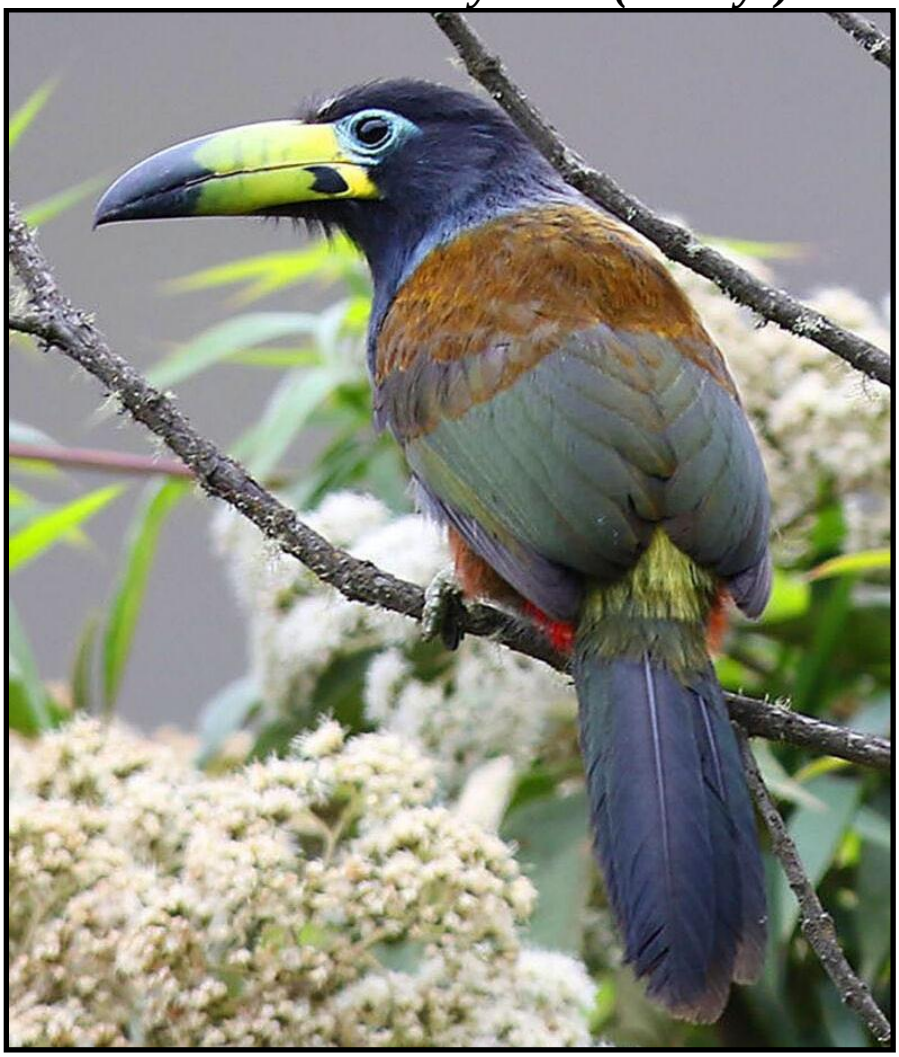
ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Bolivia

Comprehensive

21st June to 5th July 2022 (15 days)



Hooded Mountain Toucan by Alasdair Hunter

Bolivia has a very distinctive allure. It does not have the longest list of birds, nor does it have the best infrastructure or accommodations of any South American country. However, Bolivia has more intrigue and potential than any other South American country. Bolivia has more barely accessed natural areas, more varied habitats yet to be explored, and more opportunity for visiting birders to actually contribute to the base of knowledge that is only very recently, and very slowly, being expanded by researchers and travelling birders alike.

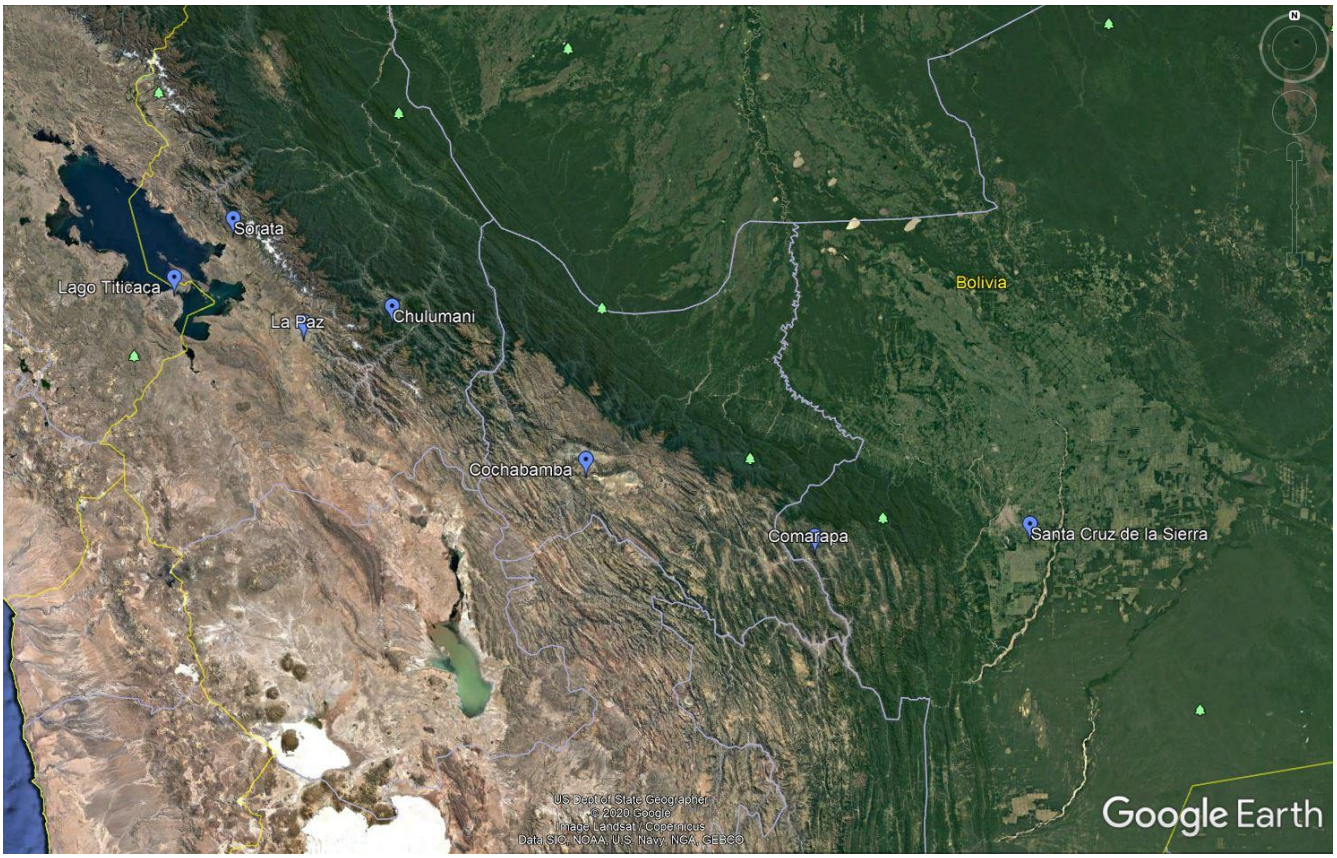
The above paragraph says nothing of the endless, impressive, awe-inspiring backdrops against which a birding adventure in Bolivia plays out. Towering peaks soaring tens-of-thousands of feet high, canyons plunging thousands of feet deep, and the largest inland lake in all of South America (home to the most influential native culture on the continent), are daily landscapes one enjoys during a tour through the heart of the Bolivian Andes. Dry Chaco forests, swampy Pampas grasslands, unique Chiquitania woodland, endemic-rich arid Andean valleys, and the bird-rich Yungas right up to scree slopes and bufedal wetlands at 15,000 feet are just some of the habitats in which we spend valuable time. In order to comprehensively bird the best that Bolivia has to offer we explore some of the most diverse, spectacular species and scenery, as well as being, by default, utterly immersed in truly remote, intact, Andean culture. Birding in Bolivia isn't just a trip; it's a unique, total experience.

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

BOLIVIA COMPREHENSIVE

Day 1	**Arrival day in Santa Cruz de la Sierra**
Day 2	**Lomas de Arena Park and Santa Cruz Botanical Gardens**
Day 3	**Birding the dry inter-Andean valleys to Comarapa**
Day 4	**Serrania de Siberia & Comarapa Yungas**
Day 5	**Red-fronted Macaw and Bolivia Earthcreeper search**
Day 6	**Return to Santa Cruz de la Sierra**
Days 7 to 9	**Yungas forests between Santa Cruz de la Sierra and Cochabamba**
Day 10	**Cochabamba - Polylepis Forest and Laguna Alalay, PM flight to La Paz**
Day 11	**Birding en route to Apa Apa**
Day 12	**Apa Apa Reserve**
Day 13	**Birding the Yungas en route to Lake Titicaca**
Day 14	**Lake Titicaca area and Sorata**
Day 15	**Departures from La Paz**

TOUR ROUTE MAP…



THE TOUR IN DETAIL…

Day 1: Arrival day in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Guests arriving from their various points of origin will be greeted at the airport, and then transported to our hotel accommodations in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. After a welcome dinner to discuss the forthcoming day's birding, a good night's rest will be in order, as we begin our adventures bright and early the following morning!



Bolivian Slaty Antshrike by Dubi Shapiro

Day 2: Lomas de Arena Park and Santa Cruz Botanical Gardens. We start our tour of Bolivia with an early morning departure to Lomas de Arena. An unusual reserve consisting of savannahs, dry forest, marshes, lakes and sand dunes, a typical visit here can produce the sought after Chaco Puffbird, stunning White Woodpecker, Chalk-browed and White-banded Mockingbirds, Comb Duck, Red-legged Seriema, White-bellied Nothura, Hudson's Black Tyrant, Spectacled Tyrant, Peach-fronted Parakeet, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Rufous-fronted Thornbird, Guira Cuckoo, Burrowing Owl, and many other fun, open country species.

In the afternoon we will head to one of Bolivia's best-known birding sites: Santa Cruz Botanical Gardens. Due to its great birding opportunities and convenience, the botanical gardens are a must on any tour. We have two major target species already in the form of Fawn-breasted Wren and Bolivian Slaty Antshrike, while more typical birds of the garden include a mix of humid forest and Chaco species such as Chaco Chachalaca, Greater Rhea, Blue-crowned Trogon, Amazonian Motmot, White-wedged Piculet, Golden-green and Little Woodpeckers, Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Blue-crowned, Yellow-chevroned and Green-cheeked Parakeets, Gilded Hummingbird, Black-capped Antwren, Yellow-olive Flatbill, Rufous Casiornis, White-bellied and Straneck's Tyrannulets, Tropical Parula, Flavescent and Golden-crowned Warblers, Orange-headed and Grey-headed Tanagers, Undulated Tinamou, Olivaceous, Black-banded and Buff-throated Woodcreepers, Variable Oriole and Purple-throated Euphonia.



Chaco Chachalaca by Clayton Burne

Day 3: Birding the dry inter-Andean valleys to Comarapa. An early departure will see us arriving at our first birding destination just after first light, before birding the rest of the day up and through the dry inter-Andean valley from Santa Cruz de la Sierra to Comarapa. As is typical in the Andes, we will cross several strata of avifauna as we change altitude. Though these xeric environs hold less overall species than the wetter slopes, endemism is much higher. Some of the many gems we may find today include Olive-crowned

Crescentchest, Black-and-rufous and Black-capped Warbling Finch, Dusky-legged Guan, Rufous-breasted Wood Quail, Andean Condor, Planalto Hermit, White-bellied Hummingbird, Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, Ocellated Piculet, Mitred Parakeet, Chaco Puffbird, Slaty Gnateater, Ochre-cheeked Spinetail, Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet, Moustached Wren and Bronze-green Euphonia. We also have our first chance to see one of Neotropic's most widely recognised and desired hummingbirds, the Red-tailed Comet.



Red-tailed Comet by Dubi Shapiro

Day 4: Serrania de Siberia & Comarapa Yungas. We will depart early for our drive up the Andes to Serrania de Siberia. This is the best site in the country to access south Bolivian upper Yungas forest, which differs greatly from the upper Yungas birding we've done thus far. Serrania de Siberia is one of Bolivia's best birding assets for a good reason. As the old main highway (remember, most of these are merely widened, graded, dirt roads with little traffic) ascends beyond Comarapa, up through the dry valley habitats towards Cochabamba, a full day's drive away, it crosses the Serrania de Siberia. This high mountain range captures what moisture there is in the atmosphere, allowing lush high-elevation southern Yungas forests to thrive on its steep slopes. Access, in the form of side roads and tiny footpaths, is plentiful, though often not needed as birding the main road can be outstanding.

Mixed flocks are plentiful, hosting a number of rarely seen and sought-after species including Blue-capped Puffleg and Violet-throated Starfrontlet. Black-winged Parrot are often seen in flight, while we can look forward to perched views of Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Light-crowned Spinetail, Buff-banded and Tawny-rumped Tyrannulets, Pale-legged Warbler, Brown-capped and Spectacled Whitestarts, Superciliaried Hemispingus, Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager, Blue-backed Conebill, and a number of Bolivian Brushfinch. Future 'armchair' ticks are practically assured with the obviously unique *argentines* subspecies of Common Bush Tanager, the distinct *discolor* subspecies of Pearled Treerunner and even the odd-sounding form of Blue-winged Mountain Tanager all being rather common here.



Bolivian Brushfinch by Clayton Burne

Diversity is high, with every flock and practically every forest patch offering something new. Andean Tinamou, Andean Guan, Grey-headed and Mountain Parakeets, the impressive Giant Antshrike, endemic Bolivian Earthcreeper, Streak-fronted and Spot-breasted Thornbirds, Stripe-crowned Spinetail, Highland Elaenia, Pale-footed Swallow, White-browed Conebill, Bolivian, Rufous-sided and Ringed Warbling Finches, Fulvous-headed Brushfinch, Trilling Tapaculo, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, Pampa Finch, Rusty-vented Canasteros, Cliff Flycatcher, White-winged Black Tyrant and Fawn-breasted Tanager. In fact, there are so many distinct taxa

in Bolivia, with so little current research that one can only hazard a guess as to the overall number of possible new species.



Red-fronted Macaw by Dubi Shapiro

Day 5: Red-fronted Macaw and Bolivia Earthcreeper search. Today, we will drive to the newly established Red-fronted Macaw Reserve, birding en route. The drive is spectacularly scenic, and again we will be in habitat unique for a few days of birding only. Cactus-studded scrub and forests, red cliff faces, immense waterfalls and deep-plunging canyons characterise this region that harbours a third of Bolivia's endemic flora and fauna. As the road winds through steep-gullys, we shall stop and search for our first target of the day, the endemic Bolivian Earthcreeper. With a little luck, we should be able to get great views of these responsive birds.

Many of the species we will looking for today are listed above, with a few notable exceptions that will be specifically searched for over the course of our time here. These include the highlight of the show: Red-fronted Macaw, of which fewer than 1000 persist in the wild. Cliff Parakeet essentially occupies the exact same habitat and range as the Macaws, and we can expect to see them together on the cliff faces opposite our accommodation. A number of other valuable species exist in this xerophytic habitat including White-tipped Plantcutter, Black-chested Buzzard Eagle, Bolivian, Black-and-chestnut and Ringed Warbling Finches, Band-tailed Sierra Finch, White-bellied Tyrannulet, the lovely Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Chaco Puffbird, Striped Woodpecker, Sooty-fronted Spinetail, both White-fronted and Green-barred Woodpeckers, Yellow-browed Tyrant, Grey-crested Finch, Ultramarine Grosbeak and the sometimes tricky endemic, Bolivian Blackbird.

Day 6: Red-fronted Macaw Reserve to Santa Cruz de la Sierra. We have a few more hours to bird around the reserve for any species we may be missing, before retracing our steps to Santa Cruz de la Sierra.



Bolivian Earthcreeper by Dubi Shapiro

Days 7 to 9: Yungas forests between Santa Cruz de la Sierra and Cochabamba. The word 'Yungas' is a Bolivian term applied to an array of mid- and upper-elevation forests, ranging from subtropical to temperate in affinity. Each elevation has its own unique flora and fauna, host not only to the majority of Bolivia's prized endemic birds, but some fine mammals to boot. Over the coming days, we will bird around Villa Tunari and Currasco National Park where a completely

different host of lower Yungas species are to be found. Species here include the extremely rare and critically endangered Yungas Antwren, White-throated Quail-Dove, Blue-crowned Trogon, Rufous Motmot, White-shouldered Antshrike, Grey-throated Leaftosser, Sclater's and Buff-banded Tyrannulets, McConnell's Flycatcher, Flammulated Bamboo Tyrant and Two-banded Warbler, amongst many others.



Bolivian Blackbird by Dubi Shapiro

We then continue through Currasco National Park and up the eastern Andes to higher elevations near Cochabamba, birding such iconic Yungas sites as Tablas Monte and the Chapare Road. This route will provide us excellent access to a huge variety of habitats, from temperate and upper subtropical forests home to Hooded Mountain Toucan, Stripe-faced Wood Quail, Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager, Rufous-faced Antpitta, Trilling Tapaculo, Black-throated Spinetail, Rufous-bellied Bush Tyrant, Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher and Black-hooded Sunbeam, through to the middle-elevation cloud forest haunts of both Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, Yungas Manakin, Versicolored Barbet, Bolivian White-crowned Tapaculo, Slaty Tanager, Yungas Tody-Tyrant, Rust-and-yellow and Straw-backed Tanagers, Bolivian Tyrannulet, Bolivian Brushfinch and Upland Antshrike.

Day 10: Cochabamba - Polylepis Forest and Laguna Alalay, PM flight to La Paz. We will depart early this morning in 4x4 vehicles to visit the first *Polylepis* forest patches of the tour. While not particularly large or contiguous, this *Polylepis* forest abounds with incredible species including Red-tailed Comet, Wedge-tailed Hillstar, Bolivian Blackbird, Giant Conebill, Cochabamba Mountain Finch, Bolivian Warbling Finch, Streak-fronted Thornbird, Maquis Canastero, Brown-capped and Tawny Tit-Spinetails, D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant, White-winged Diuca Finch, Short-tailed Finch and many others. After what is likely to be a memorable morning, we may return to Cochabamba for lunch. Our afternoon's birding will take place at the nearby Laguna Alalay, where our attention will initially be drawn to a host of waterbird targets such as Silvery and White-tufted Grebe, Puna Ibis, Puna Teal and Red Shoveler, before turning to the surrounding scrub and forest patches for White-tipped Plantcutter, Grey-crested Finch and Greater Wagtail-Tyrant. After another action-packed day of birding, we will catch an afternoon flight to La Paz.



Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager by Dubi Shapiro

Day 11: Upper Coroico Road to Apa Apa. An early departure will see us heading towards Apa Apa and Chulumani in the heart of the north Bolivian Yungas. The list of birds we will search for along the higher elevations of today's route is impressive, with the likes of Andean Goose, Crested Duck, Giant Coot, Rufous-



Cochabamba Mountain Finch by Dubi Shapiro

bellied and the rare Grey-breasted Seedsnipe, White-winged Diuca Finch, White-winged Cinclodes, Buff-breasted Earthcreeper, Puna Tapaculo and several species of ground tyrants at the highest elevations. Working our way down these staggeringly attractive high Andean slopes, we will bird some forest tracts for Black-winged Parrot, Yungas Dove, Diademed Tapaculo, the endemic Black-throated Thistletail, Hooded Mountain Toucan and Yungas Pygmy Owl. Mixed flocks are often encountered, and some of the commoner participants such as Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher, Light-crowned Spinetail, Moustached and Black-throated Flowerpiercers, Golden-collared Tanager, Orange-browed and Drab Hemispingus, Scaled Metaltail, Violet-throated Starfrontlet and other fine hummers are abundant. In order to keep close to these fantastic birding areas, we will stay at a fairly basic hotel in Chulumani, very near to Apa Apa.

Day 12: Apa Apa Reserve. Today is THE day that we search for the critically endangered and seldom-seen Scimitar-winged Piha, amongst a host of other fine middle Yungas species. The subtropical elevation of Apa Apa Reserve makes it one of the finest birding sites in Bolivia, containing many highly sought after species including Hooded Tinamou, Scarlet-breasted and Band-tailed Fruiteaters, Chestnut-crested Cotinga, Yungas Manakin, Slaty Gnateater, Blue-browed Tanager, White-browed Brushfinch, Barred Antthrush, Dusky-green Oropendola, Green-cheeked Parakeet, Green-capped Tanager, Blue-banded Toucanet and an impressive array of flock species are all possible at this beautiful site.



Giant Conebill by Dubi Shapiro

Mixed flocks can contain high concentrations of species, some of which may be welcome repeats from earlier on, or even new birds for the tour such as Black-winged Parrot, Versicolored Barbet, Straw-backed Tanager, Blue-tailed Emerald, White-bellied Woodstar, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Red-billed Parrot, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, near-endemic Upland Antshrike, Rough-legged Tyrannulet, Unadorned Flycatcher, Inca Jay, Andean Solitaire, Grey-eared Brushfinch and Slaty Tanager.

Day 13: Birding the Yungas en route to Lake Titicaca. We will depart early this morning to reach the best upper Yungas and high-elevation birding areas en route back to La Paz. The scenery today, as will be the case for much of this portion of the tour, is again of the spectacular kind.

The Yungas, near Unduavi, gives us our best chance at seeing Yungas (large-tailed) Doves, while Andean Guan, Yungas Pygmy Owl, Citrine Warbler, White-banded Tyrannulet and

Blue-backed Conebill, Hooded Mountain and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager should all turn up. Further gems may consist of White-collared Jay, flocks of Southern Mountain Cacique, Scaled and Tyrian Metaltails, White-crested and Sierran Elaenias, the rare Three-striped Hemispingus, Barred Fruiteater or even Stripe-faced Wood Quail! However, the undeniable draw card here is the chance to see Hooded Mountain Toucan. This mythical creature, which has led plenty a fine birder on a merry chase through the Andes is certainly not guaranteed, but this is one of the best places to find it. We expect to arrive on the shores of Lake Titicaca this afternoon, where a comfortable hotel and a good meal will help us a rest a little better.



Black-throated Thistletail by Alasdair Hunter

Day 14: Lago Titicaca and Sorata. This morning will be spent at various viewpoints and open-terrain sites around the shores of Lake Titicaca. Our primary reason for being here is to see the Titicaca Grebe (also known as Titicaca Flightless or Short-winged Grebe), which we have a very good possibility of seeing today! There will also be a supporting cast of other commoner waterfowl, wildfowl and shorebirds. However, there are some fine passerines to be found in the surrounding altiplano as well including Black Siskin, Wren-like Rushbird, Cream-winged Cinclodes, Brown-backed Mockingbird, Cinereous Conebill, White-winged Black Tyrant, Many-colored Rush Tyrant, Mourning, Peruvian and Ash-breasted Sierra Finches and Bare-faced Ground Dove, all of which are relatively common in the area.

In the early afternoon, we will venture to the Sorata area in search of Berlepsch's Canastero, a highly range-restricted endemic. The drive to Sorata is again great for altiplano birds, as well as waterbirds with Andean Avocet, Chilean Flamingo, Andean Lapwing, Aplomado Falcon and several species of miners, pipits, and ground tyrants commonly encountered en route. The habitat around Sorata is typical humid altiplano and Andean scrub, with another set of new species for the tour including Huayco and Ornate Tinamous, Black-winged and Golden-spotted Ground Doves, Scribble-tailed Canastero, White-winged Black Tyrant, Golden-billed Saltator and Yellow-bellied Siskin.



Titicaca Grebe by Jonathan Rossouw

We shall head back to our hotel in La Paz for a celebratory dinner. For some this will be the end of their Bolivian journey, while for everyone else, our Remote Tour beckons tomorrow.

Day 15: Final departures. After breakfast this morning, those not continuing onto our Remote Tour will head to La Paz Airport after breakfast for their international departures.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs (where applicable) and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES.

The tour fee includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 15;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings during the tour;
- All ground transportation (including boat transfers);
- All national park and other reserve entrance fees; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services)

The tour does not include:

- **ANY** flights (see above);
- Visa fees;
- Any drinks;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.

b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.

c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.

d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, porters etc) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

Please note:

- In some areas, it may be very hot, especially in the Chaco (dry) and Lowlands (humid). We will thus make good use of early morning starts to avoid, as far as possible, birding in the middle of the day. In the lowlands, humidity will be high and potentially uncomfortable. As we will also spend much

time at higher altitudes, it is important to expect cool to cold mornings as well as high levels of Ultra Violet light.

- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kgs (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kgs (18lb) for hand luggage.
- This Bolivia tour requires a very good level of fitness, and participants should be in good general health. Much of the birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time. Guests will be notified when longer walks may be undertaken. If you have any physical limitations, please notify us in advance of departure.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of an average to good standard and the hotels and resorts that we make use of range from basic to comfortable. There is no camping on this trip.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:

This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The tour will begin in Santa Cruz de la Sierra on day 1. As this is scheduled as an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time before 16:00. The tour will conclude after breakfast on day 15 in La Paz.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:

Bolivia has two main ports of entry for international flights; Viru Viru International Airport, Santa Cruz de la Sierra (IATA: VVI) and El Alto International Airport, La Paz (IATA: LPB). **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**