapes of the central region of Chile in addition to Chile's famous wines. This region is characterized by dense 'matorral' (equivalent to California's 'chaparral') vegetation where we expect to see the majority of Chile's terrestrial endemic birds. A short exploration south to the northern limits of Patagonia's temperate forests will allow us to find some striking species in the Tapaculos family and hopefully Magellanic Woodpecker. We'll visit the Pacific Coast and discover the wealth of shorebirds and seabirds of the rich waters of the Humboldt Current. We'll also have the unique opportunity to find its more emblematic pelagic seabirds, including many species of albatrosses, petrels, and shearwaters. And we can't forget the wine! We have prepared an in-depth wine tasting program, visiting the most remarkable and traditional wineries of Maipo, Casablanca, and Colchagua Valleys. This trip has been designed for the birder and nature enthusiast who wishes to combine time spent taking in the incredible birds, wildlife, and scenery of Chile while also enjoying wine tasting activities. Cheers!

Our extension will take us to Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia in southern Chile. These incredible regions are full of amazing scenery and wonderful new birds for us to see including several species of penguin!

Itinerary Overview:

Main:

March 26: Arrival at Santiago airport and transfer to hotel

March 27: Laguna Batuco - Wine tastings at Concha y Toro Vineyards - Transfer to San José de Maipo

March 28: El Yeso Reservoir & Baños Morales

March 29: Transfer to Talca - Altos de Lircay Nature Reserve

March 30: Lago Colbún – Transfer to Santa Cruz and visit Santa Cruz Vineyards

March 31: Colchagua Valley – Wine tastings at Viu Manent, Montes, and Mont Grass Vineyards

April 1: Maipo River and El Peral Nature Reserve – Transfer to Viña del Mar with a stop at Matetic Vineyard

April 2: Pelagic trip off Valparaíso - Cachagua

April 3: La Campana National Park - Loma Larga and Emiliana Vineyards at Casablanca Valley

April 4: Viña del Mar - Transfer to Santiago airport

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Extension:

April 4: Viña del Mar - Transfer to Santiago airport – Afternoon flight to Punta Arenas - Birding along the coast of the mythic Straits of Magellan

April 5: Ferry ride to Tierra del Fuego via Tres Puentes - Useless Bay for King Penguins – Transfer to Porvenir

April 6: Laguna Verde - Short ferry back to mainland via Primera Angostura - Pali Aike Road – Transfer to Puerto Natales

April 7: Full day Torres del Paine National Park

April 8: Sierra Baguales – Transfer to Punta Arenas

April 9: Flight to Santiago and end of Extension

Detailed Itinerary:

March 26: Arrival at Santiago airport and transfer to hotel

Arrive in Santiago and transfer to our nearby hotel. In the evening, we will have a wonderful welcome dinner.

-Overnight: Santiago, Chile - Holiday Inn Santiago Airport

March 27: Laguna Batuco - Wine tastings at Concha y Toro Vineyards - Transfer to San José de Maipo

Our Birds & Wine tour begins! This morning we'll drive a short distance north of Santiago airport to visit some lowland marshes. Targets here include the rare South American Painted-Snipe, Rosy-billed Pochard, White-cheeked Pintail, and Cooi Heron.

In the afternoon, we'll visit Viña Concha y Toro, located in the well-known Maipo Valley. This century winery is one of the oldest and largest operations in Chile, and we'll be delighted to learn about the variety of famed Cabernet Sauvignon and Carménère they produce. One of their most famous wines, Casillero del Diablo, Devil's Cellar, honors the place we will visit, an old and impressive underground cellar where the landlord used to hide his best wines, telling his employees that the Devil himself dwelled in this dark and mysterious place.

Once finished here, we will transfer to our hotel in San José de Maipo.

-Overnight: San José de Maipo - Hotel Sel

March 28: El Yeso Reservoir & Baños Morales

We will spend a full day exploring the surroundings of El Yeso reservoir in the Andean foothills, where we will hopefully be rewarded with sightings of the endemic Crag Chilia plus our first Andean Condor, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, as well as several other Andean specialties such as Black-winged Ground Dove, Gray-flanked Cinclodes, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, and Yellow-rumped

Siskin. Careful scanning of grasslands and streams may produce the stunning Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, our main target species for the day. This is a lovely mountain spot where we will also have chances for Mountain Parakeet flocks.

- Overnight: San José de Maipo - Hotel Sel

March 29: Transfer to Talca - Altos de Lircay Nature Reserve

Today we will continue our explorations south of Santiago, driving for at least 2.5 hours along the Pan-american Highway. Once we reach Talca, we'll head eastwards to the majestic Andes once again. Altos de Lircay Nature Reserve, located in an area better known as Vilches, holds the northernmost southern beech (*Nothofagus*) forests. Nowadays, these woodlands, deriving from ancient tree lineage, are just found as relict communities in temperate regions of the Southern Hemisphere including in distant places like New Zealand, Australia, and New Caledonia. These temperate woodlands are home to a number of unique forest-dwelling birds. Among others, today we shall look for Rufous-legged Owl, Magellanic Woodpecker, White-throated Hawk (and Rufous-tailed Hawk, if we are lucky), White-throated Treerunner, and the quasi-endemic Chestnut-throated Huet-huet. Other tapaculos we will be trying to find are the striking Chucao Tapaculo and the skulking Magellanic Tapaculo.

- Overnight: Talca - Hostería de Vilches



Diademed Sandpiper-Plover

March 30: Lago Colbún – Transfer to Santa Cruz and visit Santa Cruz Vineyards



Burrowing Parakeet

During the morning, we'll explore the nearby man-made Lago Colbún. Here we'll scan the rocky slopes looking for noisy flocks of the threatened endemic race of Burrowing Parrot. Later, we will descend to the central valley, to immerse ourselves in one of the most famous wine-making regions of Chile, the Colchagua Valley. Santa Cruz is literally the center of the wine industry of this famed region and is a picturesque little town, where we'll learn a lot about the culture of this part of the country. The lovely Hotel Santa Cruz will be our base for the following two nights, providing us with the chance to explore the museum and its fascinating collections of the pre-history and history of Chile. In the afternoon, we'll explore the Santa Cruz vineyards to enjoy a sampling of reds and whites.

Along the dirt roads we will try to find the largest of the New World tyrant-flycatchers, the voracious Great Shrike-Tyrant.

-Overnight: Santa Cruz - Hotel Santa Cruz

March 31: Colchagua Valley – Wine tastings at Viu Manent, Montes, and Mont Grass Vineyards

The Colchagua Valley is synonymous with full-bodied and richly flavored red wines, including Carménère and Cabernet Sauvignon, and praised Merlot and Syrah have been produced in recent years. Today, we plan to visit at least three top-quality wine properties of the valley including Montes, Viu Manent, and Casa Silva for tastings.

-Overnight: Santa Cruz - Hotel Santa Cruz



Viu Manent Vineyards

April 1: Maipo River and El Peral Nature Reserve – Transfer to Viña del Mar with a stop at Matetic Vineyard

We'll head north and to the coast in order to explore the Maipo River estuary and the productive coastal ponds and marshes nearby. At the tiny El Peral Nature Reserve, we'll concentrate on finding the cryptic-colored Stripe-backed Bittern, the brood-parasitic Black-headed Duck, and the striking Many-colored Rush Tyrant. We'll also have a chance to find the scarce and restricted Ticking Doradito. After a rewarding morning, we will visit the splendid facility of Matetic vineyards, where a top-quality tasting of whites and interesting blends await us. Just before reaching our seaside hotel, we'll inspect the rocky coast for the endemic Seaside Cinclodes and a variety of Humboldt Current seabird specialties.

-Overnight: Viña del Mar - Hotel Oceanic

April 2: Pelagic trip off Valparaíso - Cachagua

Today we'll make an unforgettable visit to the cold and rich waters of the Humboldt Current, considered to be one of the world's finest pelagic birding locations. We can expect to see a great variety of tubenoses such as Black-browed and Salvin's Albatrosses. On recent trips, we often see Buller's, Chatham, Wandering, and Royal Albatrosses. We should also find Southern and Northern Giant Petrels, Cape, Masatierra, Juan Fernandez, White-chinned, and Westland Petrels, Pink-footed, Buller's, and Sooty Shearwaters, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, and Peruvian Diving-Petrel. Other seabirds we could encounter include Red Phalarope, Sabine's Gull, and Chilean Skua. Regarding marine mammals, although difficult to predict, Orca, Sperm Whale, and large pods of Dusky and Southern Right Whale Dolphins are often spotted. We'll have repeated sightings of the abundant South American Sea Lion. In the afternoon, we'll continue exploring the coastal areas, visiting a protected breeding colony of

Humboldt Penguin. We hope to see the scarce and range-restricted Southern Sea Otter here, too. Before ending the day, we'll stop at a coastal marsh to see a variety of waterfowl including Red Shoveler, Yellow-billed Pintail, Speckled Teal and Chiloe Wigeon, all three lowland coot species, Spot-flanked Gallinule, and Plumbeous Rail, which surprisingly for a rail is quite easy to spot as it often walks in the open.

-Overnight: Viña del Mar - Hotel Oceanic

April 3: La Campana National Park - Loma Larga and Emiliana Vineyards at Casablanca Valley

La Campana National Park and its scrub community, Chilean Palm-tree groves, and dry forests will be the scenes for today's birding adventures. Mount La Campana (The Bell), after which the park is named, is one of the most prominent peaks of the whole Coastal Range and was also one of the many interesting places that young Charles Darwin explored during his long stay in Chile in the 1830s. Here we will look for an interesting array of passerines, all endemic to Chile, including Chilean Mockingbird, Dusky-tailed Canastero, Moustached Turca, Dusky Tapaculo, and White-throated Tapaculo. Chilean Pigeon, Striped Woodpecker, Austral Pygmy-Owl, Giant Hummingbird, and Green-backed Firecrown are also regulars here. We will also look for the endemic Chilean Tinamou.

After our exciting birding adventure, we will head to Loma Larga and Emiliana Vineyards for the final wine tastings of our tour. These two picturesque wineries will be the perfect way to spend our final afternoon of the main tour!

-Overnight: Viña del Mar - Hotel Oceanic

April 4: Viña del Mar - Transfer to Santiago Airport – End of Main Tour

We'll head back to Santiago today. Those that are only on the main tour will be dropped off at the airport while those continuing on the extension will catch our afternoon/evening flight to Punta Arenas.

Extension:

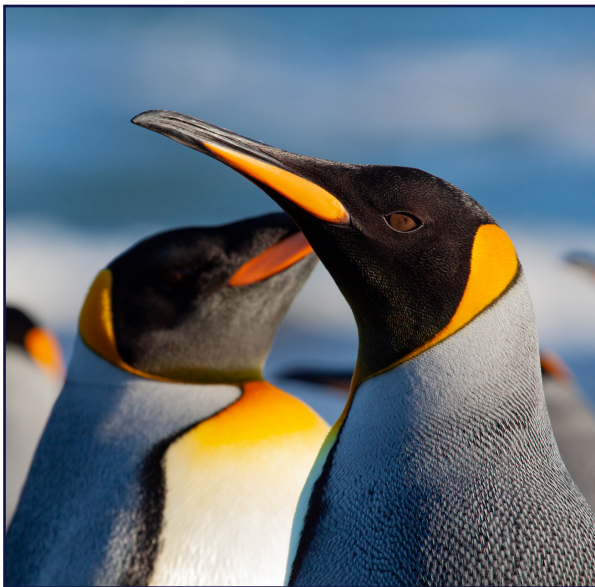
April 4: Viña del Mar - Transfer to Santiago airport – Afternoon flight to Punta Arenas - Birding along the coast of the mythic Straits of Magellan

From Santiago, we'll catch an afternoon flight to Punta Arenas (53°S), Chile's southernmost city. This can be a truly enjoyable plane journey, as we will fly over seemingly endless Patagonian icecaps, deep fjords, and the rugged peaks of the southern Andes. After our arrival, we'll bird along the coast of the mythic Straits of Magellan looking for Flying Steamer-Duck, Crested Duck, Kelp Goose, Imperial and Magellanic Cormorants, and Magellanic Oystercatcher. The coastal grasslands can produce other interesting sheldgeese including the ubiquitous Upland Goose, the smaller Ashy-headed Goose, and the endangered Ruddy-headed Goose.

-Overnight: Punta Arenas - Hotel Diego de Almagro or similar

April 5: Ferry ride to Tierra del Fuego via Tres Puentes - Useless Bay for King Penguins – Transfer to Porvenir

This morning, we'll take a two-hour ferry ride across the Straits of Magellan towards the town of Porvenir in Tierra del Fuego. We will be entertained by an interesting array of tubenoses such as Black-browed Albatross, Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Fulmar, the delightful Cape Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, and Magellanic Diving-Petrel. We'll see other seabirds including Magellanic Penguin, Chilean Skua, Kelp and Dolphin Gulls, and South American Tern. Possible marine mammals will include the common South American Sea Lion and playful pods of Peale's Dolphin.



King Penguins

Once we arrive in Tierra del Fuego, we'll check the coast where we shall see Crested Duck, Chiloe Wigeon, Baird's and White-rumped Sandpipers, Magellanic Oystercatcher, and Dark-bellied Cinclodes. We'll continue east to explore the large embayment of Useless Bay (Bahía Inútil), where it is likely to find a wealth of seabirds and other aquatic birds. On our route, we'll look for potential raptors including Variable Hawk and Aplomado and Peregrine Falcons. The Magellanic subspecies of Great Horned Owl nests in some ravines we'll pass by as well. The main target of our visit to this scenic part of the island is the newly established King Penguin breeding colony. This splendid species congregates year-round on this site, they have successfully started to breed and raise young here. Later, and

before heading back to Porvenir, we'll drive through the shrubby slopes and moorlands of the Baquedano Hills searching for Rufous-chested Dotterel, Austral Canastero, and the stunning White-bridled Finch.

-Overnight: Porvenir - Yendegaia House or similar

April 6: Laguna Verde - Short ferry back to mainland via Primera Angostura - Pali Aike Road – Transfer to Puerto Natales

During the morning, we'll visit some alkaline lagoons east of the village. Our target here will be the local and odd-looking Magellanic Plover. This enigmatic wader looks more similar to a little dove rather than to any shorebird and is often seen 'scratching' the mud with its bright pink legs! Other birds of the area will include Two-banded Plover, Wilson's Phalarope, the abundant White-rumped Sandpiper, Short-billed Miner, and the ubiquitous Austral Negrito. The windswept steppes of Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia hold a number of specialties including Least Seedsnipe, Tawny-throated Dotterel, Band-tailed Earthcreeper and Chocolate-vented Tyrant.

A short ferry ride will allow us to be on the mainland once again, and if we're lucky, we'll see the striking Commerson's Dolphin following in the wake of the ferry. Chilean Flamingo, Coscoroba Swan, Silver Teal plus thousands of waders such as Wilson's Phalarope and Baird's and White-rumped Sandpipers will be common at the roadside wetlands while we explore and enjoy the beauty of this 'big sky' country. On the journey, we should encounter Lesser Rhea, Cinereous Harrier, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, and Patagonian Mockingbird. Large herds of llama-like Guanacos will be a common sight along the entire drive towards Puerto Natales and other possible mammals will include Southern Gray (Chilla) Fox, Patagonian Hairy Armadillo, and Patagonian Hog-nosed Skunk.

-Overnight: Puerto Natales - Weskar Lodge or similar

April 7: Full day Torres del Paine National Park

Torres del Paine is one of the gems of Chile and certainly one the most visited parks in Patagonia. We'll have the whole day to explore its diverse habitats, especially to appreciate the colossal magnitude and rugged beauty of the awe-inspiring granite peaks which name the park. The reed-fringed lagoons of the eastern side of the park will keep us busy during the whole morning. Here we'll find a wealth of waterbirds including Great, Silvery, and White-tufted Grebes, Andean and Spectacled Ducks, Yellow-billed Teal, Yellow-billed Pintail, and with luck, the elusive and recently re-discovered Austral Rail. We also hope to see Andean Condors and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles hovering in these turbulent skies. During the afternoon, we'll visit Lake Gray to enjoy the stunning sight of its southern shore dominated by stranded blue icebergs. We'll scan the fast-flowing rivers hoping to find the remarkable and colorful Torrent Duck.

-Overnight: Puerto Natales - Weskar Lodge or similar



Torres del Paine

April 8: Sierra Baguales – Transfer to Punta Arenas

Early in the morning, we'll explore the impressive Sierra Baguales Range, located northeast of Torres del Paine. Along the road and in the scrubby gullies, we'll look for more restricted-range songbirds in

Chile such as Patagonian Mockingbird and Gray-bellied Shrike-Tyrant. As we continue exploring this montane habitat, we might find the local White-throated Caracara, Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, Rufous-banded Miner, Cinnamon-bellied and Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrants, Patagonian and Greater Yellow-Finches, and the stunning Yellow-bridled Finch.

-Overnight: Punta Arenas - Hotel Diego de Almagro or similar

April 9: Flight to Santiago and end of Extension



Trip Details:

Cost:

Main Tour:

Price per person (double occupancy), from Santiago, Chile: \$6,249

Single Supplement: \$850

Extension:

Price per person (double occupancy), from Santiago, Chile: \$4,349

Single Supplement: \$400

Minimum Participants: 8

Maximum Participants: 12

Price Includes:

2 Expert Guides

Ground Transportation in Chile

All Lodging

All Meals including

Park Entrance Fees

All flights within Chile

Donation to Holliday Park Foundation - \$250/
segment

Price Does Not Include:

Airfare to and from Chile

Airport Taxes

Passport and Visa Fees (if applicable)

Alcoholic Beverages

Personal Items

Travel Insurance

Tips

Deposit:

A deposit of \$500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (December 26, 2021).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact Rob at info@sabrewingnaturetours.com, by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at sabrewingnaturetours.com.

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