

BORNEO

Birding & Natural History

5.98° N



May 20 - June 2, 2027



Wild **LATITUDES**
WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS

BORNEO

Birding & Natural History

Greetings, Fellow Explorer!

Borneo is one of the world's most biologically diverse and awe-inspiring landscapes, a legendary "Land Below the Wind" where ancient rainforests meet rare and endemic wildlife, like **Orangutans** and **Pangolins**. This 14-day itinerary in Malaysian Borneo offers a deep immersion into the island's most iconic wild places, from the granite peaks of a UNESCO World Heritage site to the lush, wildlife-rich banks of the Kinabatangan River, to the deep forest of Tabin Wildlife Reserve.

The exploration begins in the coastal city of **Kota Kinabalu** before ascending into the montane forests of **Mt. Kinabalu National Park**. This botanical wonderland is home to an extraordinary array of flora, with over 50% of its plants found nowhere else on Earth. The park is a sanctuary for high-altitude birding specialties, including **Whitehead's Trogon**, **Golden-naped Barbet**, **Temminck's Sunbird**, and the **Bornean Bald Laughingthrush**... All set amidst a backdrop of ancient ferns and carnivorous pitcher plants.

Descending into the lowland dipterocarp forests of **Sepilok**, the journey visits the world-renowned **Rainforest Discovery Center**. This is a premier site for observing the enigmatic **Bornean Bristlehead** and the **Banded Broadbill** from the heights of a spectacular canopy walkway. Nearby, we visit the legendary "people of the forest" at the **Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre**.

The route then leads deep into the wild with several days on the **Kinabatangan River**, a premier location in Southeast Asia for observing wildlife. From riverboats, the canopy reveals endemic **Proboscis Monkeys**, **Rhinoceros Hornbills**, and the rare **Borneo Pygmy Elephant**, while the riverbanks offer glimpses of birds like **Red-bearded Bee-eater**. At the **Gomantong Caves**, nearly a million bats stream into the dusk sky in a stunning display.

The final destination is the vast **Tabin Wildlife Reserve**, an internationally recognized refuge containing diverse habitats from bizarre mud volcanoes to primary rainforest. This wilderness provides a final opportunity to search for elusive mammals like the **Leopard Cat** and observe **all eight of Borneo's majestic hornbill species**. The forest floor here is home to jewels of the understory, including the **Blue-headed Pitta** and the **Great Argus**. This journey offers a comprehensive encounter with the unique species and ecosystems that define one of the most remarkable islands on our planet.

TRIP DETAILS

Start Date: May 20, 2027

Duration of Tour: 14 days

Number of participants: Max of 14

Fee: \$7,790 per person

Deposit: \$4,000

Single Supplement: \$1,600

Trip Leaders: Ivan Phillipsen

Included:

- Double-occupancy lodging
- Ground transportation
- Breakfasts and lunches
- Excursions and park fees
- Guiding services

Not Included:

- Flights
- Dinners
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal items
- Optional gratuities for guides



Steve Robertson and Ivan Phillipsen
Co-owners and Lead Guides at Wild Latitudes

info@wildlatitudes.com 971-361-4629

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ITINERARY

Tentative and subject to change depending on weather, road, or other conditions.

May 18 and 19

Participants depart the States on May 18. May 19 is lost crossing the International Date Line.

Day 1 - May 20 - Arrive to the Island of Borneo

Upon arrival in the coastal city of Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah, Malaysia you will be met by your Wild Latitudes team and transfer to the hotel. After a little time to settle in and refresh, we'll gather in the evening for a welcome dinner and a trip briefing. We'll preview the adventures ahead and enjoy our first taste of Malaysian hospitality.

Lodging: [Jesselton Hotel](#)

Day 2 - May 21 - Kota Kinabalu & Penampang

We spend our first morning visiting the paddy fields of Penampang, located just 30

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minutes from the city. This area offers a cool climate and a spectacular panoramic view of Kota Kinabalu (or “KK” as the locals call it) and the islands overlooking the waterfront from a lush vantage point. The wetlands here provide a great introduction to the region’s common birds. After returning to the city for lunch and some downtime, those with remaining energy can join an optional search along the beach for the colorful **Blue-naped Parrot**, a localized specialty often found in the coastal trees, before returning to the hotel. We’ll gather to enjoy beverages before dinner, and begin to fill out our bird and wildlife lists. This will be our nightly custom for the entire adventure.

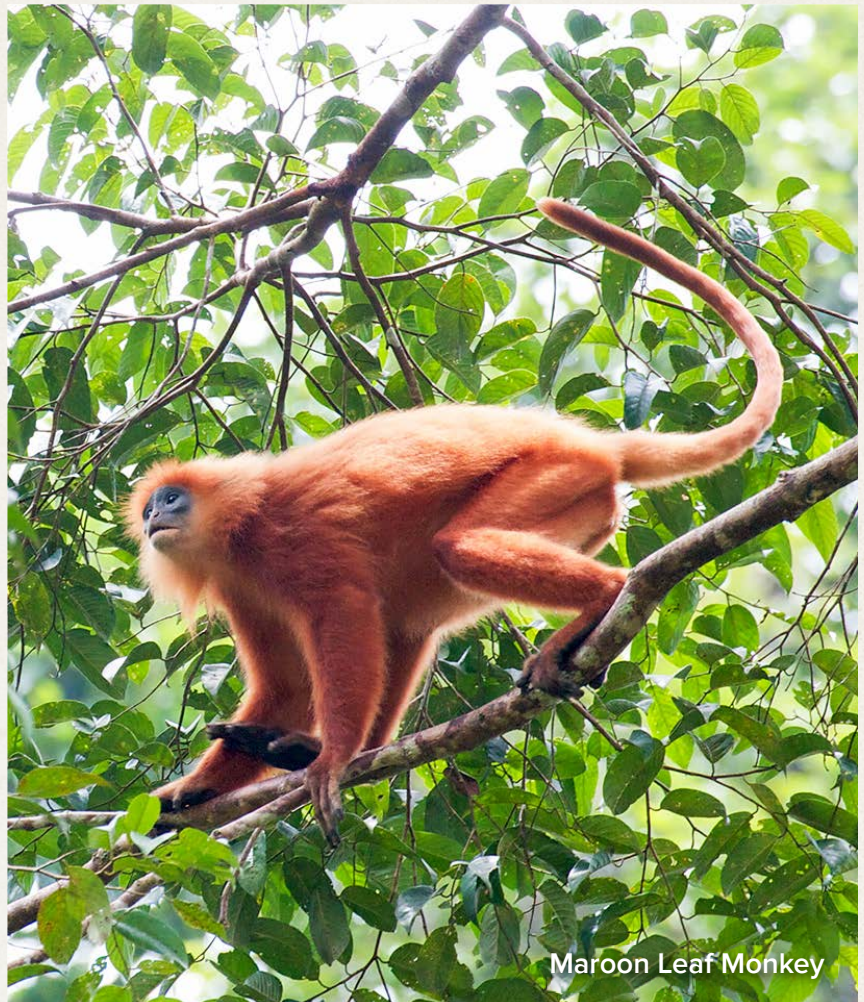
Lodging: [Jesselton Hotel](#)



Horsefield's Tarsier



Red-bearded Bee-Eater



Maroon Leaf Monkey

Day 3 - May 22 - Kota Kinabalu to Kinabalu National Park

After breakfast, we depart for a two-hour overland journey to **Mt. Kinabalu National Park**, stopping along the way for lunch. As we ascend, the air cools and the vegetation changes to montane forest. This park is a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its high number of endemic bird species and botanical wonders. The region is globally significant for its botanical endemism; over 50% of the plants here above 1,000 m are found nowhere else on Earth, including 24 species of rhododendrons and 9 species of pitcher plants, including the bizarre **Giant Montane Pitcher Plant**.

After checking into our park accommodations, we will head out for afternoon birding, hoping for our first glimpses of birds like **Bornean Bald Laughingthrush**, **Temminck's Sunbird**, and **Golden-naped Barbet**. In the evening, we'll take a night walk to search for the **Grey Nightjar** and various reptiles and amphibians endemic to the mountain.

Lodging: [Mountain Valley Resort](#)



Whitehead's Trogon

Day 4 - May 23 - Birding Mount Kinabalu National Park

We'll wake up early to make the most of our time on the mountain today. We'll be birding along the road and trails around the park headquarters and along Timpohon Road. With luck, we get score the "Whitehead's Trio": **Whitehead's Trogon**, the neon-green **Whitehead's Broadbill**, and **Whitehead's Spiderhunter**. Other high-altitude specialties we hope to find include the **Bornean Green-Magpie**, **Black-sided Flowerpecker**, **Indigo Flycatcher**, and the **Fruithunter**.

We'll return to the lodge to freshen up before gathering to celebrate the day and work on our bird and wildlife lists.

Lodging: [Mountain Valley Resort](#)

Day 5 - May 24 - Kinabalu Park to Sepilok

An early morning departure from Mt. Kinabalu National Park, perhaps catching a final view of the jagged granite peaks if the clouds part. After an hour drive east, we'll spend several hours birding around Poring Hot Springs. Some birds we hope to see here include **Great Argus**, **Rufous Piculet**, **Bornean Forktail**, and the **Black-and-Yellow Broadbill**.



Mount Kinabalu

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After lunch, we begin our 4-5 hour overland journey east to **Sepilok**. As we travel east, we move between different vegetation zones, enjoying beautiful views of valleys as we descend back into the lowland dipterocarp forests.

Upon arrival mid-afternoon, we'll check-in to our hotel. We'll work on our bird and wildlife lists before dinner. There will be an optional night walk around the lodge.

Lodging: [Sepilok Nature Lodge](#)



Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher



Orangutan

Day 6 - May 25 - Orangutans & Rainforest Discovery

This morning we'll be birding around the **Rainforest Discovery Center (RDC)**, famous for its network of trails and premier canopy walkways that provide eye-level views into the rainforest mid-story. We'll search for the spectacular **Black-crowned Pitta**, the **Red-naped Trogon**, and the majestic **Wallace's Hawk-eagle**. Then it's time for lunch and some rest back at our lodge.

The afternoon is dedicated to the **Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre**, where we can observe these legendary "people of the forest" during their feeding time. Later, we'll visit the nursery where young Orangutans play and learn behaviors vital for their rehabilitation.

In the late afternoon, we return to the RDC for more birding and a night walk to see **Red Giant Flying Squirrels** emerge from their nests at dusk.

Lodging: [Sepilok Nature Lodge](#)

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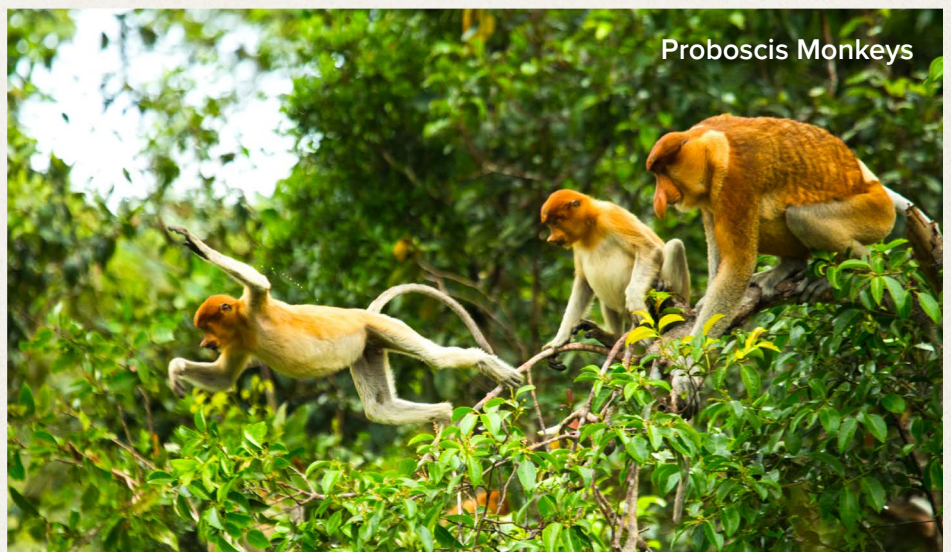
File-eared Treefrog



Lantern bug



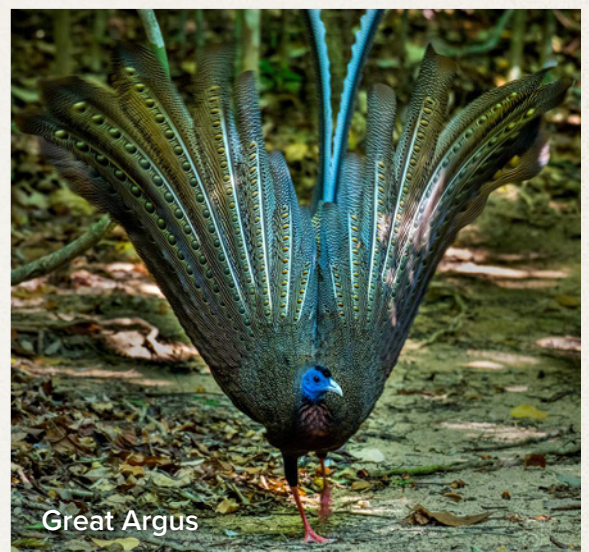
Blue-headed Pitta



Proboscis Monkeys



Bornean Bristlehead



Great Argus

Day 7 - May 26 - Sepilok to the Kinabatangan River

After a morning of birding at the RDC to search for birds like the highly sought-after **Bornean Bristlehead**, we'll visit the **Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Center**. We'll learn about the vital work being done here to protect the world's smallest bear species.

Next, we transfer to the Sukau Jetty. From here, we embark on a boat journey to our lodge on the **Kinabatangan River**. This area is renowned for its diversity and a favorite location of naturalist **David**

Attenborough. Riverboats will be our primary mode of travel for the next few days, providing a perfect, stable platform to view wildlife at the forest edge. Upon arrival at the lodge, we'll have lunch and relax a little. Then it's time to head out for an afternoon cruise to look for birds, including the iconic **Rhinoceros Hornbill**, **Bornean Ground-Cuckoo**, and **Long-tailed Parakeet**. We hope to see some of our first wild primates, too, like the endemic **Proboscis Monkeys** as they settle down on treetops. Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the best places in all of Southeast Asia to observe wildlife.

Lodging: [Borneo Nature Lodge](#)

Day 8 - May 27 - Exploring the Kinabatangan River

We board the boats at dawn for birding and wildlife viewing along the Kinabatangan River. We'll scan the riverside trees in this ancient rainforest as we move upriver. There are many possible species that we might encounter. Primates include **Orangutan**, **Southern Pig-tailed Macaque**, and **Maroon Leaf Monkey**. Other mammals we hope to see are the rare **Borneo Pygmy Elephant**, **Philippine Slow Loris**, and **Sunda Colugo**. A plethora of birds awaits us, with possibilities like **Red-bearded Bee-Eater**, **Green Iora**, **Buffy Fish-Owl**, and **Black-crowned Pitta**.

Breakfast will be back at the lodge. Then we'll have some down time mid-day to relax at the lodge or explore the grounds on your own. As late afternoon arrives, we'll take to the river for another cruise.

Lodging: [Borneo Nature Lodge](#)

Our Commitment to Conservation

On every Wild Latitudes tour, we aim to make a positive conservation impact wherever we travel. We utilize the services of local guides and stay in environmentally-sensitive, locally-owned lodges. On every trip, we make a donation to a local conservation effort that works to protect native species or ecosystems. When you travel with Wild Latitudes, you're helping to protect the wild regions you visit and the amazing species that call them home.



Kinabatangan River

Day 9 - May 28 - Kinabatangan & Gomantong Cave

This morning, we'll enjoy another early boat cruise along the river. Breakfast will be back at the lodge.

In the afternoon after lunch, we visit the **Gomantong Caves**, a massive limestone cathedral that is home to millions of bats and swiftlets. We will observe the **Black-nest Swiftlets** and **Edible-nest Swiftlets** that high-wire harvesters risk their lives to reach. Wild Orangutans are often spotted in the vicinity of the caves as well.

At dusk, we will climb a staircase to the top of the limestone outcrop witness the incredible "bat exodus," as a massive ribbon of nearly a million **Wrinkle-lipped Free-tailed Bats** emerges to feed, often pursued by **Bat Hawks** waiting for an evening meal. We'll have our own evening meal back at the lodge, following the bird and wildlife list updates.

Lodging: [Borneo Nature Lodge](#)

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Day 10 - May 29 - Sukau to Tabin Wildlife Reserve

After a final *optional* morning cruise, we check out and travel about 3.5 hours to our next lodge, in the **Tabin Wildlife Reserve**. We'll have lunch after check-in.

As the largest wildlife reserve in Malaysia, Tabin is an internationally recognized Important Bird Area (IBA) covering over 300,000 acres of primary and secondary rainforest, providing a critical refuge for Borneo's large mammals. In the afternoon, we'll trek along the Elephant Trail to the Lipad Mud Volcano, a mineral salt lick for animals.

Back at the lodge, we'll go over our bird and wildlife lists before dinner. Then you can opt to join a night safari to spot nocturnal wildlife and enjoy stargazing in Tabin's clear night sky.

Lodging: [Tabin Wildlife Resort](#)



Blyth's Paradise-Flycatcher



Leopard Cat



Rafflesia keithii flower

Day 11 - May 30 - Tabin Wildlife Reserve

We spend a full day exploring Tabin's rich trail system and boardwalks. This huge tract of forest is home to all eight species of Borneo's hornbills; we will keep a special lookout for the rare **Helmeted Hornbill**, known for its haunting, accelerating call. We will also search the forest floor for the **Blue-headed Pitta** and the **Malaysian Blue Flycatcher**. Weather permitting, we will offer a night drive to search for the elusive **Leopard Cat**, **Common Palm Civet**, and other nocturnal wonders.

Lodging: [Tabin Wildlife Resort](#)

Day 12- May 31 - Further Birding in Tabin

Enjoy another day of birding and tracking mammals in the vast Tabin Wildlife Reserve. In the depths of the forest, we may see birds like **Chestnut-breasted Malkoha**, **Blyth's Paradise-Flycatcher**, **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch**, and **Blue-crowned Hanging-Parrot**. Mammal possibilities include **Western Bearded Pig**, **Sunda Stink-Badger**, **Large Flying-Fox**, and various deer species.

Lodging: [Tabin Wildlife Resort](#)

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Day 13 - Jun 1 - Tabin to Kota Kinabalu

After a final morning of birding in the reserve, we transfer to Lahad Datu for our flight back to Kota Kinabalu. In the evening, we'll meet for a farewell dinner at a restaurant on the waterfront to enjoy our last evening in Borneo together, sharing stories of the trip and reviewing our final bird and wildlife lists.

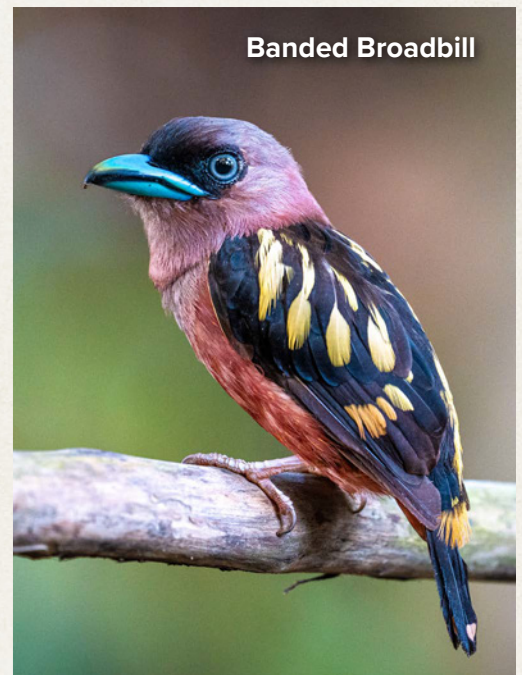
Lodging: [Jesselton Hotel](#)

Day 14 - Jun 2 - Departures

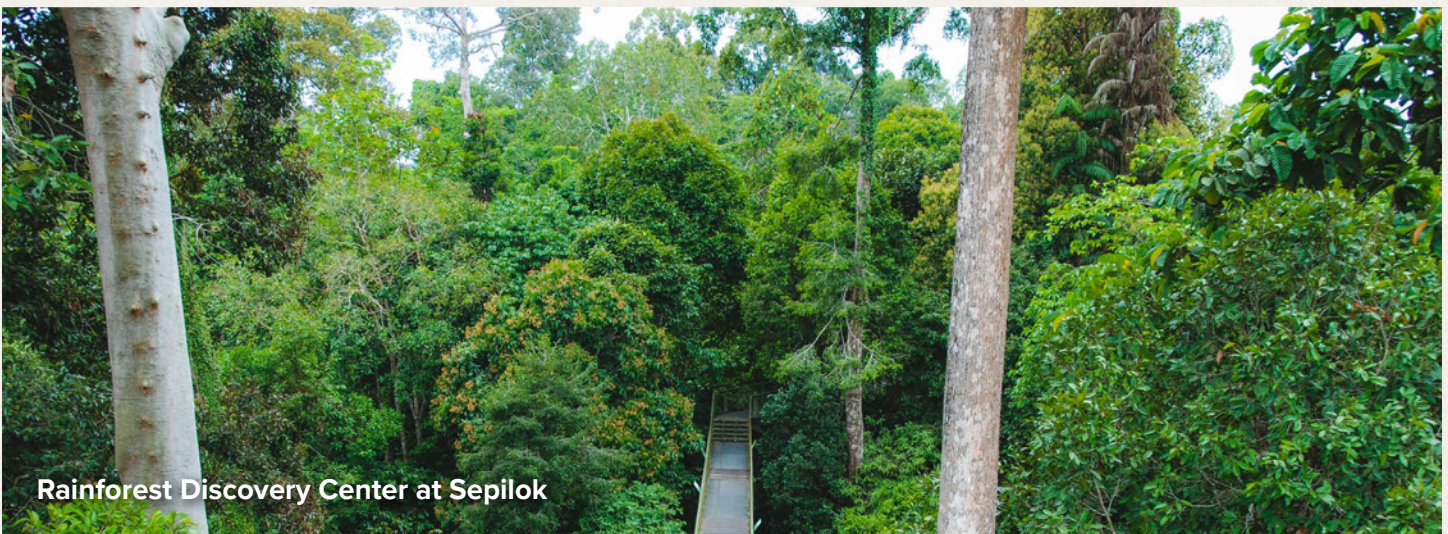
Today you will be transferred to the Kota Kinabalu International Airport for your journey



Borneo Pygmy Elephant



Banded Broadbill



Rainforest Discovery Center at Sepilok

To register for this tour, email or call: info@wildlatitudes.com, 503-714-3504

YOUR GUIDE

IVAN PHILLIPSEN

Ivan is a passionate naturalist with a background in scientific research. He holds a M.S. in biology from Cal State San Bernardino and a Ph.D. in zoology from Oregon State University.

He is the Co-owner of Wild Latitudes. Before starting this business, Ivan lead many domestic and international tours for the Bird Alliance of Oregon and worked for Lindblad Expeditions as a shipboard naturalist in Alaska and Baja California, Mexico. In recent years, Ivan has led birding tours to destinations such as Patagonia, Ecuador, Mexico, Vietnam, China, Iceland, and Australia.

Natural history is Ivan's true passion and what he is most excited to share with tour participants. Although he is fascinated by just about every aspect of nature, Ivan is particularly fond of birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, plants, and geology. Everything is interconnected in nature and Ivan does his best to take a holistic approach when teaching about the natural world.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

THE PACE AND STYLE OF OUR TOURS

The primary goal of our trips is to experience and learn about the natural world, especially the region's birds and other wildlife, and of course, to have fun! As birding is often a primary focus of our tours, and birds are active in the morning, we will sometimes have early morning outings before breakfast. That said, our style of birding may not be ideal for hard-core "listers." We prefer to spend time observing the species we encounter, and learn a bit about their natural history, rather than rushing through the field to add the maximum number of species to our bird list. We also make diversions for interesting, non-avian wildlife, plants, geological wonders, and cultural activities. The pace of most of our trips is moderate, and we encourage anyone in good health to attend and enjoy the experience. Please contact us about if you need specific information on the types of physical activities on a tour and their physical requirements.

We strive to immerse participants in the local culture and to that end, wherever possible, we stay in locally owned and operated hotels that are designed and run in an environmentally sustainable way. Though some accommodations may be more basic than others, all are safe, clean and comfortable. We also utilize the services of local guides, visit local markets, and other culturally significant sites.

TOUR DATE AND TRIP LEADER CHANGES

Leaders and schedules are determined up to a year in advance of our tours. In the event that we have a change in a tour's dates or leaders, we reserve the right to do so, and will strive to inform participants as early in the process as possible. Additional leaders may be added to tours according to the group size, and will be specified in the tour itinerary. We also reserve the right to cancel any trip for which there are insufficient reservations.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE TOUR

When you're ready to sign up for the tour, please let us know by doing one of the following:

- Send us an email at info@wildlatitudes.com
- Call us at 503-714-3504

Then we'll send you the link to our online registration form. You can choose to pay your deposit by credit card or check. See 'Deposit Policy' below.

DEPOSIT POLICY

A deposit is due at the time of registration. ***A deposit is the only thing that guarantees your place on the trip.*** Registration can be made over the phone with a credit card: 503-714-3504. *Note:* there is an additional 3.0% fee for credit card payments. This is only what we are charged by the credit card company.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Checks are happily accepted and should be made out to *Wild Latitudes LLC*. Include the tour name on the memo line of the check and send to:

Wild Latitudes, PO Box 25115, Portland, OR 97298.

PAYMENT POLICY

Full payment is required **90 days** prior to the tour departure date for international tours or any tour involving flights; and **30 days** prior to the tour departure date for local (i.e. in the Portland, Oregon area), van-based tours.

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event a participant needs to cancel a reservation for any tour, the following policies will apply:

- **90 days** or more prior to tour departure date, the deposit will be refunded, minus an administrative fee of \$100.
- **Less than 90 days** prior to tour departure date, no refunds will be given.

We *strongly* recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself from unforeseen circumstances.

If for any reason Wild Latitudes cancels a tour prior to the start of the tour, full refunds—minus the cost of any internal/in-country airline tickets purchased and/or any non-refundable deposits or expenses already made by Wild Latitudes—will be given to all participants. In the event that the tour is canceled while underway due to unforeseeable events such as but not limited to natural disaster, military activities, social uprising, or other extremely dangerous conditions not within the control of Wild Latitudes, no refund will be issued.
