

PATAGONIA

BIRDING & NATURAL HISTORY



February 18 - March 2, 2025



Wild **LATITUDES**
WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS

PATAGONIA

BIRDING & NATURAL HISTORY

Patagonia is a vast region in southern South America, spanning both Argentina and Chile. It is a wild and beautiful place, sparsely populated by humans. The ecosystems of Patagonia are diverse: jagged mountain peaks in the Andes, windswept grasslands, lakes, glaciers, and forested islands. This is a superb destination for nature travel, with a rich diversity of unique birds, wildlife, geological wonders, and fascinating habitats to experience.

Join Wild Latitudes on a 13-day tour across Patagonia. We begin in **Buenos Aires**, where we'll go birding in a riverside park that's home to a wealth of species. Then we'll take a flight south into Patagonia proper, landing in the charming city of **Ushuaia**, Argentina. Ushuaia is the southernmost city in the world. We'll take an enchanting boat ride along the channel to find seabirds, including **multiple penguin species**. A full day will also be devoted to exploring the ancient forests of **Tierra del Fuego National Park**.

Our journey continues as we drive north, across the Andes, and into Chile. A colony of **King Penguins** will be a highlight en route before we cross the **Strait of Magellan** on a ferry. Now on the mainland of Chile, we'll continue northw to Torres del Paine National Park. The park is home to iconic, stunningly beautiful mountain scenery. We'll spend two full days exploring the park, with good chances of encountering **Andean Condor**, **Guanaco** (wild cousin to the Llama), and **Chilean Flamingo**. Nowhere else in the world has a larger population of **Mountain Lions**. With some luck, we could see one of these big cats.

Heading east, we cross back into Argentina and onto the **Patagonian Steppe**, a dry grassland that extends as far as the eye can see. We'll be on the lookout for the **Lesser Rhea**, a large flightless bird related to ostriches. We then arrive in **El Calafate**, a town on the shores of Lago Argentino. This will be our home base as we make birding forays on the steppe and in local wetlands. We'll take a day to walk the forested trails of the nearby **Los Glaciares National Park**. Here, we'll get up close to a massive glacier where it tumbles into the lake. Finally, we fly back to Buenos Aires for one more night before heading home.

We hope you'll join us for this grand adventure in the far south. Patagonia is like nowhere else—a destination that beckons any lover of awe-inspiring, wild places.



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

info@wildlatitudes.com 503-714-3504

TRIP DETAILS

Start Date: February 18, 2025

Duration of Tour: 13 days

Number of participants: Max of 12

Fee for Main Tour: \$6,995 per person

Deposit: \$3,400

Single Supplement: \$1,295

Trip Leaders: Ivan Phillipsen, David Jaffe

Included:

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

Not Included:

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

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ITINERARY

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

Day 1 - Feb 18 - Arrive in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Welcome to South America! Our adventure begins in the bustling city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Nestled along the banks of the Rio de la Plata, Buenos Aires enchants visitors with its urban excitement and rich culture—from tango dancing, to street art, to the city's countless cafes and restaurants.

On arrival at Ezeiza International Airport, you'll be greeted by Ivan Phillipsen, David Jaffe, and our Argentinian guide, Esteban. After introductions, we'll head to lunch and have an informal orientation about our trip. We'll check into our hotel after lunch.

For the nature lover, Buenos Aires offers an expansive natural space along the river: **Costanera Sur Ecological Reserve**. The reserve is a major hotspot for birding, with over 200 species living in a mosaic of wetlands, woodlands, and grassy areas. We'll take a leisurely stroll through the reserve in the afternoon, hoping to find such species as

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the **Southern Screamer**, **Red-crested Cardinal**, **Glittering-bellied Emerald**, **Saffron Finch**, **Checkered Woodpecker**, **Ultramarine Grosbeak**, and **Maguari Stork**.

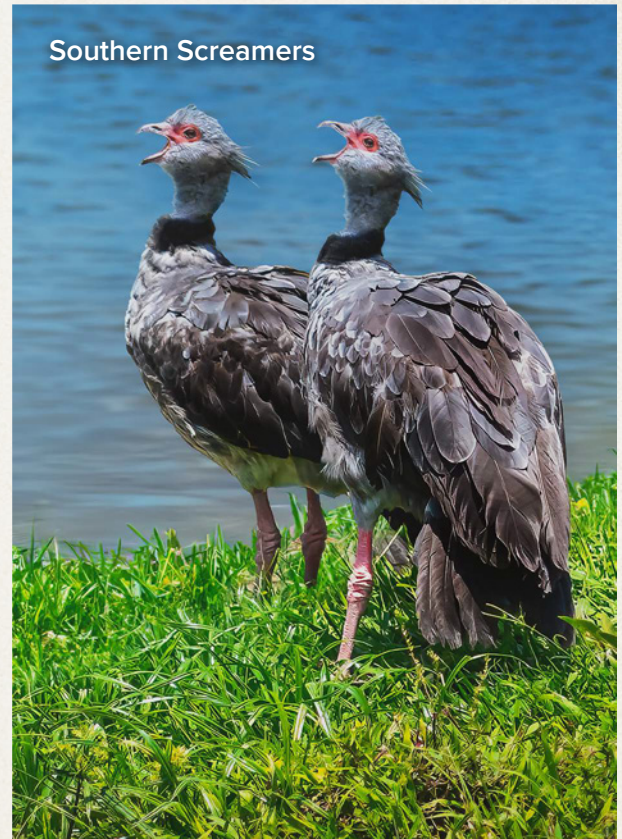
We'll gather at the hotel in the evening to enjoy cold beverages and our first round of recording species on our bird list. Then it's off to enjoy a delicious dinner.

Lodging: [Efe Hotel](#)

Day 2 - Feb 19 - Fly to Ushuaia, Boat Ride along the Beagle Channel

Today we'll take an early flight from Buenos Aires to the southern tip of Argentina—to the city of **Ushuaia**. Now we have truly arrived in Patagonia!

We'll spend two nights in Ushuaia. This small city's charm lies in its unique position as the



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world's southernmost city (at 54°48'7"S), nestled amidst the breathtaking landscapes of **Tierra del Fuego**. The "End of the World" spirit of adventure is palpable as one strolls along the streets and waterfront of Ushuaia. It's easy to find an interesting diversity of bird species along the water's edge. Some possibilities include **Southern Lapwing**, **South American Tern**, **Yellow-billed Teal**, **Chimango Caracara**, **Blackish Oystercatcher**, **Southern Giant Petrel**, and **Patagonian Sierra Finch**.

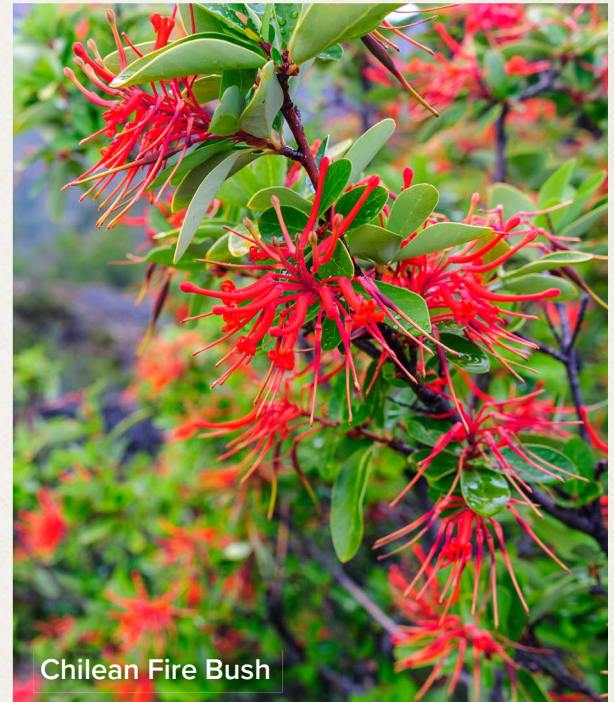
After checking into our hotel, it's off to the harbor, where we'll embark on an excursion along the **Beagle Channel**. This is one of the three navigable passages that connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The channel was named after the HMS Beagle, the ship made famous by its passenger Charles Darwin. Darwin explored this region in 1833. Our boat ride will take us to several small islands in the channel which are teeming seabirds. We hope to get good looks at species like **Imperial Shag**, **Magellanic Cormorant**, **Chilean Skua**, and **Black-browed Albatross**. Perhaps most exciting is the chance to see both **Magellanic Penguins** and **Gentoo Penguins**!

Back in town, we'll meet up before dinner to go over our bird list and celebrate the day.

Lodging: [Hotel Vitalia](#)



Magellanic Penguins



Day 3 - Feb 20 - Tierra del Fuego National Park

We have a full day to explore the beautiful **Tierra del Fuego National Park**, which lies a short drive to the west of Ushuaia. *Tierra del Fuego* translates as “Land of Fire” in Spanish. This is both the name of the region here in southernmost South America and the name of the local province in Argentina.

The national park lies where the Andes mountains meet the ocean at the Beagle Channel. The scenery is breathtaking, with mountain peaks, lagoons & beaches, and lush forest. The dominant ecosystem is subantarctic beech forest. Its ancient, gnarled trees are covered by thick layers of moss and lichen.

Many bird species are found in the park, and we expect to see many of them. Notable species include **Thorn-tailed Rayadito**, **Flightless Steamer-Duck**, **White-throated Treerunner**, **Spectacled Duck**, **Great Grebe**, **Green-backed Firecrown**, and **Black-faced Ibis**. One of the target species today will also be the charismatic **Magellanic Woodpecker**. We'll enjoy a picnic lunch in the park.

You should have time in the late afternoon to explore the streets of Ushuaia on your own. We'll meet up again to go through our bird list, and head off to a relaxing dinner in town.

Lodging: [Hotel Vitalia](#)

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Tierra del Fuego National Park

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle



Magellanic Woodpeckers



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Day 4 - Feb 21 - Las Hijas Ranch and Fagnano Lake

Today is primarily a travel day, as we head north. We leave Ushuaia after breakfast and cross the Andes, over a low pass at less than 2,000 feet. Several short stops on our route will offer places to stretch our legs and look for birds.

Lunch will be at the charming **Las Hijas Ranch**. This working ranch near the shores of the enormous **Fagnano Lake** employs “gauchos” (Argentinian cowboys) to look after their herds of sheep and cattle. While here, we’ll be treated to a lunch prepared on a traditional barbecue.

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.



Guanaco

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Our road then takes us north and east, across a mostly flat landscape. We'll keep our eyes open for small, wild herds of **Guanacos**, close relatives of the domesticated Llama and members of the camel family.

Tonight, we'll stay in the town of Rio Grande on the Atlantic coast. We hope to offer some time to relax before we gather in the evening for our customary bird list meeting and then dinner.

Lodging: [Posada de los Sauces](#)

Day 5 - Feb 22 - Crossing into Chile, King Penguin Colony

This morning we cross the border into **Chile**! Then we drive west to the shores of Inutil Bay. Here we'll experience the major highlight of our day: a small colony of **King Penguins**, the second largest penguin species in the world. We'll get to watch the penguins up-close, and with luck, even see adult penguins caring for their fluffy chicks.

In the afternoon we'll drive to the town of Porvenir, situated on the **Strait of Magellan**. Along the way, we'll make opportunistic stops for birds in the grasslands. One possibility is the imposing Magellanic or **Lesser Horned Owl**.

We'll stay overnight in Porvenir. Before dinner we'll go through our bird list and enjoy some beverages.

Lodging: [Hotel Barlovento](#)



Chilean Flamingos

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Day 6 - Feb 23 - Strait of Magellan and North to Torres del Paine

This morning we'll board the ferry to cross the **Strait of Magellan**. The crossing takes about 1.5 hours. Discovered in 1520 by Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan, the strait is the most significant water passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. We disembark the ferry in the port of **Punta Arenas**. This small, but vibrant Chilean city is our gateway to the wild Patagonian landscapes further north.

We'll make a short stop or two to look for birds and other wildlife as we drive to the town of Puerto Natales and beyond. Some species we may encounter include **Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Upland Goose, Correndera Pipit, Chilean Flicker, Austral Thrush, and Long-tailed Meadowlark**. But perhaps the most outstanding bird we hope to see is the **Lesser Rhea**. This large, flightless bird is a member of an ancient group of birds that includes ostriches and cassowaries.

Our destination today is **Torres del Paine National Park**, in the Andes Mountains. We'll be spending three nights here, with two full days of exploration.

This evening at the lodge, we'll take in the fresh air, enjoy the scenery, and have fun going through our bird list before dinner.

Lodging: [Morrena Lodge](#)



Andean Condor



Mountain Lion

Day 7 - Feb 24 - Exploring Torres del Paine National Park

Torres del Paine National Park is a place of epic, iconic scenery. The Andean peaks here, composed of both sedimentary rocks and granite, were carved into dramatic shapes by glaciers during the Ice Ages. Nestled among the towering, sheer-sided peaks are patches of beech forest and countless ponds and lakes, some of which are vast. Although the environment has a subalpine quality, elevations here are less than 1,000 feet.

The main attraction of the park may be the scenery, but there are plenty of birds and other animals for us to enjoy. Herds of **Guanacos** are frequently encountered. More elusive is the **Mountain Lion**, or Puma. Yet chances of seeing this big cat are better here than anywhere else—the park hosts the world’s largest population of this species, and these cats are often active during the day.

Topping the list of birding highlights are possible sightings of **Andean Condor**, **Chilean Flamingo**, and **Ashy-headed Goose**. Other birds we’ll look for include **Flying Steamer-**

Lesser Rhea in Torres del Paine NP



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Duck, Austral Pygmy-Owl, Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant, Torrent Duck, Andean Duck, Magellanic Snipe, Fire-eyed Diucon, and Gray-hooded Sierra Finch.

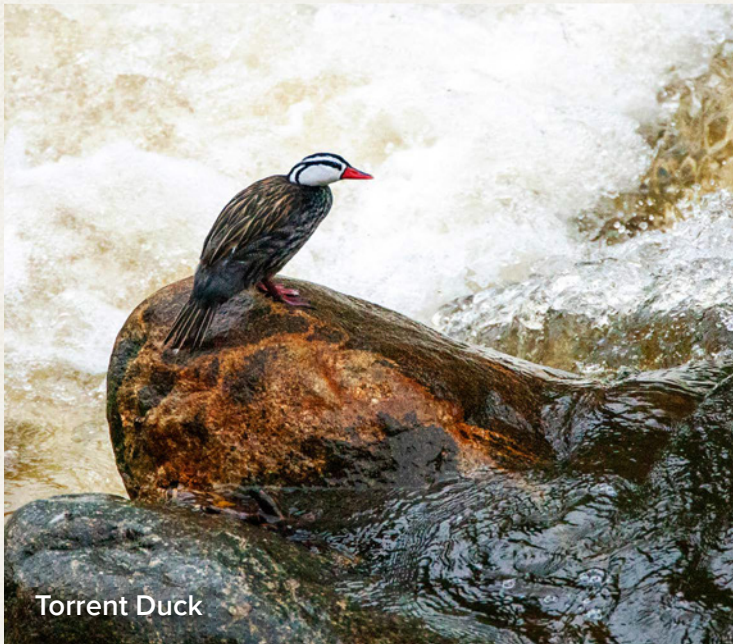
We'll spend this day and the next visiting a variety of locations across the park. In addition to birding and wildlife watching, we'll learn about the region's geology, and take opportunities to just appreciate and be inspired by the majestic landscape.

Lodging: [Morrena Lodge](#)

Day 8 - Feb 25 - Explore Torres del Paine National Park

More exploration of Torres del Paine National Park. Possible sites include the saline lake Laguna Amarga, Paine Lake, and the Salto Grande Lookout.

Lodging: [Morrena Lodge](#)



Torrent Duck



Gray-hooded Sierra Finch

Day 9 - Feb 26 - Road to El Calafate, Argentina

Leaving Torres del Paine, our road now takes us east, back into Argentina. En route, the landscape opens up, as we encounter the arid grassland called the “**Patagonian Steppe**,” appearing to stretch to the horizon. This windswept grassland is beautiful and seemingly empty. Nevertheless, we have chances to see birds like **Lesser Rhea, Rufous-chested Dotterel, Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, and Andean Condor** as we travel to El Calafate.

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The pleasant town of **El Calafate** sits on the shore of Lago Argentino, a huge lake supplied by water from the high Andes to the west. Several active glaciers empty into the lake, and these are major attractions in the region. We should have some time to stroll the shops and cafes of El Calafate before gathering in the evening to fill out our bird list for the day. Tonight, you get to enjoy dinner on your own, as there are many excellent options within walking distance from our hotel.

Lodging: [Kau Kalshen](#)



Patagonian Steppe



Green-backed Firecrown



Lesser Rhea

Day 10 - Feb 27 - Los Glaciares National Park

A scenic drive to the west of El Calafate this morning will take us back into the Andean Foothills. Our plan today is to explore **Los Glaciares National Park**. Here we'll get an amazing, up close view of the **Perito Moreno Glacier** as it grinds its way down to meet the blue waters of Lago Argentino.

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The park is criss-crossed by a well-maintained network of trails through a dense forest of Magellan's and Lenga beech trees. The iconic **Chilean Fire Bush**, with its crimson flowers, should be in bloom. We'll walk the trails at a leisurely pace, enjoy a picnic lunch, and look for birds like **Magellanic Tapaculo**, **Rufous-tailed Plantcutter**, **Patagonian Tyrant**, **Tufted Tit-tyrant**, and **Black-chinned Siskin**. And we hope to see flocks of **Austral Parakeets** here, feeding on leaf buds and seeds in the beech trees, with the massive glacier as a surreal backdrop. No other parrot species in the New World lives as far south as the Austral Parakeet.

We'll return to El Calafate in the late afternoon. After a bit of time to rest and freshen up, we'll get together to review our bird list for the day and venture out to enjoy a pleasant dinner in town.

Lodging: [Kau Kalshen](#)



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Day 11 - Feb 28 - Nature Reserve and Birding the Patagonian Steppe

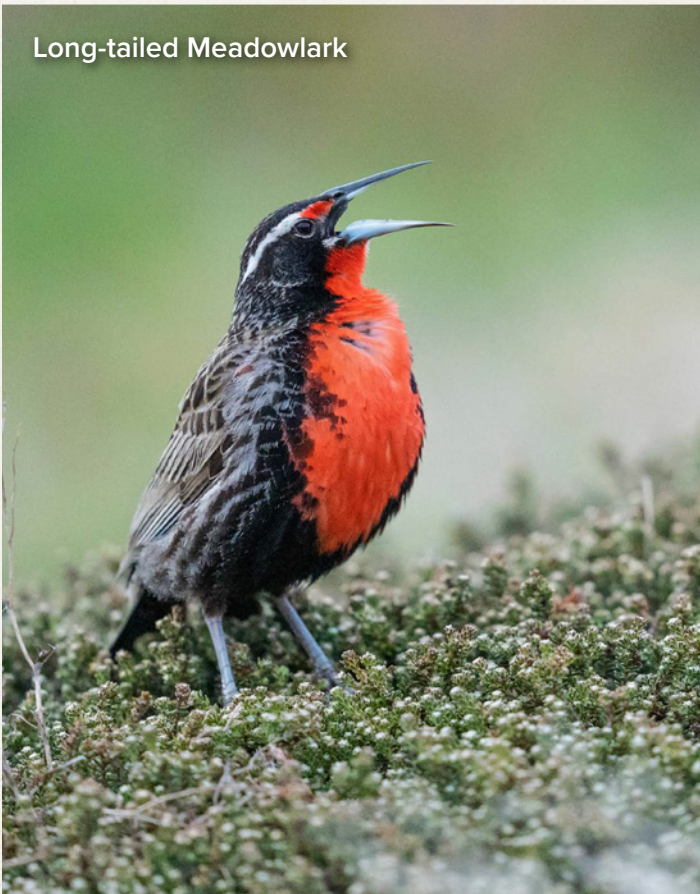
Today we'll go birding at several sites. The first, the **Laguna Nimez Nature Reserve**, is on the lake just at the edge of town. We'll explore the reserve all morning. The habitat here is a mixture of wetlands and grasslands, with small pockets of trees and shrubs. A great diversity of **waterbirds**, **raptors**, and **passerines** are all possible here, including **Coroscoba Swan**, **Black-necked Swan**, **Chiloe Wigeon**, **Red Shoveler**, **Yellow-billed Pintail**, **Andean Duck**, **Chilean Flamingo**, **White-tufted Grebe**, **Plumbeous Rail**, **Magellanic Snipe**, **Cinereous Harrier**, **Wren-like Rushbird**, **Austral Canastero**, **Many-colored Rush Tyrant**, and **Yellow-winged Blackbird**.

After lunch in town, we'll head out into the dry country of the Patagonian Steppe. We'll be on the lookout for species like **Least Seedsnipe**, **Variable Hawk**, **Scale-throated Earthcreeper**, **Cordilleran Canastero**, **Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant**, **Crested Caracara**, **White-throated Caracara**, and **Great Shrike-Tyrant**.

We should have time to explore town a bit before gathering in the evening to go through our bird list. You have the option of dining on your own for dinner this evening.

Lodging: [Kau Kalshen](#)

Long-tailed Meadowlark



Ashy-headed Goose



Tufted Tit-Tyrant



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Day 12 - Mar 1 - Fly to Buenos Aires

We'll have an optional bird walk along the lake shore this morning before we depart the hotel to catch our flight back to Buenos Aires. Once there, we'll settle in at our hotel and have a fun evening, including finalizing our bird and wildlife lists, and sharing a final dinner of the tour together.

Lodging: [Efe Hotel](#)

Day 13 - Mar 2 - Departures

If time allows, we'll offer another visit to Costanera Sur Ecological Reserve, since there are surely more bird species for us to find here. Then it's time to head to the airport and say our farewells. *Adios, amigos!*

Austral Parakeets



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.



DAVID JAFFE

David Jaffe has been guiding and teaching since 1991. His childhood interest in nature eventually led him to Evergreen State College, WA where he earned a B.S. in Environmental Studies and Geology. After 13 years of 'life-experience' he returned to graduate school, earning a M.S. in Applied Ecology with The Field Naturalist Program from the University of Vermont.

David has trekked through the Himalaya in Nepal, looked into the eyes of masked boobies in the Galápagos, sought nudibranchs on the Great Barrier Reef, and walked the Ghats along the Ganges River in India. He has led backcountry trips in Denali National Park, learned from students in Kentucky, and gained great insights while hitchhiking home from work in Yosemite National Park. He has experience as a naturalist in many of the lower 48 states and Baja California. David worked as a divemaster in Australia, Costa Rica, and India. He assisted with the establishment of a marine protected area off the coast of Madagascar and researched and formally studied birds in Canada and South America. His understanding, love and enthusiasm about the natural world continues to grow.



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 but more than 60 days** prior to tour departure date, all payments refunded, minus 50% of deposit.
- **Less than 60 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.
