

CHILE

Birding the Atacama Desert to the Temperate Rainforest

18.10° S - 42.52° S



Oct 25 - Nov 8, 2027



Wild **LATITUDES**
WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS

CHILE

Birding the Atacama Desert to the Temperate Rainforest

Greetings Fellow Traveler,

Chile is one of the most geographically improbable countries on Earth—a sliver of land stretching nearly 2,700 miles from the driest desert in the world to the stormy channels of Patagonia, squeezed between the Andes and the Pacific. Nowhere else can you move from flamingo-studded salt lakes at 14,000 feet to ancient temperate rainforest dripping with moss, passing through fertile valleys, dramatic volcanic landscapes, and one of the most productive marine coastlines on the planet—all in a single two-week journey.

Our 15-day tour begins in **Santiago**, where productive wetlands on the edge of the city introduce us to South American specialties like the beautiful **Many-colored Rush Tyrant**. From the capital we explore both directions: east into the high **Andes** of the **El Yeso Valley**, where the **Andean Condor** soars above glaciers and the **Diademed Sandpiper-Plover** picks along frigid streams; and west to the rugged Pacific coast and **La Campana National Park**, home to Chilean endemics like the **Moustached Turca** and **White-throated Tapaculo**. **Seaside Cinclodes** share the coastal landscape with **Inca Terns** and **Humboldt Penguins**.

From Santiago we fly north to the the **Atacama Desert**, the driest place on Earth, where narrow coastal valleys shelter the critically endangered **Chilean Woodstar** alongside a suite of colorful Andean species. Then we ascend to the altiplano—the vast, windswept high plateau of **Lauca National Park**, sitting above 13,000 feet. Here, the **three flamingo species** of Chile—**James's**, **Andean**, and **Chilean**—gather at shimmering lakes in the shadow of snow-capped volcanoes, while **Andean Geese**, **Gray-breasted Seedsnipe**, and the peculiar **Glacier Finch** inhabit one of the most otherworldly landscapes any of us will ever bird.

Returning south, we fly into the Araucanía region and the ancient forests of **Conguillío National Park**, where groves of the sacred **Monkey Puzzle Tree** frame the still-active **Llaima Volcano**. This is the habitat of the spectacular **Magellanic Woodpecker**, as well as the **Austral** and **Slender-billed Parakeets**. Continuing south, we descend into the temperate rainforests of the **Lake District**, where cathedral-like groves of ancient *alerce* trees shelter the secretive **tapaculos** and the extraordinary **Des Murs's Wiretail**. Our journey ends on the **island of Chiloé**, a place of wooden stilt-houses, painted churches, and the world's only penguin colony where **Humboldt** and **Magellanic Penguins** breed side by side. Chile's birds are spectacular, its landscapes are dramatic, and its culture—from the Andean villages of the altiplano to the seafaring traditions of Chiloé—is endlessly engaging. We hope you'll join us!

TRIP DETAILS

Start Date: Oct 25, 2027

Duration of Tour: 15 days

Number of participants: Max of 12

Fee: \$6,990 per person

Deposit: \$3,400

Single Supplement: \$1,120

Trip Leaders: Ivan Phillipsen

Included:

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

Not Included:

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



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

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

Day 1 - Oct 25 - Arrival in Santiago & Batuco Wetlands

Welcome to Chile! Upon arrival at **Santiago's** international airport, you'll be met by your Wild Latitudes guides and our local guide, then transferred to our hotel in the city. After brief introductions, we'll head out—our first birding stop is **Batuco Wetlands**, not far from the city.

Here, among the reeds, we'll search for the elusive **Many-colored Rush Tyrant** and **Wren-like Rushbird**. Waterfowl are a highlight, including **Rosy-billed Pochard** and the brood-parasitic **Black-headed Duck**. Keep an eye on the sky for the dashing **Aplomado Falcon**, a regular visitor to these open wetlands.

In the evening we'll gather for dinner and our first round of working through the bird and wildlife checklist together — a ritual we'll enjoy every evening throughout the tour.

Lodging: Hotel Director or similar, Santiago

Day 2 - Oct 26 - El Yeso Valley

Today we make our first foray into the **Andes**. The **El Yeso Valley** climbs deep into the heart of the central Andes east of Santiago, where snow, glaciers, and the mineral-rich geology of the mountains combine to create one of the most staggeringly beautiful landscapes in South America.

We'll spend the full day at high elevation, birding habitat that feels like another world entirely. Our main targets are the specialist species that have carved out a living in this harsh, cold environment — birds like the **Diademed Sandpiper-Plover**, one of the most sought-after shorebirds on the continent, along with the mighty **Andean Condor** soaring above the ridgelines. Along rocky streambeds we'll look for **White-sided Hillstar** (a hummingbird) hovering among boulders, and open grasslands should produce various miners and sierra finches including the handsome **Plumbeous Sierra-Finch**. It's a long and rewarding day, and we'll be glad to settle in for drinks and checklist time before dinner back at the hotel.

Lodging: Hotel Director or similar, Santiago



Andean Condor



Diademed Sandpiper-Plover



Many-colored Rush-Tyrant



La Campana National Park

Day 3 - Oct 27 - La Campana National Park & Pacific Coast

This morning we head west into the **Coastal Mountain Range** to explore **La Campana National Park**, a strategically positioned reserve that shelters some of Central Chile's most compelling endemic birds. The park's diverse and highly endemic flora—including one of the world's last remaining stands of **Chilean Wine Palm** (*Jubaea chilensis*), the southernmost palm tree on Earth—supports a rich community of passerines and raptors.

We'll spend the morning searching for Chilean endemics, including the **Moustached Turca**, the cryptic **Chilean Tinamou**, and the **White-throated Tapaculo**, along with canopy birds like the **Thorn-tailed Rayadito** and the striking **Chilean Flicker**. The afternoon takes us to the Pacific coast, where we'll watch the endemic **Seaside Cinclodes** working the rocky shoreline and enjoy our first sightings of the charismatic **Humboldt Penguin**. Back at the hotel, we'll relax over drinks and work through what promises to be a very satisfying day list before dinner.

Lodging: Hotel in Viña del Mar or Quintero



Day 4 - Oct 28 - Coastal Wetlands & Valparaíso

We spend the morning along the central Chilean coast, working wetlands and patches of coastal sclerophyllous forest in search of waterfowl, shorebirds, and a few more endemics. The **Dusky Tapaculo** is a priority here—secretive and range-restricted, it rewards patient searching. Out on the water, the striking **Inca Tern** and the scarce **Guanay Cormorant** work the productive Humboldt Current, while flocks of **Whimbrel** and **Sanderling** pick along the tideline.

The afternoon belongs to **Valparaíso**, one of South America's most celebrated cities and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We'll walk the colorful hills of Cerro Alegre and Cerro Concepción, absorbing the city's remarkable layering of colonial history, maritime heritage, and contemporary culture. It's a welcome contrast to the day's earlier birding and a reminder that this tour engages with Chile's human story as much as its natural one. We'll find a good spot for evening drinks and add today's coastal species to our list before dinner.

Lodging: Hotel in Viña del Mar or Quintero

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Inca Terns



Vicunas



Moustached Turca



El Yeso Valley

Humboldt Penguins



Chilean Firebush



Day 5 - Oct 29 - Maipo River & Flight to Arica

Our final morning in the Santiago region takes us to the **Maipo River** mouth, one of the most important wetlands in central Chile and a site where the local community has done exemplary work to protect habitat for sensitive species. The endemic **Dusky Tapaculo** is resident here, and with patience we may also find the **Ticking Doradito**, a tricky migratory species that favors dense reed beds. **American Oystercatcher** and **Black Skimmer** work the river mouth itself.

After a productive morning, we drive to the airport for an afternoon flight north to **Arica**, near the Peruvian border. This jump of nearly 2,000 kilometers deposits us at the edge of the **Atacama Desert** ecosystem. It's a travel-heavy evening, but we'll make time over dinner to review our lists and prepare for what awaits tomorrow—the beginning of the ascent to one of the most extraordinary birding landscapes on Earth.

Lodging: [Apacheta Hotel](#) or similar, Arica

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, when possible, stay in environmentally-sensitive, locally-owned lodges. Through our partnership with the Rainforest Trust, a portion of all international tour fees goes to purchasing rainforest acreage, for its protection in perpetuity. On every trip, we also make a contribution to a local conservation effort that works to protect a native species or ecosystem.



Oasis Hummingbird



Ornate Tinamou



Day 6 - Oct 30 - Valleys of Camarones & Chaca, then up to the Altiplano

We begin with early birding in the coastal valleys of **Camarones** and **Chaca**—narrow ribbons of native trees and shrubs that cut through the Atacama Desert and shelter a remarkable suite of species in an otherwise nearly lifeless landscape. The star attraction here is the **Chilean Woodstar**, a critically endangered hummingbird found only in this narrow zone of northern Chile and southern Peru. We'll also look for the **Oasis Hummingbird**, the **Peruvian Sheartail**, and colorful species like the **Blue-and-yellow Tanager** that congregate wherever there is water and greenery.

In the afternoon, we begin our ascent toward **Putre**, a small village at 11,500 feet (3,500 m) that will serve as our base for the next two nights. As we climb through pre-puna shrublands, we'll encounter a new cast of species adapted to altitude, including the cryptic **Ornate Tinamou**. By evening we'll be well on our way to acclimatizing to the thin air—a good night to take it easy, enjoy a delicious beverage while tallying the day's species, and rest up for the full altiplano experience that awaits.

Lodging: Hotel La Chakana or similar, Putre

Day 7 - Oct 31 - Lauca National Park: The Altiplano

Today is the crown jewel of the northern Chile segment—a full day on the **altiplano** within **Lauca National Park**, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve sitting above 13,000 feet (4,000 m). The landscape here is unlike anything most travelers have experienced: a vast, wind-swept plateau of bunchgrass and cushion bogs, ringed by towering snow-capped volcanoes and dotted with shimmering lakes where all three of Chile's flamingo species gather. Seeing **James's**, **Andean**, and **Chilean Flamingos** standing together in the shadow of the **Parinacota volcano** is a genuinely unforgettable sight.

Beyond the flamingos, the altiplano harbors a remarkable diversity of high-Andean specialists. **Andean Geese** graze the *bofedales* (unique, high-elevation wetlands), **Gray-breasted Seedsnipe** crouch cryptically among rocks, and finches like the **Glacier Finch** and **Bright-rumped Yellowfinch** forage along the margins of wetlands. We'll explore carefully, pausing to scan every hillside and lake shore. Back at the lodge, we'll warm up with drinks and work through our lists before dinner. Afterward, we'll offer an optional nocturnal excursion searching for the **Band-winged Nightjar** and, with luck, the **Peruvian Pygmy Owl**.

Lodging: Hotel La Chakana or similar, Putre



Day 8 - Nov 1 - Las Vicuñas Reserve & Return to Arica

We venture further into the high plateau today, exploring the **Las Vicuñas Reserve** and additional areas of Lauca. Our targets include the **Lesser Rhea**—a large, ostrich-like bird striding across the puna—along with the **Puna Tinamou** and the charming **Golden-**

spotted Ground Dove. Herds of vicuñas are a near-certainty in this reserve, and the sweeping views of the Andes at this elevation are endlessly dramatic. We'll also look for **Mountain Parakeet** and the perky **Black-throated Flowerpiercer** wherever flowering shrubs grow at altitude.

On our way back down to Arica, we'll stop to bird the **Lluta Valley**, a narrow strip of irrigated farmland and river habitat that cuts through the Atacama to the sea, offering a good chance to pick up any lingering species before we leave the north behind. A long but extraordinarily rewarding day—we'll enjoy a relaxed evening over drinks and lists, and dinner with memories of one of the most dramatic landscapes in South America.

Lodging: [Apacheta Hotel](#) or similar, Arica

Black-throated Flowerpiercer



Day 9 - Nov 2 - Flight to Santiago and Temuco; Conguillío National Park

Today is primarily a travel day, but the destination is spectacular. We take an early flight south to Santiago, then connect onward to **Temuco** in the **Araucanía region**—a journey that compresses much of Chile's geographic sweep into a single day of travel. Upon arrival in Temuco, we collect our vehicles and make for **Conguillío National Park**, one of the great wild places of the southern Andes.

Conguillío is presided over by the still-active **Llaima Volcano** and blanketed by ancient groves of *Araucaria araucana*—the **Monkey Puzzle Tree**, known as *Pehuén* in the Mapuche language and sacred to the people who have lived in this landscape

for centuries. If time allows after settling in, a short walk around the lodge may already produce **Austral Thrush**, **Striped Woodpecker**, and the distinctive **Austral Negrito**. We'll go over our lists for the day and get a good night's rest before the serious forest birding begins.

Lodging: [Hotel La Baita](#) or similar, Conguillío National Park



Conguillío National Park

Day 10 - Nov 3 - Full Day in Conguillío National Park

We spend the full day immersed in one of Chile's most spectacular national parks. Conguillío's mix of Monkey Puzzle forest, volcanic lakeshore, and open rocky terrain supports a suite of birds found nowhere north of here. Our top target is the **Magellanic Woodpecker**—a crow-sized, flame-headed giant that is an icon of southern South America. It haunts the mature forest with resonant drumming that carries across the hillsides. We'll also search for **Austral** and **Slender-billed Parakeets**, which make their home in the conifer canopy, and scan the lakeshore for the handsome **Spectacled Duck**.

Beyond birds, the landscape itself is extraordinary: lava fields, glacially carved lakes, and the brooding profile of Llaima all contribute to a setting that feels genuinely primeval. We'll make the most of every hour of daylight and then gather beside the fire for drinks and our evening checklist review before dinner.

Lodging: Hotel La Baita or similar, Conguillío National Park

Day 11 - Nov 4 - Conguillío to Puerto Varas

We spend the morning in the park picking up any remaining targets—the **Rufous-legged Owl** is worth a focused search before we depart, and open country along the road south can be productive for **Ashy-headed Goose** and **Upland Goose**. Around midday, we begin the drive south toward **Puerto Varas** and the **Lake District**, making frequent birding stops along the way.



Magellanic Woodpecker

By afternoon we'll arrive in the charming town of Puerto Varas, set on the shores of Lago Llanquihue with commanding views of the **Osorno Volcano**. Puerto Varas will serve as our comfortable base for the final chapter of the tour. After getting settled, we'll find a good spot for drinks and work through the day's list before dinner—a fine way to mark the transition into this new and very different landscape.

Lodging: Hotel Park Inn or similar, Puerto Varas

Day 12 - Nov 5 - Alerce Andino National Park

Our first full day in the Lake District takes us into **Alerce Andino National Park**, a world apart from Conguillío. Where the Araucanía forest was open and volcanic, the temperate rainforest of Alerce Andino is dense, dripping, and ancient. Humidity, moss, and lichen cling to every surface, and towering *alerce* trees, also called **Patagonian Cypress** (*Fitzroya cupressoides*). Some are thousands of years old, rising above a cathedral understory. This is the realm of Rhinocryptidae, the **tapaculo** family, and we'll spend the day seeking out the secretive **Chucao Tapaculo**, **Ochre-flanked Tapaculo**, and the remarkable **Black-throated Tapaculo**—birds that are heard far more often than they are seen, making a clear sighting a genuine prize. The delicate **Des Murs's Wiretail**, with its extraordinary elongated tail feathers, is another forest jewel we'll keep watch for.

We'll work quietly through the trails and listen carefully, letting the birds come to us when possible. In the evening, we'll settle in with drinks and compare notes on what we found.

Lodging: Hotel Park Inn or similar, Puerto Varas

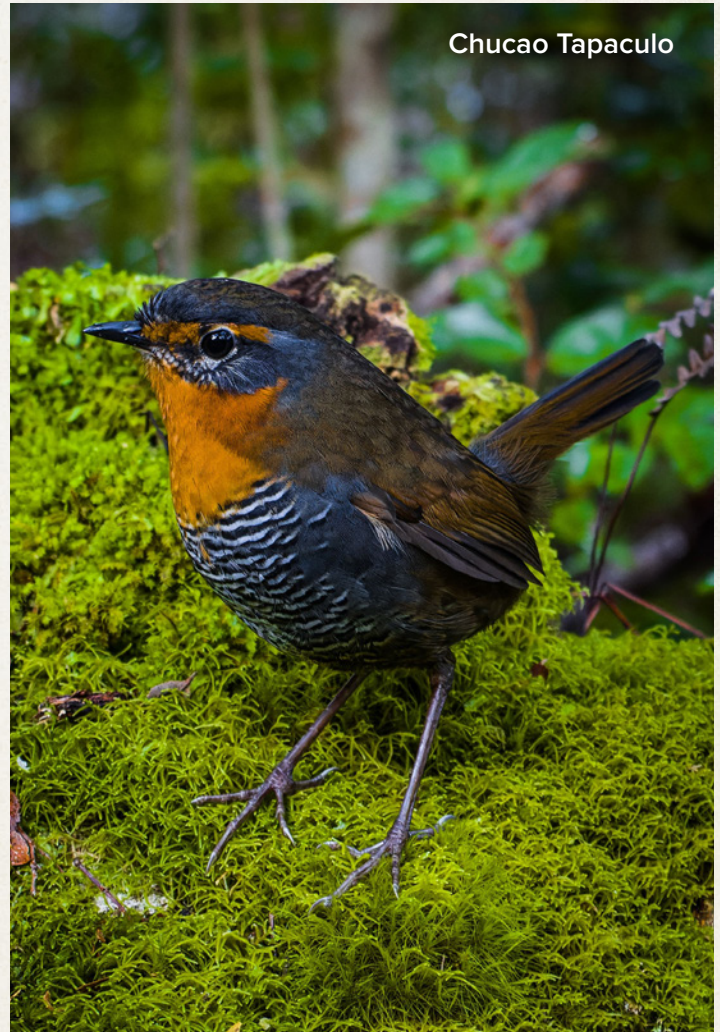


Osorno Volcano

Des Murs's Wiretail



Chucazo Tapaculo



Blue-and-Yellow Tanager



Day 13 - Nov 6 - Endemics of the Rainforest

A second day of deep rainforest birding, this time exploring **Vicente Pérez Rosales National Park** and additional protected areas in the Lake District. Vicente Pérez Rosales is Chile's oldest national park, encompassing a landscape of lakes, rivers, and ancient forests anchored by the spectacular Osorno and Calbuco volcanoes. The forests here are excellent for the full suite of temperate-forest endemics, and we'll pursue species that may have eluded us the day before.

Once again, the **Magellanic Woodpecker** is a priority—and in these forests there's a real chance of close, extended views. We'll also search for the **Chilean Pigeon**, the bold **Fire-eyed Diucon**, and the **White-throated Treerunner** creeping up mossy trunks in the deep forest shade. After a full day in the field, we'll gather over drinks for a review of our lists before a hearty dinner.

Lodging: Hotel Park Inn or similar, Puerto Varas



Spectacled Duck

Day 14 - Nov 7 - Chiloé Island

We take a short ferry crossing to **Chiloé Island**, the largest island in Chilean Patagonia and one of the most culturally and ornithologically distinctive places in the country. The island's unique heritage—its distinctive wooden *palafito* stilt-houses, its network of painted churches (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), and the Chiloé mythology that has shaped local culture for centuries—gives the day a special character.

Birding takes us to the **Caulín Bird Sanctuary** and the wetlands near **Chacao**, where the tidal flats and estuaries host the handsome **Kelp Goose**, the bizarre **Flightless Steamer-Duck**, and good numbers of shorebirds including the long-distance migrant **Hudsonian Godwit**. The highlight for many participants will be a boat trip to the **Puñihuil Penguin Colony**—the only breeding colony in the world where both **Humboldt** and **Magellanic Penguins** nest side by side. Back in Puerto Varas, we'll enjoy a farewell round of drinks and one last run through our bird and wildlife lists before heading out for a celebratory final dinner together.

Lodging: Hotel Park Inn or similar, Puerto Varas

Day 15 - Nov 8 - Departures

After breakfast at the hotel, we transfer to the airport for your onward journey home... or wherever your next adventure takes you. ¡Buen viaje!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

YOUR GUIDE

IVAN PHILLIPSEN

Ivan is a dedicated 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. As Co-owner of Wild Latitudes, Ivan has been able to apply his knowledge in crafting and leading ecotours around the world.

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 he 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.